

**The Enduring Myth of an Okinawan Struggle: The History  
and Trajectory of a Diverse Community of Protest**

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research. It contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any university.

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## ABSTRACT

The islands of Okinawa have a long history of people's protest. Much of this has been a manifestation in one way or another of Okinawa's enforced assimilation into Japan and their differential treatment thereafter. However, it is only in the contemporary period that we find interpretations among academic and popular writers of a collective political movement opposing marginalisation of, and discrimination against, Okinawans. This is most powerfully expressed in the idea of the three 'waves' of a post-war 'Okinawan struggle' against the US military bases. Yet, since Okinawa's annexation to Japan in 1879, differences have constantly existed among protest groups over the reasons for and the means by which to protest, and these have only intensified after the reversion to Japanese administration in 1972.

This dissertation examines the trajectory of Okinawan protest actors, focusing on the development and nature of internal differences, the origin and survival of the idea of a united 'Okinawan struggle', and the implications of these factors for political reform agendas in Okinawa. It explains the internal differences in organisation, strategies and collective identities among the groups in terms of three major priorities in their protest. There are those protesters principally preoccupied with opposing the US-Japan security treaty and for whom the preservation of pacifist clauses of the Constitution and the utilisation of formal legal and political processes are paramount as a *modus operandi*. There are also those primarily concerned to protect Okinawa's distinctive lifestyle and natural environment, as well as an assortment of feminist groups fundamentally opposed to the presence of US bases due to concerns about patriarchy and exploitation of women, fostered by militarism. In these last two perspectives, protest tends to be conducted much more via informal, network-oriented processes, and includes engagement with international civil society groups.

The increasing range of protest groups derived from the expansion of these last two perspectives — diversifying beyond the traditional workers' unions and

political parties — is consistent with the ‘new social movement’ theory. This theory’s emphasis on the importance of socio-economic change for the emergence of groups with post-materialist reform agendas and a stronger predisposition towards informal political processes resonates with the Okinawan experiences. However, the impact of this has been — especially after the reversion in 1972 — to hinder effective coalition building among the Okinawan protest groups and organisations, weakening their power to bring about political reforms, particularly towards the removal of the US military bases from the island.

Crucially, though, the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ has endured in the community of protest throughout the post-war period. Ideas about marginalisation of, and discrimination against, Okinawans constitute a powerful myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’, which has a long history of being redefined, used and exploited differently by a wide range of protest actors, adjusted to their particular and historically specific struggles. Indeed, in the event that the US military bases were withdrawn from Okinawa, the ability and appeal of the myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ would therefore not necessarily expire, even if it will increasingly be joined by other protest perspectives as a result of the flowering of new social movements.

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## **Note On Japanese Names and Spelling**

Japanese names are presented surname first and given name second, following the conventional Japanese fashion, except for the English-language quotations or otherwise ordered bibliographical references. Macrons are placed to indicate all long vowels, except in the case of well-known geographical names and publishers.

## Abbreviations

ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Union
G.R.I.	Government of Ryukyu Islands
OLDP	Okinawa Liberal Democratic Party
OPP	Okinawa People's Party
OSMP	Okinawa Socialist Masses Party
OSP	Okinawa Socialist Party
OTA	Okinawa Teachers' Association
SDF	Self Defence Forces
SCAP	Supreme Command for Allied Powers
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
USCAR	United States Civil Administration of the Ryūkyūs
WWII	World War II



## Glossary

<i>Ampo</i>	US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty
<i>Fukki</i>	Reversion
<i>Fukki-kyo</i>	Council for the Return of Okinawa to the Home Country
<i>Kankōrō</i>	Okinawa Public Office Workers' Unions Council
<i>Kenrōkyō</i>	Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee
<i>Iken Kyōtō</i>	Okinawa Supporting Council for the Legal Actions against Unconstitutionality
<i>Jichirō</i>	All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union
<i>Kenrōkyō</i>	Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee
<i>Minsei</i>	Democratic Youth League
<i>Okifuren</i>	League of Okinawan Women's Groups
<i>Rengō</i>	Japanese Trade Union Confederation
<i>Sōhyō</i>	General Council of Japanese Trade Unions
<i>Tochiren</i>	Okinawa Federation of Landowners of Land Used for Military Purposes

<i>Yamato</i>	Mainland Japan
<i>Zenchurō</i>	All Garrison Forces Labor Union Okinawa Division
<i>Zengakuren</i>	All-Japan Federation of Student Self-Government Association
<i>Zengunrō</i>	All Okinawan Military Workers' Union
<i>Zenkyōtō</i>	All-Japan Joint Struggle Committee
<i>Zen-Oki Rōren</i>	All Okinawan Labour Unions' Association

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## Introduction

In a society dominated by the US military presence, people in Okinawa have constantly protested against militarism and war. The disproportionate concentration of US military bases on Okinawa — where 75 per cent of the US forces deployed in Japan are located, even though Okinawa accounts for just 0.6 per cent of Japan's land mass — is a result not just of the US–Japan security alliance but also Japan's discriminatory treatment of a minority group. However, the presence of US military bases has not been the exclusive cause of Okinawans' protest. Subjugation to powerful outsiders has been a constant variable in the history of the Okinawa Archipelago. Protests against the US military presence on the Okinawa Main Island in the post-war phase are rooted in the long struggle of the island's people against marginalisation.

In this long history of Okinawan people's protest, diversity and internal differences among the protest actors have continually defined Okinawan civil society. 'Okinawa' encompasses a group of multi-lingual and multi-cultural islands and regions, with varying degrees of socio-economic and demographic conditions. Today, for example, the US military bases affect regions and municipalities considerably differently in terms of noise, crimes, and importantly, economic benefits to the local economy. There are many different ways of defining Okinawa's predicament today; factors such as protesters' occupations, assets, place of residence, gender, age and past experiences as activists being among those that influence this diversity. This includes disagreements over, and variations of perception about, what 'Okinawa' means, *vis-à-vis* mainland Japan: how separate an entity 'Okinawa' is, from *yamato*. Inevitably, these differences are reflected in the contrasting priorities and *modus operandi* of protest. Moreover, particularly after Okinawa reverted to Japanese administration in 1972, protest groups have become smaller, less affiliated to established political parties or workers' unions, and their number has been increasing. They address increasingly different areas of social concerns that are not exclusively related to the marginalisation of Okinawa *vis-à-vis* Japan, but also engage in building

transnational networks and activities, especially concerning environmentalism and feminism. Okinawan protest actors are becoming more and more akin to ‘new social movements’ prevalent in post-industrial societies.

The theory of ‘new social movements’ is thus especially relevant to the Okinawan case. Vibrant centres of protest in Okinawa are moving away from established leftist political parties and workers’ unions, and the means of protest are becoming more individual-based and concentrated on informal political activities. Traditional actors, namely, political parties and union activists remain a routine protest sector, so that we see a deepening of the divisions within the community of protest rather than a smooth replacement of old for new.

The diversity and vibrancy of protest actors contribute to the perception of Okinawa as an interesting region in Japan, with a distinctive democratic and pacifist tradition. Okinawan civil society is therefore seen to contain a deep reservoir of social movements derived from its rich tradition of protest. There are apparent expectations that the power of Okinawans’ protest will create political change not only affecting US military presence in the region, but also towards a different ‘Japan’. In particular, the Okinawan anti-base protesters collectively attract external sympathy and support from academics, peace and environmental activists, feminists, and journalists, for staging a long-term struggle against the two superpower states, the US and Japan. However, in the context of macro-level analysis of the US, Japan and Okinawa, the internal differences within Okinawan protest actors tend to be underrepresented. From the perspectives of international and mainland Japanese audiences, the ‘Okinawan’ protesters are often viewed as a single, united entity.

It is the primary concern of this dissertation not only to explore the internal diversity of and differences between protest groups, features that are concealed by the representation of a united ‘Okinawan anti-base movement’; but also to simultaneously ask what role the idea of a singular ‘Okinawan struggle’ or an ‘Okinawan movement’ has played or plays. It analyses the impact of diversity in the community of protest in relation to that community’s power to bring about the reforms aimed for by protesters, most notably the reduction and eventual removal of

the US military bases from Okinawa. It also considers the implications of the diversification of protest actors for the utility and appeal of the idea of a singular ‘Okinawan struggle’ — however arbitrarily interpreted — that is still prevalent across different sectors of the community of protest.

The central argument is that the diversification of protest actors in Okinawa reflects a transformation of civil society in Okinawa towards an increasingly open, plural sphere with greater entry points for participation in the community of protest. However, a more open and vibrant civil society has not necessarily resulted in a greater ability to put effective pressure on the state to make political reforms to reduce the US military presence. With splintered collective identities (definition of who ‘we’ are), repertoires of protest (reservoirs of knowledge acquired from experiences in protest and mutual learning) and framings (meanings attached to the act of protest) in the community of protest, a unified ‘Okinawan struggle’ that was strongly supported during the reversion movement, has become more problematic. The idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ that gives continuity and unity across different actors in different periods and locations may be diminishing as a basis for building different organisations into a coalition. Nevertheless, the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ is likely to survive as a myth that supports and nurtures the increasing plurality and chaos in Okinawan civil society. This is because the appeal to the idea of marginalisation and discrimination can continue to tap into a deeply embedded political culture reflecting Okinawa’s particular historical experience.

Chapter 1 reviews how anti-base popular protest in Okinawa is represented in the developing literature on Okinawa. The chapter then defines concepts and theories of social movements relevant to the central questions of this thesis and useful for understanding and explaining the diversity and unity of the ‘movement’ and its transition over time. The chapter particularly elaborates on the utility of ‘new social movements theory’. The rest of the dissertation is divided into three parts.

In the following two chapters comprising Part I of this dissertation, I examine the historical processes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that

contributed to the development of a historical narrative of marginalisation: forced annexation to mainland Japan; delayed reforms and subsequent economic hardship; involvement in WWII and the Battle of Okinawa. This exercise is important, as this dissertation explains this historical narrative of marginalisation as a significant — albeit not the only — component of the myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’, or the otherwise coined notion of a continuous struggle of Okinawans as a united ‘movement’. This section also identifies and analyses contending perspectives on how to interpret these events among Okinawans; perspectives whose legacies are still exerting an impact today in definitions of Okinawan collective identity, as well as the strategy and organisation of protest. From early on, the desire for assimilation to mainland Japan and the assertion of distinctiveness coexisted in Okinawa.

Chapter 2 mainly focuses on the increasing complexity of the emerging Okinawan identity and associated contention, notably to what extent it should be ‘Japanese’. The emergence of the ‘assimilationist’ strategy in Okinawan political action is particularly significant, exemplified by the dominant positions in ‘Okinawan Studies’ and Jahana Noboru’s political movement. The assimilationist strategy, which seeks protection from the Japanese state, has survived in the post-war protest of the Okinawans in the reversion movement. Chapter 3 discusses residents’ experiences in the Battle of Okinawa, which generated Okinawan-specific ‘absolute pacifism’. The basic tenet of this ‘absolute pacifism’ is that the state cannot be trusted because when it engages in war, it subjects the lives of its people — especially the lives of minorities — to its own interests. The experience of the Battle of Okinawa and representation of the residents’ experience constitute the basis of pacifism and anti-militarism in Okinawa.

Part II (chapters 4 and 5) examines the emergence of a tradition of voluntary mass protest that involved the island-wide population, the rise of the ‘community of protest’ and the idea of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ under direct US military rule. Initially they emerged with the people’s protest against the US military’s land policy, which developed into a popular movement towards reversion to Japan. Chapters 4 and 5 elaborate on the first two ‘waves’ of the island-wide struggle, through which



various protest groups represented themselves as one ‘Okinawa’, and the concept of a singular ‘Okinawan struggle’ *vis-à-vis* US direct rule and mainland Japan. The chapters focus on the period when the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’, referred to as ‘the Okinawa Struggle’ (*Okinawa Tōsō*) provided the most powerful coalition basis.

Chapter 4 examines the birth and growth of local political parties, workers’ and teachers’ unions and other actors of collective action, which created the ‘first wave’ island-wide struggle, that is, the 1956 Okinawans’ mass uprising against the US military’s forced acquisition of privately owned land. Amongst other actors, the farmers’ disobedience in Ie-jima, is especially important for the legacy of a uniquely ‘Okinawan’ non-violent pacifism immediately following the Battle of Okinawa experience. The uprisings in this period demonstrated Okinawans’ ability to organise against the US authorities to demand changes. After the rise and fall of the first-wave Okinawa Struggle, which peaked in 1956, and the financial settlement between the landowners and the US authorities, the reversion movement prevailed over the land dispute as the main agenda of the ‘All-island’ protest.

Chapter 5 examines the development of organisation, strategy and collective identity in the second-wave island-wide struggle. The Okinawan Teachers’ Association, political parties and workers’ unions established a coalition for reversion, which was a goal that dictated a unified strategy to seek assimilation. However, the coalition’s political agenda tended to be removed from Okinawan residents’ day-to-day concerns about the US bases. The ‘assimilationist’ avenues of protest motivated by the ultimate goal of reversion, however, did not accommodate workers’ attempts of general strikes, citizens’ concerns and anti-base sentiments resulting from accidents and the use of nuclear weapons in the bases, and other more intellectual critiques against reversion. Importantly, the organisational structure and collective identity of the reversion movement have survived in the ‘constitutionalist’ framing of anti-base protest today.

Part III comprises three chapters, which examine the ‘low’ cycle of protest after the reversion, and the rise and fall of the ‘third wave’ island-wide struggle. The political and economic conditions in Okinawa went through significant changes

following reversion to Japan in 1972, and protests against the US military entered a quiet period. The idea of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ — once a strong basis for coalition during the reversion movement — and its goal, organisation and collective identity had to be re-defined. The aim of chapters 6, 7 and 8 is to explain three major reform orientations of protest, respectively, ‘constitutional’, ‘local’ and ‘gender’, which can be differentiated in terms of collective identity, repertoires of collective action, and on interpretations of what was really at stake.

Chapter 6 examines the process of re-defining the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ after the reversion, focusing on the characteristics of organisation, strategy and collective identity of anti-war landowners and their supporters. The successors of the mainstream ‘Okinawa Struggle’ were the anti-war landowners, and their supporting organisations, comprised of the *One-tsubo* anti-war landowners, Okinawan anti-base political parties and workers’ unions. They managed to re-establish an anti-base coalition — albeit a much weaker one than previously— based on the ‘constitutional’ framing of protest. The anti-base coalition converted the ‘assimilationist’ strategy and collective identity of the reversion movement into a strong attachment to the democratic and pacifist principles of the post-war Japanese Constitution, connected to specific Okinawan experiences, and particularly related to the Battle of Okinawa and the anti-war landowners’ disobedience against the US and Japan’s violation of individual property rights, justified by the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty.

Chapter 7 examines the major transformation in the community of protest that marks what this dissertation sees as the emergence of ‘new social movements’. It focuses on the emergence of residents’ movements, as one alternative to the previously dominant workers’ and socialist movements. It undertakes two case studies of residents’ protest against the oil refinery industry development in Kin Bay and the construction of the New Ishigaki Airport in Shiraho that emerged after reversion in 1972. These two struggles paved the way for the ‘local’ framing of protest, which attaches great significance to the conservation of local marine resources that have provided residents’ traditional lifestyle and finds ‘Okinawan’ identity in unique localities within Okinawa. What directly gave meaning to the act

of protest in these case studies were the life experiences in specific local contexts within Okinawa, which had tended to be underrepresented previously because of the preoccupation with integration of Okinawa to Japan during the reversion movement. The emergence of these residents' movements that reflected diverse forms of life within Okinawa also put the idea of a single 'Okinawan struggle' under critical reconsideration by the activists in general.

Chapter 8 focuses on the peak and the downturn period following the rise of the third wave 'Okinawan Struggle'. The contemporary community of protest is characterised by the co-existence of plural social movements. Differences and internal divisions within the community of protest, I argue, indicate the co-existence of qualitatively different kinds of social movements, although they are all related in some way to the inequality and marginalisation related to the continuing dominance of US military bases on Okinawa.

A distinctive contribution of this thesis is to understand the Okinawan protest actors from the perspective of changing and dynamic 'social movements'. This dissertation critically examines and analyses the people and their experiences of protests in Okinawa, as varieties of social movements, similar to other protest experiences in the world that are studied more widely and profoundly, for example, the civil rights movement, anti-nuclear movements and women at Greenham Common. It contributes to opening the black box of 'Okinawan protesters' represented as a collective victim of an invincible US international security policy, of Tokyo's political economy of compensation, and of marginalisation of a minority group in Japan. It attempts to look at who the protesters are, what they want, how they strive to get it, and why.

Overall, it contends that the myth of an 'Okinawan struggle' has survived, and will survive increasing diversification of protest actors and changing reform agendas in Okinawa because of its flexibility in being harnessed to a myriad of shapes and forms of campaigns against marginalisation. This dissertation reveals that through the post-war period, the myth — described variously as an 'Okinawan struggle', the 'Okinawa Struggle', or the 'Okinawans' movement' — has become less

rigid in the way it is incorporated into notions of collective identity or rationales for specific protests and organisations thereof. Yet it is precisely this capacity of the myth to speak to so many different interpretations of marginalisation — involving different struggles and experiences at different periods in time — that means it is still a powerful and attractive one. It continues to be an effective source of inspiration and mobilisation for divergent groups by providing strategies and ideas of protest derived from past experiences, and to be a source of self-expression. Another attraction of the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ is its ability to provide a base for individual struggles, from which to connect with common experiences of marginalisation taking place in other parts of the world, thus promoting developing networks with social movement actors in global civil society.

## **Protest, Social Movements and the Okinawan People's Struggle**

### **Reading Protest in Okinawa**

Following wide coverage in the media of the rape case of an Okinawan girl in 1995 by three US Marines, an increasing number of commentaries have touched on the subject of local protest against the US military's presence on the main island of Okinawa. Increasing work from social, historical and political studies focus on the factors that have given rise to contemporary local protest and political action against the US military and Japanese government. Okinawa provides plenty of rich raw materials for studies of US neo-colonialism and imperialism in East Asia (for example Johnson 1999a), the devastating and parasitic forces of capitalism on vulnerable islands (for example McCormack 1998a), the insidious structure of compensation politics, under which Okinawans' bargaining power against the heavy US military presence has been constantly suppressed after the 1972 reversion (for example George-Mulgan 1999, Johnson 2002, Yonetani 2001), contesting interpretations of Okinawa's past, especially regarding war memory (Yonetani 2003, Nelson 2003), systematic discrimination against minorities in Japan, and the expressions of Okinawan identity and their political implications (for example Morris-Suzuki 1998, Taira 1997). Relatively few studies, however, have focused on the constituent protest organisations and the relationships among them.<sup>1</sup>

### *Representation of the Homogenous and Diverse Okinawan Anti-base Movement*

Within the existing, growing literature on Okinawa, the anti-base protesters have received considerable attention through, amongst others, the Japan Policy Research

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<sup>1</sup>Exceptionally, Yonetani (2001) describes some of the anti-base activities in Nago, Okinawa before the 2000 Kyushu-Okinawa G8 Summit. Inoue (1999) also thoroughly studies the protest against the new off-shore base, which is going to be constructed after the closure of the Futenma Air Base, and its impacts on community life in Henoko hamlet.

Institute (JPRI).<sup>2</sup> The JPRI forum has provided significant channels through which the battles against continuing discrimination and marginalisation of Okinawa by mainland Japan are advanced by Okinawans, providing information and analyses for an academic and English-speaking readership on the anti-base movements in Okinawa. The JPRI writings, and similarly, Hook and Siddle's collection of essays on Okinawa (2003), help correct a misleading image that the local populace is uniformly against the US military presence, as is sometimes represented in simplified accounts.<sup>3</sup>

The voices of Okinawan activists such as Ōta Masahide<sup>4</sup>, Carolyn Francis,<sup>5</sup> Miyagi Yasuhiro<sup>6</sup>, Arasaki Moriteru<sup>7</sup>, and Medoruma Shun<sup>8</sup> have been prominently represented in a JPRI article (JPRI Staff 1998b). Furthermore, local reactions to the state's attempt to consolidate the island as a security outpost have been reported (McCormack & Yonetani 2000). These studies contribute to a more informed global audience on what is happening in Okinawa, and give shape and voice to the

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<sup>2</sup> JPRI is an electronically accessed journal edited by a group of scholars in the study of political economy and international relations of East Asia and Japan, headed by Professor Chalmers Johnson (see <http://www.jpri.org>).

<sup>3</sup> After the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl in September 1995, in a typical newspaper report, 'the incident has inflamed the 1 million residents of this subtropical island and sent their governor to Tokyo to call for closure of the massive US military bases here' (*Washington Post* 20 September 1995). Hook and Siddle point out that 'for some [Okinawans], the bases are a 'good'' (2003: 4), referring to the landowners who gain incomes from leasing their properties to the US military, albeit to a much less degree than the pre-reversion period, employment opportunities that the bases provide, and indirect benefits to the local economy created by goods purchased by, and construction projects for, the US forces.

<sup>4</sup> Ōta Masahide is a former governor (1990–98) and emeritus professor of humanities at the University of the Ryukyus, and a Socialist Democratic Party member of the Upper House. He has published numerous books on Okinawan history.

<sup>5</sup> A founding member of the Okinawan Women Act Against Military and Violence, Carolyn Francis first came to Japan as a missionary, and moved to Okinawa to engage in consciousness-raising activities on women's rights and anti-US militarism.

<sup>6</sup> Miyagi Yasuhiro was born in Nago and engaged in theatrical performances in Tokyo. In opposition to the construction of a new US off-shore base in Nago, he led the campaign to initiate a plebiscite of Nago citizens in 1997, as spokesperson for the Nago Citizens Act Against the Heliport Campaign, and chair of the Nago City Plebiscite Promotion Council. Miyagi ran for mayor in 2002 but lost to conservative incumbent Kishimoto Tateo.

<sup>7</sup> Professor of history at Okinawa University, Arasaki Moriteru is of Okinawan heritage, but was born and educated in Tokyo. With Nakano Yoshio, Arasaki contributed to the research on Okinawan post-war history, particularly with (Nakano & Arasaki 1976). As a politically active intellectual, he participated in the anti-CTS (Central Terminal Station) movement (discussed in chapter 6), and has founded and represented the *One-tsubo* Anti-War Landowners' Organisation (see chapter 5), as well as regularly contributing articles in local newspapers.

<sup>8</sup> Medoruma Shun is an Okinawan writer who has also written critical commentaries on Okinawa's conditions. Medoruma's novel, *Droplets*, won the Akutagawa Prize in 1997. See Medoruma 1999.

anti-base activities of the Okinawan activists. In this sense, JPRI writings on Okinawan protests can be read as a support network in global civil society for the ‘Okinawan protesters’ by representing their voices.

From JPRI and other work focused on contemporary anti-base struggles of the Okinawans (for example Hein 2001, Inoue, Purves & Selden 1998, JPRI Staff 1998b, McCormack & Yonetani 2000, Yonetani 2001), it is evident that there are increasingly diverse angles from which to protest. There are anti-base labour unions and local socialist and communist parties who compose a local anti-base coalition. There are anti-war landowners who refuse to contract with the US military, a women’s organisation stages its own anti-base protest, there has been a local campaign in Nago City against the relocation of the Futenma Air Base. Chalmers Johnson observes ‘...the protest against the American presence in Okinawa has deepened and gained sophistication compared with the protests of the 1950s and 1960s’ (Johnson 1999a: 109). As such, in Okinawa, there are numerous positions and memberships associated with anti-base protest, which are transforming with time, towards ever intensifying diversity.

However, paradoxically, representation of ‘Okinawan activists’ in the JPRI forum has also contributed to an image of a unified ‘Okinawan anti-base movement’. Individual protesters are collectively and unitarily represented in the context of macro-level social, economic and political structures, and international relations. This is the case, in particular, for the JPRI literature that represents ‘Okinawan protest’ on US–Japan relations in the post-Cold War era, money and politics in Okinawa and Japan, and the local economy’s dependence on the central government’s special subsidies, involving construction-oriented public works that are destructive to Okinawa’s natural environment, which are tied to acceptance of the US military presence (Johnson 1999b, 2002, JPRI Staff 1998a, 1998c, McCormack 1998b, McCormack & Yonetani 2000, Smith 1998).

In the framework of analysing the tripartite relationship between Okinawa, the US and Japan, it is inevitable that representation of differences within Okinawan protesters is suspended. In additional literature to that of JPRI, Okinawan people’s

battles against the US and Japan have been similarly accompanied by critical analyses on US militarism and anachronistic colonialism in Okinawa, and the Japanese government's manipulation using financial means to suppress anti-base and anti-military movements.

Since 1995, anti-base movements in Okinawa have posed critical challenges to the post-cold war designs of the US and Japanese strategic planners, to the economic and social priorities of Okinawan development, and to the democratic process (Inoue et al. 1998: 85).

Barrel and Tanaka portray 'the Okinawan grassroots movements' against the presence of US bases as a radical challenge against Tokyo:

Since then things have changed... the consensus is that as far as the military presence is concerned — either US or Japanese — Okinawans have decided 'enough is enough' (Barrel & Tanaka 1997: 5).

Okinawan protesters also present themselves as unified actors, in relation to the Japanese government and the US military. For example, in 1995, a veteran anti-base activist Uehara Kōsuke (see chapters 4 and 5) noted 'a new battle is beginning, in order to clear the suffering of the 'Okinawans' in the last 50 years' (Okinawa Mondai Henshu Iinkai 1995: 41). Allen concedes that the undifferentiated use of 'Okinawa' as a natural representation of identity, in relation to the issues of international politics and sovereignty is, in a sense, a 'legitimate' and 'relevant' component of many individual Okinawan identities: 'in opposing the bilateral exploitation of the prefecture, quite understandably, protesters have placed the concept of Okinawa at the forefront of resistance movements' (Allen 2002: 4). Allen is, therefore, cautious of 'the focus on the 'base problem' (*kichi mondai*)' because it 'elides much of the complexity that underscores the production and reinvention of identity within Okinawa today' (Allen 2002: 4–5). Puzzlingly, implications of the paradoxical representations of the 'Okinawan anti-base movement(s)' as a coherent, single entity, and of diversity within the 'Okinawan activists' are not explored much. What is not explained is how the diverse Okinawan protest actors manage to produce an idea, outlook or substance of a united, coherent 'movement' and how it is maintained.

Much work has been initiated that shows how, through an historical



micro-focus on particular issues, periods, regions, and individuals in Okinawa, valuable insights into the complexity of today's protest action can be gained (for example Allen 2002, Amemiya 1999a, 1999b, Inoue 1999). This work is especially useful for revealing the diversity which comprises 'Okinawa' and the dramatic social and political changes in post-war history contributing to this.

In *The Japan We Never Knew*, David Suzuki and Keibo Ōiwa tell the stories of radical, eccentric and individualistic anti-war and environmentalist Japanese, including Okinawan, activists. They write about individuals who betray the predominant — and stereotyped — sterile, homogeneous, conformist and economic-centred image of the Japanese people. For example, they interviewed a 95-year-old peace activist Ahagon Shōkō (deceased 2002), in Ie-jima, Okinawa (discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis), who is a farmer, Christian war survivor and who fought against the US military's forced land acquisition in the 1950s. He projects a tireless message: 'war is a form of madness and inhumanity that destroys those who wage it' (Suzuki & Ōiwa 1996: 7). Another Okinawan interviewed in this book is Chibana Shōichi, a 48-year-old 'grocer and unlikely rebel' (Suzuki & Ōiwa 1996: 22, see also Field 1993).<sup>9</sup> Suzuki and Ōiwa travel to remoter islands such as Miyako, Iriomote and Ishigaki, and learn about rituals and handicraft that embody different kinds of living, spirituality and harmony with nature based on 'a sense of place' passed down uniquely to each community. This part of their journey reveals the dazzling internal diversity of 'Okinawa', which is not just the Okinawa Main Island. The story of activist Yamazato Setsuko, one of the villagers in Shiraho hamlet in Ishigaki Island, who successfully campaigned against the construction of a new airport (discussed in chapter 7 of this thesis), tells that grassroots movements are connected differently to a unique 'sense of place' specific to each location within Okinawa.

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<sup>9</sup> Chibana is perhaps one of the best-known Okinawan activists, who not only burned the *hinomaru* flag to make a point that the symbol of imperialism and war was not welcome in his village, but he was also a former student activist who campaigned for reversion and more recently an owner of a property within a US military communication facility in Yomitan (see Field 1993, Chibana 1992). Currently, Chibana runs a hostel with his family, and serves as a guide for those who come to learn about the history of war and nature (in particular, the ocean) in Okinawa.

Although not written specifically for an academic readership, Tony Barrel and Rick Tanaka's *Okinawa Dreams OK* (1997) provides a package of snapshots that covers almost every major subject that tells of Okinawan uniqueness, including Okinawan martial arts, food, liquor, history, military bases, traditional dance, music, life and the cultural attributes of remote islands apart from the Main Island. It is based on interviews with US soldiers, anti-base activists, politicians, musicians, business leaders, hotel owners and filmmakers, and conveys the diverse and chaotic realities of 'Okinawa'.

*Okinawa Dreams OK* also describes the groups and factions who routinely conduct protests against the US military and the Japanese government representatives.<sup>10</sup> Somewhat dismissively and negatively, Barrel and Tanaka call these groups and factions as the 'usual suspects' (1997: 170–1). The term refers to the numerous local trade unions, teachers' unions, students' organisations, political parties and other citizens' groups, who regularly participate and 'mobilise' local residents to demonstrate and rally against the US bases every time there are accidents or controversial military exercises. It is relatively rare that the activities of these groups and factions are described in the English language literature on Okinawa, compared to the aforementioned individual protesters. In *Okinawa Dreams OK*, the contrast between the description of the encouraging, optimistic messages of the 'grassroots' Okinawan individuals, and the unexciting and rather negative portrayal of the anonymous, regularly participant anti-base groups is striking.

However, these local groups and unions have constituted the bulk of what is recognised as the 'Okinawan anti-base movement'. Although they are collectively described as 'usual suspects' by Barrel and Tanaka, these groups and factions are quite heterogeneous. Since Okinawa was under the direct US military rule, long before 1995 when Okinawa became the centre of temporary attention, numerous anti-base political parties, unions and citizens' groups were formed, and have played different roles in the local political activism.

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<sup>10</sup> Especially, the Naha Security Facility Bureau (*Naha Bōei Shisetsu-kyoku*) is a direct representative of Japanese government's interests regarding the US bases in Okinawa.

The obvious problem of these regular, traditional groups and factions is that they are 'somehow exclusive of the wider population' (Barrel & Tanaka 1997: 171). The authors describe a scene of demonstrations and rallies conducted by these groups against the US Marines' live-fire artillery exercises across a major public road near Camp Hansen in Kin Town. Every time the exercise started and the road closed to the public, routine protest rallies were held.<sup>11</sup> Barrel and Tanaka found that out of the reported 1000 participants, 350 were schoolchildren who looked bored and annoyed by the cold weather. They discovered that the children were 'mobilised' there by the teachers, who also 'seemed ignorant of what was happening' except for a small number of staff members who led the protests (Barrel & Tanaka 1997: 170).

This conformist, highly regimented character of the protest reminds us of the familiar image of the stereotypical Japanese. The description of these activists fits the image of 'the stale and choreographed nature of much anti-base activism' (Siddle 1998: 205).

It seems that if the movement against centralised control and bogus international security agendas is to have any real success in Okinawa or anywhere... the struggle can't be left to the usual suspects (Barrel & Tanaka 1997: 171).

The above quote describes a widely perceived problem associated with the traditional leading protest organisations in Okinawa today. The style of protest represented by the traditional regular participants is generally not attractive to most locals (especially younger generations), unless they are happy to be 'mobilised' in a top-down manner.<sup>12</sup> Rising representations about more unconventional, rebel Okinawan anti-base activists should not, however, obscure the history and achievements, as well as problems of, the traditional Okinawan anti-base actors. This thesis attempts to contribute to unmasking these anonymous groups, and what their trajectories of protest have been.

In the English-language writings of Okinawan grassroots movements, 'women' represent another category of Okinawan activists (for example Francis 1999, Kirk & Okazawa-Rey 1998, Takazato 1996, 2001). Okinawan women have a

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<sup>11</sup> This live firing practice has been transferred to rural regions of mainland Japan, which was decided by the 1996 SACO agreement (see chapter 8).

<sup>12</sup> This has been the author's impression, obtained from conversations with numerous Okinawans.

double struggle as ‘Okinawans’ and as ‘women’. Angst (2001) and Francis (1999) have shown how, following the 1995 rape, the women activists’ most burning concern resided in a feminist issue to do with gender violence and militarism, which was a qualitatively separate movement from other more prominently represented struggles against the US military’s invasion of Okinawan sovereignty and the repatriation of land to Okinawan landowners. Yet these differences are not expressed as a primary concern of the Okinawan women’s group, for the strategic purpose of forming a unitary front against the US and Japan (Angst 2001: 249).

However, especially recently, it is hard to consolidate the existence of a unitary front among different protest actors, if there is any. Allen Nelson, a former US Marine and now a peace activist, frequently visits Okinawa, meets local anti-base and peace groups, and gives talks about his experiences in the military, of the Vietnam War, and about the actual war practices of the US military, in the bases located on Okinawa.<sup>13</sup> On his trip in 2002, I met Nelson at a private function where he gave a talk. He was physically exhausted and had been lying down until immediately before the talk. Nelson explained:

When I come to Okinawa, I have an extremely busy schedule, because I give talks for so many different groups. I am asked to give a talk by this group and that organisation and I don’t want to say no. The Okinawan peace groups are so splintered. Why can’t they all be together? Personally I don’t think they will have a substantial voice strong enough to move the US military unless all those small different groups are able to come together in one united front. (Personal communication, February 2002)

A still largely unexplored question about the Okinawans’ protest, especially against the US military bases, is why there are so many different groups, what explains their differences, what are their dividing lines, and how the dynamics of individual organisations and events sit with the representation of protest of a singular ‘Okinawa’ or ‘Okinawans’. As discussed above, homogenous representation of the ‘Okinawan anti-base movement’ tends to leave out conflicting differences in reform agendas, motivations, priorities and definitions of the Okinawan predicament among the

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<sup>13</sup> Nelson also engages in helping African and Hispanic American children receive more education, and often gives talks at schools and group meetings in the US and Japan. As a soldier, he trained in a US base on Okinawa (See Nelson 1999).

protest actors, and how they have changed over time. Also absent is the analytical focus on the mechanisms, through which a ‘movement’ emerges, develops and is sustained. These are the areas that this thesis attempts to explore.

### *The ‘Okinawa Struggle’*

Confirming the diversity among the Okinawan protesters explained in this chapter, in my two field trips to Okinawa in 1999 and 2002, I could not easily find concrete attempts by the activists to group all the different struggles in Okinawa into one ‘movement’. Like Allen first encountered in his trip, it is difficult to trace evidence of an ‘Okinawans’ movement’ committed to political action to demand secession from Japan (Allen 2002: 3).<sup>14</sup> Rather, my impression was that the local activists tended to accept, and even appeared proud of, the diversity of, and chaotic complexion among, different individuals and organisations engaged in protest.

The closest I have come to the idea of ‘the Okinawa Struggle’ is the definition used by professor of Okinawan history and anti-war landowner Arasaki Moriteru. Reflecting on the period that followed the rape case of a twelve-year-old schoolgirl in September 1995, Arasaki wrote, ‘temporarily, I shall refer to this phase of mass protest as the third wave of the Okinawa Struggle’ (*Okinawa tōsō*)’ (Arasaki 2000: 39). Arasaki (see also Johnson 2000: 52) introduces the idea that there have been three major ‘waves’ of mass protest in post-war Okinawan history. The first wave was the period of mass protests against the US military’s land confiscations that reached a peak in 1956 and is remembered as the ‘all-island struggle’ (*shimagurumi tōsō*). In the second wave of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, from the late 1960s to early 1970s, the protesters demanded the end of US direct rule and reversion to Japanese administration. This is generally called the ‘reversion struggle’ (*fukki tōsō*). According to Arasaki (and also Johnson 1999a: 114), the third wave of mass protest re-emerged following the 1995 case of a 12-year-old girl abducted and raped by three US soldiers, which contributed to drawing public attention worldwide to the dangers visited upon local populations by the foreign

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<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, at a theoretical level, a group of people has been committed to the ‘Okinawa independence theory’ (*Okinawa dokuritsu ron*), expressed in a local journal *Urumnesia*.

deployment of US bases in the post-Cold War world, hitherto barely recognised in other parts of Japan and the world (see also Funabashi 1997, Mochizuki & O'Hanlon 1998).

The 'Okinawa Struggle' is an expression specific to the late 1960s, which was first used by the mainland Japanese anti-base activists.<sup>15</sup> Immediately before 1970, Okinawan activists started to use the term 'Okinawa Struggle' as well. They did so with a proposition that, in order to overcome Okinawa's predicament at the time, Okinawa's reversion — or 'regaining of Okinawa' from the mainland Japanese perspective — was not enough, it was necessary to oppose the military bases on Okinawa, the US–Japan security alliance and US foreign policy in world politics (Arasaki Interview February 2002).

Most significantly, Arasaki's idea of the 'Okinawa Struggle' — and the 'three waves' in the post-war period — attaches continuity and coherence to the protests of the Okinawan people. It gives shape, and a name, to numerous and diverse events, and renders them as a struggle of a single group of people that has peaked three times. The idea of 'three waves' captures the periods of intense political contention, which are popularly called 'the island-wide struggles' (*shima-gurumi tōsō*) in Okinawa, representing the time when the population put aside its differences in political affiliation and social status, and collectively expressed their demands. It accurately conveys that in between these three peaks of protest on an island-wide scale, more than likely there were many smaller struggles on a daily basis. The framework of 'three waves' provides a general timeline to assume an overall trajectory in which diverse Okinawan protest organisations, and alliances among them, have emerged, developed and waned.

The notion of a coherent, single struggle of a single group of people that may be interpreted from the 'Okinawa Struggle', however, is more problematic. Arasaki's idea of the 'Okinawa Struggle' portrays a sense of unity and continuity

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<sup>15</sup> The Japanese peace activists' main struggle was against the renewal of the Japan–US Mutual Security Treaty in 1970, especially among the radical New Left organisations loosely united by the aim of socialist revolution based on individual action (Ikeda 1997: 98, Steinhoff 1984, Takazawa 1996: 10).

among different actors and struggles in post-war Okinawa, which certainly appears to have strong currency among Okinawans, albeit in an abstract sense. However, also, the indication is that in the periods described as ‘three waves’ the differences among the protesters have been negotiated into a representation of one ‘Okinawan’ voice only three times in more than 50 years.

This dissertation takes the position that Arasaki’s concept of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ cannot be used to validate the general idea of a unified ‘movement’ of all Okinawan people with a strong organisational coalition and solidarity as an ethnic group. Rather, this risks misrepresenting the splintered nature of the Okinawan community of protest. The three ‘waves’ only represent the rare and temporary moments when different protesters were able to form a coalition. A large part of this dissertation involves an historical examination of protest actions in Okinawa that critically examines a long-standing ‘Okinawa Struggle’, exploring the features and elements of this ‘movement’ to ascertain its political trajectory over time and its constituent elements. It will be seen that under the direct US military administration, when the term ‘Okinawa Struggle’ was first introduced, there was some basis to the idea of a unified movement, or at least potential for it. However, today’s emerging diverse, smaller, looser and more splintered protest groups from a wider range of social sectors are less inclined to form into a united coalition under the banner of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’.

Arasaki continues to use the word ‘Okinawa Struggle’ as the most adequate term to describe ‘a comprehensive people’s movement (*minshū undō*) against the current marginalisation of Okinawans’ interests and voices, as a product of US military bases, the Japan–US security alliance and the US global military strategy’ (Arasaki, Interview, February 2002). Yet his definition of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ that places emphasis on Okinawa’s structural discrimination defined in terms of the US–Japan security alliance should be interpreted as one among many, it by no means represents the perspective of every Okinawan activist.

Importantly, nevertheless, the idea of a tradition of continuous struggles of the Okinawan people has survived as a myth, which enables the members of the

community to define, understand and legitimise their individual collective action in a historical context (see later). Expressions other than the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, such as an ‘Okinawan movement’ (*Okinawa no undō*) or the ‘struggle of Okinawa’ (*Okinawa no tatakai*) are used interchangeably to describe the all-encompassing idea that describes the struggle of the Okinawan people. Historical experiences of marginalisation and discrimination, in particular, of the Battle of Okinawa, and of experiences and legacy of protests such as the all-island struggles against the US military regime, shared by different generations, locations and sectors within Okinawa, are important elements of this myth.

The growing internal diversity notwithstanding, I do not discount the existence of a ‘community of protest’ in Okinawa, which envelops different and diverse actors who share the goal of protesting against the current discriminatory situations in Okinawa symbolised by the US military presence. However, this community is imaginary and is without a solid comprehensive organisational coalition or concrete shared reform agenda. This is similar to the way that, despite diversity and internal differences, feminism provides an imaginary ‘community of struggle’ and a basis of transnational alliances of different women engaged in different oppressive situations (Mackie 2000: 183–4, Mohanty 1991: 83). The ‘community of protest’ is much less tangible than the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, the tentative unity expressed in the three waves of mass protest has emerged from a wider ‘community of protest’ that is always there, with changing participants who come and go. Within this wider sphere of the community of protest, as time passes and internal differences intensify, the concept of a unitary ‘Okinawa Struggle’ becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. Yet a ‘community of protest’ in Okinawa survives as a space where different issues and actors constantly try to advance their respective causes.

But if the community of protest in Okinawa is becoming more diverse, what are the political implications of this? Does it mean the protesters are becoming more, or less, effective in achieving their goals? What is the extent and potential for alliances within this diverse and seemingly chaotic ‘community of protest’? If



differences, divisions and conflicts among the various protest groups and actors within the community of protest in Okinawa are intensifying, what constitutes the appeal to the myth of a unitary ‘Okinawan struggle’? In response to these questions, this dissertation investigates the historical dynamics between diversity and unity within the Okinawan ‘community of protest’.

### **Rationales for Research: Why do Diversity and Unity Matter for Protest?**

#### *Protest and Democracy*

This dissertation uses the word ‘protest’ to describe a form of political participation in order to exert influence or coercion on decision-making processes, particularly against those that are perceived to create unjust results for some or all citizens. Protest involves a range of methods from individual behaviours such as signing petitions, boycotts, demonstrations, sit-ins, strikes and refusal to pay taxes, to dramatic mass action such as physical prevention of public functions, which may involve violence, and mass demonstrations.

Okinawa is often regarded by the mainland Japanese as a rare place in Japan where earlier attempts to realise a democratic public sphere in post-war Japan, particularly in the form of protest against *Ampo* (Japan’s military alliance with the US), are still alive in the Okinawans’ anti-base protest (Personal communication with members of a mainland Japanese anti-*Ampo* group April 1999). Debates on democracy in Japan among critical citizens and intellectuals tend to focus on its ‘political culture’, that is, on Japanese individuals’ inclination and ability to actively participate in creating a public and civil sphere independent from the state, rather than on formal state institutions (Kersten 1996: 6). Japanese left-wing citizens, activists and intellectuals such as Maruyama Masao, Tsurumi Shunsuke and Yoshimoto Takaaki and others have attempted to link Japan’s national identity and unique cultural traits of the nation with the creation of a new, post-war democratic society through political activism and protest (Kelman 2001).<sup>16</sup> However,

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<sup>16</sup> Assertion of Japan’s uniqueness through protest and participatory democracy is drastically different from the cultural nationalist position found in the *nihonjinron* literature, which denies such possibility through drawing on the static idea of Japanese cultural characteristics focused around conformity and deference to the authorities. See for example Lawson 1999 and Yoshino 1992.

particularly following the renewal of the US–Japan Security Treaty (*Ampo*) in 1960, and despite widespread opposition and mass protest, ‘debates on democracy in post-war Japan developed as a discourse of failure’ among Japanese left-wing intellectuals (Kersten 1996: 8). It is not surprising, therefore, that the remaining anti-*Ampo* activists, rather than the Okinawan activists, are the main users of the expression, the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ to describe anti-base protest in Okinawa.

Johnson also describes Okinawa as an exceptional region in Japan in that it has a strong tradition of residents’ participation in deciding their political fate: ‘Okinawa is the only Japanese community whose residents have fought for the democracy they enjoy’ (Johnson 2000: 52). This recognition of a tradition of popular struggle specific to Okinawa is extremely important, and is what this thesis refers to as a ‘myth’.

I do not use the word ‘myth’ in a pejorative way, to mean something that is simply not true. In other words, by understanding the idea of a united, coherent lineage of struggles of the Okinawan people as a ‘myth’, I do not mean these struggles were an illusion, or never happened. The myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ does not refer to the series of actual events that took place, but to the ways in which they are described and told, and re-described and re-told.<sup>17</sup> ‘Myth’ is to be taken seriously, for its powerful political effect that gives a name that summarises the long and complicated string of historical events into a collective memory. The collective memory expressed succinctly helps motivate individuals into collective action and legitimises it.

In myth are expressed the thought patterns by which a group formulates self-cognition and self-realisation, attains self-knowledge and self-confidence, explains its own source and being and that of its surroundings, and sometimes tries to chart its destinies. By myth man (sic) has lived, died and – all too often – killed (Puhvel 1987: 2).

Myth in this thesis means a story and a narrative that resonate in the community of protest, which connects present action to the collective remembrance of the past of one group of people, that is, the ‘Okinawans’.

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<sup>17</sup> See Barthes 1974 (1957).

Talking about the myth of a united struggle helps us to understand both the development of diversity and pluralism, and yet also how this is concealed in a ‘community of protest’. In particular, this thesis highlights the diversity masqueraded by the narrative of unity, and oneness of all the ‘struggles’ that is at times exaggerated. By conceptualising the idea of an Okinawan struggle as a myth, the internal differences in the community of protest become clearer.

In the creation of the ‘myth’, interpretation and understanding of one’s own past is particularly important: the myth connects the contemporary activists to the past struggles. For example, the residents’ direct participation in mass collective action that brought the end to the US military dictatorship, a return to Japanese administration, and the formal entitlement to the post-war Japanese Constitution and democracy — despite the fact that the US military presence remained, in contrast to what most Okinawans had wished — stand out as proud Okinawan achievements. The achievements of the reversion movement are a particularly crucial component of the myth of an Okinawan people’s struggle. For this reason, this thesis particularly values the ways the past struggles are understood, in the context of ongoing protests in Okinawa.

It is outside the purpose of this dissertation to evaluate whether Okinawa is more democratic than mainland Japan. Instead, the primary interest is to understand the implications of the diversification of protest actors for political participation in Okinawa and the island’s brand of democracy. Is increased diversity in the community of protest contributing to a greater power of Okinawans’ protest to bring about the reforms that they desire, especially the reduction and eventual removal of the US military bases from Okinawa? Is the ‘myth’ of a united struggle still important and relevant to the diverse constellation of social movements in today’s Okinawa?

#### *(Global) Civil Society*

The central questions of this dissertation require looking into the relations between an increasing diversity of protest actors and a more inclusive, diverse and vibrant civil society in Okinawa. ‘Civil society’ is open to a range of conceptualisations.

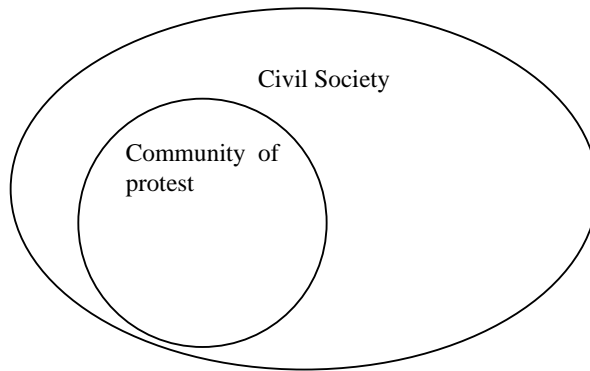
Most broadly or ‘softly’ defined, it refers to ‘areas of social life — the domestic world, social activities, economic interchange and political interaction — which are organised by private or voluntary arrangements between individuals and groups outside of the direct control of the state’ (Held 1995: 181). In a narrower definition, the emphasis is placed on the political nature of the groups, ‘which act to promote and defend the interests’ of individuals ‘including against the state’, and ‘a network of groups which structures individuals’ private lives and their pursuit of interests in the public sphere [but] does not constitute a civil society unless groups are able to pursue those interests in the political sphere’ (Gill 2000: 5–6). The existence of civil society is widely regarded as a prerequisite for a democratic society,<sup>18</sup> as a potential sphere in which various ‘struggles’ against state power occur (Shaw 1994: 649). Through ‘economic and cultural production, household life and voluntary associations’ (Keanne 1988: 14–5), members in civil society must have the means to put ‘all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions’.

Individuals, groups, and organisations who engage in protest against the Japanese government and the US military are part of an Okinawan civil society that fits both narrow and broad definitions explained above. In this thesis, a civil society refers to a distinct public sphere where individuals ‘speak, assemble, associate, and reason together on matters of public concern and act in concert in order to influence political society and, indirectly, decision making’ (Cohen & Arato 1992: 564). The protest activities that Arasaki calls the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ take place in an Okinawan civil society. In this dissertation, I conceptualise these protest actors to form a distinctive, imagined ‘community of protest’ within a civil society, where channels of protest other than political parties and unions are expanding. (Figure 1.1).

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<sup>18</sup> A common assumption is that the democratisation of formal state institutions is accompanied by the growth of a robust autonomous realm of civil society, independent from state power .

Figure 1.1 Location of ‘community of protest’ in a civil society



How to construct a public sphere separate from the state in post-war Japan has been debated among Japanese intellectuals (for example, see Matshushita 1996; von Wolferen 1994). A philosopher and anti-war activist Kuno Osamu contributed to the circulation of the idea of ‘civil society’ constituted by autonomous ‘citizens’ (especially Kuno 1996).<sup>19</sup> At the peak of mass protest against the renewal of the US-Japan security treaty in 1960, Kuno defined ‘citizens’ as those who maintained independent lives from their professional occupations. By this separation Kuno specifically emphasised the individuals’ independence from the control of the state authority, and ability to self-govern and self-regulate their own codes of activities. At the time, he judged that the concept had not taken root in Japan (Kuno, 1960, cited in Sasaki-Uemura 2001: 181-182). On contemporary Japanese civil society, Pharr emphasises the state’s highly activist role in enabling or sponsoring some groups and associations, and constraining others (Pharr 2003). It is a general observation, however, that the number, diversity and vibrancy in general of the actors in Japanese civil society are rising (Schwarz 2003: 8; Tsujinaka 2003).

The focus of this thesis is the community of protest within Okinawan civil society, and the development in the diversity and complexity among the actors. Importantly for post-reversion Okinawa, Diamond stresses the significance of the autonomy of civil society from a ‘political society’, that is, from the party system. He emphasises the importance of ‘channels other than political parties for the

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<sup>19</sup>Kuno Osamu was one of the leading intellectuals (others included Tsurumi Shunsuke and Maruyama Masao) who joined in the *Shisō no Kagaku* (Science of Thought) group, who supported grassroots protest against the Japanese government’s undemocratic machination to suppress opposition to *Ampo*.

articulation, aggregation, and representation of interests' particularly for the relatively powerless minority deprived of institutional and organisational means to represent interest in the area of formal politics (Diamond 1994: 8). The degree to which protest actors are independent from political parties is important for this thesis, in analysing qualitative differences and change in the quality of the groups and organisations.

Civil society also extends outside national boundaries. As economic interdependence and human interactions across state borders increase, activities for social movements inevitably transgress the limit of national politics. A greater than ever number of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) are representing non-state forces in the global arena (see Della Porta & Kriesi 1999). Falk calls this emerging transnational political dynamism 'globalisation-from-below', projected against the 'globalisation-from-above' promoted by governments of big states and large-scale transnational business organisations (Falk 1999: 2–3). According to Falk:

The historic role of globalisation-from-below is to challenge and transform the negative features of globalisation-from-above, both by providing alternative ideological and political space to that currently occupied by market-oriented and statist outlooks and by offering resistance to the excesses and distortions that can be properly attributed to globalisation in its current phase. (Falk 1999: 139)<sup>20</sup>

Okinawa provides a location for the US military forces operating in the global arena as the leading force of 'globalisation-from-above'. The basic purpose of the US military stationing on Okinawa is to maintain what the Pentagon perceives as the stability of the regional security environment, considered necessary to 'defend US, allied and friendly interests in this critical region' (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region) 1998: 10), which is unchanged today. The US government sees that the security alliance

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<sup>20</sup> The meaning of 'the field of action and thought occupied by individual and collective citizen initiatives of a voluntary, nonprofit character, both within states and transnationally' is discussed in the expanding literature of 'global civil society' (Falk 1999: 138). Such transnational political space has always existed, however, the meaning of 'global civil society' is not a return to the medieval world before the nation-states became the principal bodies of sovereignty, either. States still are the most prominent units of authorities in the world of 'globalisation', transnational actors and social movements still need to interact most often with states. Falk denies the intention to draw a bifurcated picture of the world divided between good citizens and oppressive states (1999:138). His terminology nevertheless reflects a certain standpoint with which to interpret what is meant by 'negative features' and 'excess and distortions' of the effect of globalisation.

between the US and Japan as the core regional security arrangement in the East Asia–Pacific region, which is ‘vital to the pursuit of a more open international economic system’ (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region) 1995: 10).<sup>21</sup> The Marine troops, large-scale arsenals that contain nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and the air bases on Okinawa are part of the forward presence to be used across the globe. Every time the US sends its forces to a Gulf War, Kosovo, Afghanistan, or a War on Iraq, local residents are exposed to the daily sight of military vehicles such as tanks and the noise of intensified air raid practices.

Against the heightened alert from George W. Bush on global security, the international informal network of citizens has manifested its potential in opposing global militarisation. The expansion of such networks is an example of ‘globalisation-from-below’, most potently demonstrated by the worldwide protest against the US war on Iraq in February 2003. As Cox stresses, the peace movement is significant as the ‘broadest basis for popular mobilisation toward an alternative society’, and the most promising form of challenge against state power to conduct war (Cox 1987: 353). Okinawan protesters are part of this peace movement and the worldwide networks against global militarisation through US military outposts.

Today, Okinawan anti-base individuals and organisations are constantly making efforts to connect with the global struggles against the international US military network, overcoming cultural and language barriers. Some groups and organisations in Okinawa have steadily developed ties with overseas social movement organisations. Okinawans’ integration with environmentalism and anti-militarist struggles related to gender and violence overseas are prominent. The extent and nature of the connections of anti-base Okinawans’ activities and the community of protest overseas is part of this study.

#### *Protest and Social Movements*

Even though they are frequently described as a ‘movement’ (as in the ‘Okinawan

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<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the geopolitical sphere affected by this alliance has expanded from regional to global as expressed in the new ‘guideline’ of the US–Japan Mutual Security Pact ratified in 1999.

anti-base movement'), studies of protests on Okinawa in general have not made enough use of the existing literature on social movements and collective action. The main interest of this dissertation is what happens when Okinawan protests are understood as varieties of social movements. For this exercise, it is necessary to clarify what this dissertation implies by protest and social movements.

A variety of actors engage in protest, including those who have little access to decision-making power. As Lipsky observes, 'protest is a political resource of the powerless' (Lipsky 1965: in Della Porta & Diani 1999: 168). Through protest, the powerless can exert 'indirect persuasion mediated by the mass media and by more powerful actors' (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 169), such as political parties, unions, pressure groups and social movement organisations. In particular, social movements typically rely on 'protest (particularly at its most innovative and radical)', because 'unlike political parties and pressure groups, they have fewer channels through which to access decision makers' (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 170). In this sense, protest entails 'collective action<sup>22</sup> aimed at achieving significant social or personal change opposed to central institutions' (Lofland 1985: 24).

Whereas protest can be limited to activities against specific goals and grievances involving only limited members, social movements aim for 'more comprehensive and fundamental changes in the social order' (Herberle 1968: 439). However, protest often combines with, includes or develops into social movements, which is, I contend, the case of anti-base protest in Okinawa.

A social movement is 'a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests and, for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity chiefly concerned to defend or change society, or the relative position of the group in society' (Scott 1990: 6). In the early nineteenth century, the term was first applied to indicate the movement of the industrial working class, 'which gave expression and direction to the strivings of the industrial proletariat toward a new social order which would abolish economic

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<sup>22</sup> In his study of collective action, Tilly defines collective action as 'acting together in pursuit of common interests' (Tilly 1978: 7).



exploitation and give the workers a chance to achieve full personality development' (Herberle 1968: 438).

Social movements are 'composed of multiple social movement organisations (SMOs) that are independent entities even though they share enough beliefs with those other SMOs to justify conceiving all of them as a single social movement' (Lofland 1996: 143). They sometimes 'embrace interest groups and may even spawn political parties, trade unions and socialist parties, for instance, can be seen as part of a broader labour movement' (Heywood 1997: 266). Therefore, a social movement can be composed of a diverse range of organisational types, from informal small groups to established political parties. This is applicable to the community of protest in Okinawa, and the range of avenues of political opposition is expanding beyond left-wing local political parties and schoolteachers' and other trade unions who have traditionally been leaders of anti-base protest. But whether there exists a distinguishable social movement in Okinawa, embracing all sorts of collective actors, is another matter.

It is possible to view Okinawan anti-base protest as an example of compensation politics in regional Japan (see George-Mulgan 2000), as dynamics between local protest against unwanted 'private and public projects, including industrial facilities and waste repositories' and the state's 'extensive compensation schemes' (Lesbirel 1998). Indeed, most conservative politicians in Okinawa initially participate in protest against the implementations of new military or industrial facilities, until obtaining satisfactory compensation or promise of compensation. NIMBY (not in my backyard) politics is certainly an important part of Okinawan protest, especially at the local communities adjacent to the unwanted military and industrial public facilities.

However, the main forces that drive anti-base protest in Okinawa have been much more than NIMBY politics. It is not generally noticed that many Okinawan anti-base activists are consciously taking up the task of addressing humanistic concerns aroused by global US strategies that require military bases on Okinawa. Particularly after the reversion, the main motivations for joining protest activities

against the US military bases expanded from demanding political and economic concessions to expressions of environmental concerns, opposition to militarism and patriarchal society, and general concerns to do with peace and human rights (Yabuno 1997). For example, Okinawan women's groups were engaged in local activities to raise consciousness about the effects of depleted uranium used in weapons, some of which were sent from Okinawa during the Gulf War, on new-born children and residents in Iraq (Author's observation April 1999). These women activists, as well as Ahagon and Chibana (Suzuki & Ōiwa 1996: 22, 60–82) oppose war, militarism and military bases, as they inflict pain on humans of all kinds, rather than from a perspective solely concerned with marginalisation of Okinawa. The framework of NIMBY politics alone could not explain the dynamics of anti-base movements in Okinawa today that share basic concerns with ubiquitous social movements in the realm of global civil society, namely, peace movements, environmentalist movements, and women's movements and, more broadly, identity politics from the perspective of a minority within Japan.

Conceptualising the Okinawan community of protest as a collection of social movements provides an alternative model to the unitary representation of the Okinawan 'anti-base movement'.

### **Theories and Concepts of Protest and Social Movements: Which One Best Explains the Diversity of Okinawan Protest?**

There are several different theoretical positions from which to approach social movements that are useful to make sense of the diversity and internal differences among protest actors in the community of protest, and to explain the dynamic processes that can form alliances and produce an outlook of a united 'movement'. This section examines some theoretical approaches and conceptual tools for explaining the collective action of social movements, which may provide helpful clues to understanding the Okinawan protest, and finding answers to the central questions of this dissertation.

#### *'New Social Movements' Theory*

The 'new social movements' theory, cultivated by mainly European researchers, and

the resource mobilisation theory (RMT) predominant in North America, have challenged the limitation of the classical tradition of the study of 'collective behaviour'. Classical sociological studies have used the term 'collective behaviour' to describe non-institutional collective behaviour which tends to be treated as a marginal and transitional social phenomenon. 'Collective behaviour' stands for aberration from normal institutionalised procedures of politics, or 'symptomatic of social malfunctions and/or pathology' (Pakulski 1991: 13).<sup>23</sup> Collective behaviour is understood in terms of its anomaly, as a reaction to social tension, crisis, grievance and deprivation, typically described as 'non-institutional' as opposed to legitimate and part of stable institutions.<sup>24</sup> Collective behaviour is primarily an act outside these institutional contexts, and tends to be regarded as not a 'proper object of analysis' (Scott 1990: 2)

In this mode of research, the study of social movements mainly concentrated on the labour movement. Tilly (1984) explained that the development of the labour movement coincided with that of the modern state, particularly in the post-WWII welfare state. As the elite extended the voting rights to male workers, party politics and activities associated with the formation of an industrial sector became the main political avenues for the labour movement to make political demands (Tilly 1984). On the other hand, this institutional bias made it difficult for sociological analysis to include political activities of social movements that did not operate within the typical

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<sup>23</sup> The study of collective behaviour was developed most early by Gustav LeBon's analysis of 'crowd psychology'. See LeBon 1960.

<sup>24</sup> The 'mass society' theory, mainly deriving from the examples of mass movements in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, also shares the view of such movements as 'non-rational', 'non-institutional' and 'associated with social malfunctions and pathologies' (Pakulski 1990: 8). The Chicago School scholars such as Robert Park and Herbert Blumer developed the study to focus on the dynamics between macro-level social change and the emergence of mass social movements, through observation of activities 'aimed at producing new norms and new solidarities' (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 5). In 1962, Neil Smelser explained collective behaviour in terms of the functional process that reveals the imbalance and contradictions of existing society, through the development and expression of 'shared beliefs' or 'generalised beliefs', within various kinds of groups, sects and secret societies. Since then, the work of Joseph Gusfield (1963), and that of Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1987) came to regard the role collective behaviour plays in social change as 'an integral part of the normal functioning of society' (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 5). Movement mobilisation was empirically explained as a process of inaugurating new kinds of cultural norms and new ways of expressing identities. The important achievement of the 'collective behaviour' approach was that it defined an important subject of study as a driving force of social change. Significantly, it introduced essential components of collective action such as forming of organisations, the use of cultural symbols and identity construction in the process of explaining reaction to rapid social change.

model of the labour movement (Nash 2000).

For many people, political parties as a medium of political participation have become less attractive, due to growing cynicism and distrust towards the organised and bureaucratised structure of party institutions. Importantly, however, the greater cynicism towards existing institutional political parties as milieus of political participation has not necessarily resulted in apathy against political activities. As the credibility in party politics and formal democratic representation has declined, interest in alternative forms of political activity has expanded. The rise of student revolts, civil right movements, feminist and peace movements as well as environmentalist and other movements increasingly provided alternative modes of political participation within civil society to joining political party activities, during the 1960s and 1970s.

The term 'new social movements' came into regular use to capture the momentum and the prominence of these actors whose distinguishable features included informality, a conscious avoidance of hierarchy and bureaucracy in organisational structures and decision-making, a focus on culture, lifestyle, and value-oriented issues, the expression of identity, and concentration of activities in the mass media and consciousness-raising in the social sphere, rather than through formal state institutions (Crook et al. 1992: 148, Nash 2000: 102–3, Scott 1990). In terms of ideology, forms of collective action and agendas, the features of so-called new social movements have existed at least since the early nineteenth century as in women's movements and nationalist movements (Calhoun 1995). 'New social movements' are 'new' in terms of their late entry as legitimate areas of sociological research.

The concept of a 'new social movement' provides a useful explanation for the recent change in the community of protest in Okinawa. New social movements are particularly distinguished from the 'old' movement, that is, the labour movement of the industrial working class. What Barrel and Tanaka call the 'usual suspects', that is, the local trade unions and leftist political parties that once could provide a more solid basis for a coalition for an Okinawans' struggle against the state before the

reversion, cannot be as effective any more. In Okinawa, the labour movement organisations such as left-wing political parties and trade unions have cultivated channels within the state institutions such as political parties, local governments and the judicial system.

Interestingly, after the reversion in Okinawa, ‘residents’ movements’, a different type of social movement organisation became increasingly prominent. They placed emphasis on expressions of local identity, linking directly to social concerns that are globally applicable, engaging in activities using informal personal networks crossing national boundaries. After the reversion, the traditional labour movement organisations had difficulty in defining the next stage of their ‘Okinawa Struggle’. Since then, more protest actors in Okinawa have been small-scale organisations, distinguishable from traditional counterparts that are, in general, larger and based to a greater extent on hierarchical, bureaucratic organisation. These new types of Okinawan actors may be understood as ‘new social movements’.

Kurihara (1999) explains the emergence of new types of social movements in Japan, related to the decline of the organising power of the labour unions and political parties in the Japanese people’s opposition to the dominant conservative sector. According to Kurihara, new social movements in Japan are heterogeneous and amorphous, yet can be understood in terms of three generic types: ‘citizens’ movements, residents’ movements and people’s movements’, although many overlap across them. Kurihara understands the anti-military base movements in Okinawa as an example of people’s movements, characterised by marginal social positions, vernacular communication modes and challenging visions to the dominant social system (1999: 17-19). This categorisation, though adequate, depicts Okinawan anti-base movements as one people’s movement, in which heterogeneous ‘movements’ are concealed.

New social movements are ‘new’ because they are ‘manifestations of some qualitative shift in the nature of capitalist, or more generally industrial, society’ (Scott 1990: 7), that is, indications of change in social and economic conditions in late capitalist society. Offe (1985) connects the emergence of the ‘new middle

classes' and new social movements, linking the former with the rise of educational levels and the increase in service-sector employment in late capitalist economy. The characteristic of these new classes is their critique of the malaise inherent in late capitalist societies, particularly manifested in the environmental, anti-war and anti-nuclear movements. In post-industrial societies, an 'increasing sense of political obligation' and a preference for expressive participation among the 'young, educated white-collar categories' is observed (Crook, Pakulski & Waters 1992: 139–40), which applies in Okinawa as well. Habermas (1981, 1987) has also provided accounts for the significance and democratic possibilities of new social movements in post-industrial society. According to his typical account of new social movements, new conflicts

no longer arise in the areas of material reproduction, they are no longer channelled through parties and organisations, and they can no longer be alleviated by compensations that conform to the system. Rather, the new conflicts arise in areas of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation. They are manifested in sub-institutional, extra-parliamentary forms of protest... In short, the new conflicts are not sparked by problems of distribution, but concern the grammar of forms of life (Habermas 1981).

Inglehart (1990) has provided another way of explaining new social movements motivated by what he calls 'post-materialist concerns'. Based on extensive cross-cultural, national and generational surveys, he makes a general observation that 'post-materialist' values contribute to the rise of new social movements. The 'post-materialists' typically belong to post-WWII generations with increased access to education and information on political matters, have experienced less economic scarcity than previous generations, and tend to place greater value on better quality of life that cannot be achieved in material terms, such as nature, peace and inter-personal relationships. He also finds among 'post-materialists' higher participation in socially conscious activities outside political parties and other formal political organisations (Inglehart 1990: 391–2). The post-materialist theory suggests that when society becomes more affluent people's dominant public concerns are less related to demanding equal economic distribution. Instead, other social concerns to do with quality of life, typically with the environment and

anti-militarism, become more important motivators of collective action.

The ‘post-materialist turn’, namely, a greater focus on seemingly non-economic issues of the ‘new middle classes’, appears to provide a valid explanation for the changing dynamics of anti-base protest in Okinawa. During the first- and second-‘wave’, principle concerns that drove people’s collective actions were directly connected to ‘materialist’ demands, such as land repatriation and base workers’ working conditions. The common enemy was easier to target, that is, the American rule, and it was easier to form an all-encompassing coalition across different sectors in Okinawa against the US. The main motivations of protest organisations today are still related to economic issues, particularly, opposition to the structural dependence on the central government’s subsidies — tied to the US military presence — the Okinawan economy is subjected to.

However, particularly after the reversion, the US military has also been regarded as the provider of material benefits for the local economy. There are obvious short-term material benefits: rent incomes for the landowners of the private properties used by the US military, relatively secure employment opportunities that the bases provide for the local population, goods and services catering for the military, and construction projects that the subsidised public works bring in. Increasingly, the focus of protest against structural economic dependence relates to fear of pollution, various hazards such as noise and militarism that lower the quality of life, and grievances towards the insufficient protection of locals’ rights against crimes and other hazards caused by the US military under the current Status of Forces Agreement.

Nevertheless, the concerns that drive the anti-base protests of many Okinawans retained ‘materialist’ dimensions. The damage that the US bases inflict on health and the environment is often symptomatic of socio-economic impacts. It is therefore difficult to talk about the change in what motivates protest as a clean transition from the ‘materialist’ to the ‘post-materialist’. Yet, it is clear that the presence of ‘post-materialist’ values in much of the protest against the US bases today is greater than in previous decades.

Related to this point, a major shortcoming of the focus on macro-theory on social change for understanding social movements is that it is too general: 'It does not take the members of social movements seriously in their own terms' (Nash 2000: 110). In order to understand the points of convergence and differences among Okinawan protesters and their implications, it is necessary to investigate how protest movements have organised themselves, defined problems, what is at stake, and how they have conducted their collective action, and to analyse differences and commonalities among them.

Melucci (1995) has emphasised that the invisible and shared definition of the subject of protest that gives a sense of unity among diverse and multiple actors does not exist from the start in a fixed and visible form, but is an end result of mutual interactions among protest actors in the process of collective action: 'what was formerly considered a datum (the existence of the movement) is precisely that which needs to be explained' (Melucci 1996: 70). Melucci contends: 'To understand how a 'social movement' succeeds or fails in becoming a collective actor is therefore a fundamental task' of the researcher (Melucci 1996: 80).

Melucci has developed a 'constructivist' view of collective action, and the concept of 'collective identity' to capture the process in which a collective actor — 'we' — is formed: collective identity is constructed through 'an interactive and shared definition' (Melucci 1989: 34) of 'the ends of the actions', 'the means', and 'relationships with the environment' (Melucci 1995: 44), that is, 'the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place' among the organisations and members concerned (Melucci 1989: 34), in the course of collective action. Melucci is sympathetic to the 'new social movements' school, and has focused on the greater significance and power of cultural, non-institutional dimensions of collective action in contemporary technology-oriented society, which still tend to be excluded from the formal arenas of 'politics'. He emphasises the importance of 'the plurality of aspects present in the collective action' and of explaining the processes in which social movement actors are 'constructed' and 'how they are combined and sustained through time' (Melucci 1996: 70). This focus is



useful for the purpose of this dissertation to analyse the process in which different actors are constructed in a community of protest, and how a concept of an ‘Okinawan movement’ is formed, sustained and of fluctuating influence.

The concept of collective identity helps understand the often invisible ways in which ‘Okinawa’ or ‘Okinawan’ — who is inside and outside the community of protest — are constructed. It helps illuminate how being ‘Okinawan’ as a subject of protest is constantly redefined as the collective action unfolds, and to understand the internal dynamics of protest, that is, ‘interaction, negotiation, and the opposition of different orientations’ (Melucci 1995: 43). Collective identity is distinguished from identity that is defined by objective social location, often described in essentialist terms of ethnicity, gender, race and nationality and other objective differences. In this sense, the subject of protest is not necessarily ‘Okinawans’ that are the residents in a geographical region of Japan with kinship rooted in the place, although being from and living in Okinawa is still considered an important characteristic of the actor, separated from ‘outside supporters’ often in a deterministic manner.<sup>25</sup> Thinking about collective identity draws attention to the ideas shared collectively among the subject (‘we’) of social movements on what their activities aim for, what is at stake, and how they should be carried out, and in what external (political, social and cultural) context. The following chapters of this thesis attempt to identify the ways in which collective identity of protest in Okinawa is constructed. Understanding unity in diversity of protest in Okinawa is a question of how a unified ‘movement’ is constructed, from diverse and multiple actors with different definitions of, and meanings attached to, their protest activities. Therefore, collective identity provides a framework for figuring out the ‘processes’ in which symbols and particular knowledge construct new or recurring meanings in the public sphere for the political motivation of protest.

#### *Resource Mobilisation Theory*

Generally speaking, concepts of collective identity help in the understanding of *why*

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<sup>25</sup> Calhoun warns against ‘the social constructionist’ approach to identity that overlooks ‘the real, present-day political and other reasons why essentialist identities continue to be invoked and often deeply felt’ (1994: 14).

one protests. However, as Scott points out, the ‘new social movement’ approach is limited in analysing the actual effects of social movement organisations in representing themselves, especially in the formal political sphere. Here Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) helps in providing tools for understanding *how* a protest is conducted: the organisation and strategy of protest for drawing out desired reforms effectively. This is despite the major shortcoming of RMT’s analysis that it often understands individual behaviour detached from the specific historical, geographical, social and cultural context in which ‘a movement’ was born and maintained. Indeed, Melucci (1989) intended to address this weakness through his work on collective identity.

RMT has also challenged the classical sociological approach to ‘collective behaviour’, with emphasis on the rational capabilities of social movements, such as the calculation involved in action, goal-setting, dealing with information, strategy, and the ability to learn from past experiences. Olson’s (1965) analysis of individuals’ decisions to join the collective activities focuses on rational aspects, such as calculating the costs and returns. According to this ‘rational actor’ model, social movements are constantly restricted by the problem of ‘free riders’, benefiting from the results without paying the cost of participation. Olson’s theory offers limited explanations as to why individuals take part in collective actions despite the unfavourable benefit of participation. A number of RMT scholars further advanced the study of rational aspects of social movements particularly in participation, organisation, and processes of mobilisation (see for example Oberschall 1973, McCarthy & Zald 1977). Zald and McCarthy, for example, have established the significance of professional organisations capable of attracting staff and raising necessary funds by gaining connections with private and government sectors, as a contributing factor in the expansion of social movements, which solves the ‘free-rider’ problem inherent in collective actions pointed out by Olson (Zald & McCarthy 1987). This focus on organisation illuminates aspects such as how organisations are established, including differential resources such as funding, staff, experience, and among others, connections with influential institutions inside the

orbit of the state.

These aspects of RMT therefore complement the sociological and cultural focus of the 'new social movements' theory. As Scott points out, an 'adequate theory of social movements would have to recognise the problematic and effortful nature of mobilisation and the consequent organisational constraints' (Scott 1990: 109). It addresses the organisational and institutional elements for a social movement to produce political effects. The following sections discuss some of the RMT concepts useful for the central questions of this dissertation.

#### *Political Opportunity Structure*

Because protest against the US military presence in Okinawa seriously challenges the existing security policy the state elites wish to maintain, the difficulty in mobilising resources multiplies. Tilly (1978) has explained the importance of social movements' organisations and their relations with the state. According to Tilly, success in achieving social movements' goals depends on political opportunity structures, that is, change in the cost of collective action linked with external situations, especially when 'the government suddenly becomes vulnerable' against the mobilisation of collective action that challenges the state (Tilly 1978: 100–1). Understanding social movements requires taking into account both internal factors, such as resources of organisations, and external factors, that is, the environment out of which the collective actions are generated and unfold. Tarrow also stresses the importance of political opportunity structure: 'dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure' (Tarrow 1994: 85). Not only in terms of increase and decrease in participation, political opportunity structure explains why collective action sometimes produces unusually effective results in influencing the state, but at other times its momentum rapidly declines (Tarrow 1994: 85).

#### *Cycles of Protest*

Closely related to political opportunities are 'cycles of protest' as conceptualised by Tarrow (see also Swidler 1986, Brand 1990). When political opportunities are

favourable for the protesters to challenge the authorities, it often raises the frequency and intensity of collective action, innovative forms of protest increase quickly, and participant actors with differential resources and organisational structures interact more vigorously. Cycles of protest are, in general, ‘sequences of intensified interaction between challengers and authorities’ (Tarrow 1994: 153). Tarrow stresses interactions among protest organisations as an important factor that affects the fluctuation of a cycle. Protest actions stimulate other actions by spreading new types of strategies, organisational structures and knowledge, which are imitated by other actors, and changes in popularly accepted ideas, which increase the momentum of protest (see also Oliver 1989). Formation and dissolution of alliances among organisations and external support are key factors that affect the dynamics of protest during a cycle, ‘which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution’ (Tarrow 1994: 153), or simply decline.

Recognising the three ‘waves’ in the history of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ identified by Arasaki as three cycles of protest may help understand how the momentum of protest has transformed over time. This dissertation organises its research around those three major ‘waves’, or high points of frequency and intensity of interactions between the protest actors and the authorities, as well as among themselves.

Importantly, the three waves vary in size, and fluctuate up and down drawing differently shaped curves. In particular, the first (1956) wave was shortly followed by the second (1969–70), however, the second and third (1995) waves are much further apart. Because the first two waves — the land struggle and the reversion struggle — peaked during the 27 years of direct US military rule, the series of individual protests shared a greater goal of demanding repatriation to Japan. However, the third wave, which peaked in 1995, came after a long ‘low’ period following Okinawa’s formal reversion in 1972. In this extended quiet phase, island-wide mass demonstration was absent, however, smaller struggles continued.

#### *Repertoires of Collective Action*

Mutual learning and sharing strategy and knowledge play a crucial role in generating

a sense of unity among different organisations. The ‘repertoire of collective action’, coined by Tilly (1978), refers to the accumulation of experience resulting from a number of collective actions shared by different organisations, through mutual interactions and learning. This includes forms of collective action, such as how to conduct demonstrations, how to organise and what to do in a mass rally, by witnessing and learning through the media, ‘several varieties of strikes, petitioning, the organisation of pressure groups, and a few other ways of articulating grievances and demands’ (Tilly 1978: 152).

An ‘Okinawan struggle’ as a ‘movement’ is often acknowledged through an accumulation of ‘repertoires of collective action’, throughout different periods. Major struggles, such as the ‘all-island’ struggle against the US land policy, the struggle against the US military ‘bulldozers and bayonets’ that forcefully dislocated the farmers from their own land, the base workers’ struggle against the discriminatory working environment, and a range of mass protest actions towards the reversion, are stories that are told and retold by the Okinawan activists. These memories and stories of struggles have become a tradition remembered by generation after generation in the community of protest. The audience includes, for example, high school students within Okinawa and mainland Japan who make fieldtrips to various places in Okinawa such as the Peace Memorial and remaining caves used during the battle of Okinawa to take refuge, in order to learn about the Okinawans’ war experiences. It is part of a repertoire of collective action to ‘educate’ others about the tradition of struggles experienced by the Okinawans, by keeping alive the stories excluded by the mainstream Japanese or international media.

On the other hand, ‘repertoire of collective action’ also signifies differences among protest actors. Depending on the activists’ experiences and definitions of who ‘we’ are, preferred strategies and codes of conduct in protest vary significantly. Repertoire is an important element of the community of protest, through which the actors form alliances or differentiate themselves.

### *Framings of Protest*

Melucci's idea of collective identity is useful for identifying the processes by which the symbols produce meanings to construct a collective actor. However, it falls short of distinguishing diverse versions of meanings attached to the protest action *after* they are produced. In order to identify different but a recognisably generic set of discernable, identifiably characteristic meanings that different social movement organisations typically attach to collective action, I use the term 'framings of protest', applying Snow and his associates' concept of 'framings of collective action' (Snow & Benfold 1992). 'Frames', similarly to collective identity, highlight how collective actors look at their own activities and interpret them — dimensions to do with perceptions and mental work — to establish 'meanings' of collective action, 'by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment' (Snow & Benfold 1992: 137).<sup>26</sup> The concept of 'collective action frames' or 'frames' generates from the RMT school of social movements, within the rationalist and individualist approach, which tends to view even mental dimensions of meaning productions as 'resources' for successful mobilisation and participation of a social movement. Snow and others' conceptualisation of the dimensions to do with perceptions and meanings in the realm of culture is meant to overcome RMT's weakness, namely, to treat the 'ideas and meanings as given', 'detached from the 'social productions that arise during the course of interactive processes'' (Snow & Benfold 1992). 'Frames' are also meant to bridge those dimensions related to the ideas, perceptions and meanings that are socially constructed, with existing RMT research areas on political opportunity, participation, and movement mobilisation. Though 'frames' give certain solidity to the set of meanings attached to collective action after they are produced, they also allow room for examination of the ways in which frames of protest, once produced, are reassessed and renegotiated by the actors (Snow et al 1986). Combined with the focus on the process of meaning production during the

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<sup>26</sup> Snow et al. (1986) and Snow and Benfold (1992) have adopted the concept of 'frame' from Goffman's (1974) same idea, 'to denote 'schemata of interpretation' that enable individuals 'to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large'' (Goffman 1974: 21 in Snow et al. 1986: 464).

construction of collective identity, that is, being ‘Okinawan’, different framings of anti-base protest indicate differences in interpretations of the current predicament and the historical background to that predicament.

*Methodology: A Combined Theoretical Approach for Okinawan Protests*

This dissertation takes an eclectic approach that draws selectively from different theoretical approaches to social movements reviewed above, to analyse dynamics and change in the post-war protests in Okinawa. The ‘new social movements’ theory is particularly useful in explaining transitions in the community of protest at the macro-level of socio-economic change. With major local economic change following reversion in 1972, quality of life, expression of local identities and gender relations, namely, ‘post-materialist’ agendas became a more prominent driving force of the Okinawans’ protests. Individual and network-based, smaller organisations have become more active, autonomous actors, and have shown different strategies and repertoires of protest from those of political parties and workers’ unions.

Collective identity and ‘framings’ of protest help explain transitions and internal differences among protest actors. As the primary reform agendas have changed, definitions of who ‘we’ are have been expressed differently. In particular, the ‘Japanese’ identity of Okinawans has been more emphasised in some periods than in others, or by different actors in the same period, depending on the priority reform agendas of the protest actors. The ‘constitutional’ framing of protest continues to define the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ in terms of a special attachment to the pacifist principles of the Japanese constitution, whereas environmentalists and feminists tend to stress the ‘Okinawan’ experiences, in connecting with the global struggles against gendered violence and conservation of natural resources.

Drawing on concepts of political opportunity structure and cycles of protest, this dissertation maps out how alliances and coalitions have emerged to temporarily demonstrate what is understood as the ‘three waves’ of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ and which have then disintegrated into a usual, divided and chaotic state. Furthermore, sharing strategies within the community of protest and mutual learning from the past experiences in the struggle, namely, recognising a distinctive ‘repertoire of protest’

supports the myth of a unitary, coherent ‘Okinawan struggle’ beyond generations.

This thesis mainly draws on the social movement theories in English language. It attempts to understand the experiences of the community of anti-US base protest groups in Okinawa, in the theoretical framework used to explain other social movements in the world. The primary intention of this project is to make the Okinawan case relevant to the wider study of social movements, going beyond the confinement of Japanese area studies literature and an exclusively Japanese readership. This, of course, does not mean that the study is irrelevant to either.

I am also aware of the danger of overlooking what cannot be fully grasped using the theories and concepts explained above, that is specific about Okinawa, that can only be understood in the historical and local context.<sup>27</sup> This is why, for empirical analysis, this thesis draws mainly on primary and secondary materials written in Japanese, especially by Okinawan writers, as well as an increasing reservoir of useful sources written in English. There are extensive and voluminous records and studies conducted on post-war protest in Okinawa. These materials are still under-recognised outside the local audience, even though the recent, expanding studies on Okinawa in English language have started to use them.

Primary materials used in this thesis include locally published newsletters issued by protest organisations, and local newspapers. Because this thesis is mainly interested in the protest actors, it takes advantage of the materials written and published by the members of protest organisations themselves. These materials were collected in local public and university libraries and archives, purchased from second-hand bookshops and from the offices of protest organisations and directly from activists in Okinawa. Furthermore, I draw on the interviews and personal observations conducted and obtained during my two fieldtrips in Okinawa in 1999 and 2002, extending for six months in total. During these fieldtrips, I

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<sup>27</sup> Tomiyama is weary of talking about Okinawa in the language of post-colonialism, or understanding Okinawa as a ‘colony’. This is because discussing Okinawa applying a neat, academic framework that is greatly external to the Okinawan reality necessarily generates a large amount of ‘refuse’ that cannot be done justice to. Yet he also points out the need to describe Okinawa in negotiation with the all-encompassing labeling of colonialism, while resisting it at the same time (Tomiyama, 2002: 2-9).



communicated in Japanese language with participants of protest and selectively conducted interviews with a wide range of activists. I have also attended rallies and meetings whenever possible in order to acquire participant observations. For secondary materials, I draw on writings on Okinawan post-war history, politics, economics and society written by Okinawan writers and those of English-speaking writers. These writings are subjected to critical examination and scrutinised in light of other research materials.

### **Conclusion**

Protest actors in contemporary studies of Okinawa are depicted on one hand as a unitary and promising agent for political change, on the other hand, diversity and differences among them are represented as an increasingly prominent character. Arasaki's idea of the 'Okinawa Struggle' and the 'three waves' of mass protest in the post-war period, if understood as the evidence of a unified, continuous struggle of all Okinawans, risks misrepresenting the internal differences among the protest actors, as well as significant change in their characters over time, especially after reversion. The idea of a unified, coherent 'Okinawan struggle', if there was any, has diminished as a basis of coalition building, nevertheless, an important question is how the idea of Okinawa's marginalisation has continued to be exploited by everyone, regardless of intensifying diversity and divisions within the community of protest.

This dissertation understands protests in Okinawa as a collection of diverse, conscious social movements in a civil society, rather than as an aberrational, spontaneous and homogeneous reaction to the US and Japanese states and military bases. The concepts of 'new social movements', collective identity, framings of protest, political opportunity structure, repertoire of protest, and cycles of protest are central to this study. They are drawn on to explain the dynamics and change among the Okinawan community of protest, and to understand the implications for civil society and political reform, especially regarding the presence of US military bases.

## **Part I**

### **‘Turning Japanese’: Historical Background to the Protests in Okinawa**



## Okinawa's Annexation to Japan and the Development of an Ambiguous Japanese Identity

### Introduction

To understand what the presence of the US bases on the Okinawa Main Island today means to many Okinawans, Hook and Siddle explain the significance of

a historical narrative of victimisation that stretches back to the days of the Ryūkyū Kingdom. This dominant narrative ... is punctuated with keywords like *Ryūkyū Shobun*, *sotetsu jigoku* (palm-tree hell — the starvation period of the 1920s), *tetsu no arashi* (the Typhoon of Steel: Battle of Okinawa) and *fukki* (reversion). It culminates in the *kichi mondai* (base issue) and Okinawa's 'unfair treatment' at the hands of the central government. The importance of this victim-centred narrative lies not so much in its validity or otherwise as historical 'truth', but in its utility as an ideational resource for the construction and articulation of a contemporary Okinawan identity politics (Hook & Siddle 2003: 11).

Specific events in history have been constantly referred to as various forms of marginalisation of Okinawa and, in later years, as the struggles of Okinawans. I call this a historical narrative of marginalisation and it is an important component of the myth of a single, continuous lineage of an 'Okinawan struggle'. The word marginalisation is used here to include not only references to Okinawans as victims of aggression, but to all kinds of subjection to marginal positions and denial of equal treatment compared to that of other parts of Japan.

Okinawan identity as 'Japanese' developed out of complex processes, beginning with the Meiji government's forceful abolition of the Ryūkyū kingdom in 1872. In the late nineteenth century, Japan rapidly transformed itself into a new body politic: a sovereign nation-state. Japan absorbed the islands formerly within the Ryūkyū Kingdom and defined them as inside the national border, while adopting a discriminatory policy. This inevitably positioned Okinawa in a binary opposition between 'Japan proper' and 'Okinawa, Japan but not so proper'. This chapter emphasises the conscious choice, made especially by Okinawan intellectuals and

elites, to view 'Okinawa' as part of Japan. However in the long term this has influenced the Okinawans' political struggle that fundamentally questions and challenges the policy of marginalisation by mainland Japan, which is today most clearly manifested in the continuing heavy existence of the US military bases.

This chapter points out the attempts of the 'Okinawan studies' scholars to accentuate the common cultural traits between Ryūkyū and Japan, and the campaign for Okinawans' political rights led by Jahana Noboru, which exemplify the Okinawans' strategic assimilation to Japan for political reasons. The language dispute that divided the population for and against the preservation of the distinct Ryūkyūan language in the early 1940s is indicative of the ambiguous coexistence of self-definitions of 'Okinawans' that emerged and became consolidated: 'Okinawans' as an integral component embraced by a greater entity, Japan, and '*uchinanchu*' who are fundamentally and undeniably different from, and can never completely see themselves as, mainland Japanese. This ambiguity has influenced the 'Okinawan' collective identity and the myth of an 'Okinawan struggle', representing the roots of the diverse interpretations of collective identity and purpose behind Okinawans' protest in later periods.

### **Ryūkyū Shobun**

Archaeological studies have found Okinawan inhabitants had cultural and human exchanges with Kyūshū since the *yayoi* period,<sup>1</sup> and linguistic affinity is traced between the ancient Ryūkyūan and Japanese languages (Pearson 1996). The period in the history of Ryūkyū (Okinawa) before being taken over by the Satsuma domain, a powerful local lord based in southwest Kyushu, is known as the Early Ryūkyū (*Kō-Ryūkyū*) period. The Ryūkyū kingdom remained outside of Japan in terms of political control, before the Satsuma invasion in 1609. However, Ryūkyū was subjected under superior powers: China and Satsuma. and indirectly, Tokugawa Japan.<sup>2</sup> Together with Korea, Vietnam and Burma, Ryūkyū was one of China's

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<sup>1</sup> The *yayoi* period 'began between 500 BC and 300 BC, and persisted until 300 AD' (Pearson 1969: 41).

<sup>2</sup> On this subject, see, in particular, (Smits 1999: 15-49, Takara 1993, 1998)

tributary states.<sup>3</sup> In East Asia, the tributary system formed a different kind of international order from that of the sovereign states established earliest in Europe. The centre of this order was hegemonic China.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that Ryūkyū's direct tributary relations with China were separately shaped from mainland Japan; the special ties in the form of distinguishable Chinese cultural influence and customs have been a source of contemporary Okinawan identity that marks difference from mainland Japan.

In 1609, Satsuma soldiers, mainly from the Shimazu family, invaded and took over the Ryūkyū kingdom. At this point, Ryūkyū became a colony of the Satsuma domain, but not a formal part of Japan. Satsuma's control over Ryūkyū was much harsher than that of China's, which hardly interfered with Ryūkyū's domestic affairs. The Ryūkyū kings had to pay onerous taxes to Satsuma, which were confiscated by local authorities who were dominated by the Shuri court, the royal court of the Ryūkyū kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Thus, people in Ryūkyū were doubly subjugated by Shuri and Shimazu.<sup>6</sup> Satsuma promoted the impression that Ryūkyū was an 'ethnically different' country from them, not only to exploit Ryūkyū's trading rights with China, but also to demonstrate their strength by colonising a people of supposedly different ethnicity. Under Satsuma's rule, Ryūkyū was neither a direct part of Japan nor China; however, the independent status of a kingdom was only decorative.

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<sup>3</sup> Since the formal tributary relationship was established with Ming China at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Ryūkyū kings engaged in formal tributary trades with China, formed relations with Korea and mainland Japan, and engaged in trading activities with other regions in Asia ranging through The Philippines, Malacca, Java to Bengal (Kerr 1958: 126-9, also see Takara 1993). By the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Chūzan king (a city state in the central region) unified the main island (*Okinawa honto*), and the Shuri court in Naha placed military and administrative outposts in other groups of islands in the Ryūkyū archipelago (Amami, Yaeyama and Miyako regions) under its control, with similar tributary relations to China's, though Shuri's rule of those remote islands was far more oppressive. The kingdom as a trading outpost in the southern seas thrived during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Kerr 1958: 124).

<sup>4</sup> Ryūkyū was one of the smaller and weaker states under China's political sphere of influence, but it was allowed to keep its autonomy. In exchange, Ryūkyū paid tribute to Chinese political sovereignty by adjusting to Chinese customs and culture, by sending ships regularly to China with gifts, and by being enthroned by the Chinese emperor's missions. The Ryūkyū kings obtained considerable wealth from trade with China, which was the basis of their political power.

<sup>5</sup> There was not enough food to meet domestic demand by the Ryūkyūans, who had to import rice from Satsuma (Higa, Shimota & Shinzato 1997 [1963]: 84-85).

<sup>6</sup> Tax burden on the residents in remote islands was greater than on Okinawa Main Island, known as the poll tax that continued to dominate islanders' lives until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Before Commodore Perry forced Tokugawa to open ports to US ships, Perry had visited the Ryūkyū kingdom and signed a compact in 1854 (Kerr 1958: 335). The Meiji restoration followed, reviving the ancient political authority of the emperor as the sovereign body of the new nation (Beasley 1990: 54-55). During the Meiji restoration, the *Shōgun* office was abolished, and the feudal lords submitted their autonomous domains (*han*) to the emperor. The Meiji government introduced numerous social and political reforms, replacing *han* with prefectures (*ken*). In the late nineteenth century, Japan started to expand its territory overseas, whilst protecting itself from being colonised by Western imperial powers. The future status of the Ryūkyū kingdom became a serious subject of deliberation among the Meiji leaders.

Due to drastic reforms, the financial condition of the Meiji government was not able to provide the remote islands with public services such as police, military and education. Also, completely incorporating Ryūkyū into Japanese territory involved the risk of producing a diplomatic conflict with China. Moreover, the opposition to accepting the Ryukyuans as Japanese was made by quite a few leaders such as Okuma Shigenobu and Kido Takayoshi, who mentioned that the Ryūkyū people were ethnically different from the Japanese (Oguma 1998: 20–1). In 1872, as an interim solution, the Japanese government made Ryūkyū into a *han* (when there were no *han* left in mainland Japan) attached to Kagoshima prefecture (former Satsuma *han*).<sup>7</sup> However, by the 1870s, the Meiji government became more aware of Ryūkyū as a strategic fortress in East Asia owing to its proximity to China, Korea, Southeast Asia, and to other islands in the Pacific (Oguma 1998: 21).<sup>8</sup>

Perceptions about the Japanese national cultural boundaries did not consolidate overnight: Japan had modelled itself after China and assumed a morally and culturally central position described as ‘*ka*’ *vis-à-vis* the barbarian peripheries ‘*i*’,

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<sup>7</sup> The king of Ryūkyū *han* was added to the newly established Japanese aristocratic group, or ‘peerage’, together with other previous feudal lords in mainland Japan (Oguma 1998: 19, Taira 1997: 154). Some of the government elite, especially in the parliament, were opposed to granting the Ryūkyūans, who were ‘aliens’, an equal level of nobility with other Japanese (Ōta 1972: 87).

<sup>8</sup> On the northern front, Japan constantly had engaged in disputes with Russia over their national borders, and in 1869, Ezo, also known as *Ainu Moshiri* (Land of the Ainu), was taken under Japan’s control and given a new name, ‘Hokkaido’ (North Sea District).

which referred to the Ryūkyūans, the Ainus and Ogasawara islands (Morris-Suzuki 1996: 50). Instead of 'the frontier as a single, unequivocal line marking the boundary between one nation and another', the dominant image of the boundary of 'Japan' was closer to 'a series of frontiers marking gradually increasing degrees of difference' (Morris-Suzuki 1996: 54).

In the *Ka-I* view of Japanese 'nationhood', Ryūkyū was not only furthest from Tokyo geographically but also culturally. It was therefore not quite domestic or foreign but ambiguous. However, this view ceased to be dominant among the Meiji elites who came to see that the world order was transforming into one composed of capitalist economies and sovereign nation-states with clear geographical boundaries. By the late nineteenth century, Japan was positioned at the periphery of this new kind of international order, and was threatened by foreign colonial expansion in the region if its 'domestic' border was left undecided. There was a pressing need to face a new conceptual orthodoxy of international relations with a clearly defined territorial border backed by substantial military power.

In 1871, a fishing vessel drifted from Miyako Island, a southwestern island of Ryūkyū. It landed on the Taiwanese shore, and 54 of the 66 crew members were slaughtered by the indigenous Taiwanese. This incident opened a pathway for Japan to annex Ryūkyū (Smits 1999: 144). The Japanese government seized this opportunity to send troops and a punitive expedition to Taiwan in 1874. At the time, nevertheless, Japan was still militarily much weaker than the European and North American states, and was not confident enough to provoke any further conflicts with China or any other powers through illegitimate military aggression.<sup>9</sup> With British mediation, the incident was settled with a treaty between China and Japan. The most effective way for the Japanese government to justify the aggression to the Chinese representatives and the British mediators was to argue that the victims from Miyako Island were officially 'Japanese people', and that Ryūkyū was part of Japanese territory. Driven by strategic imperatives, the government inserted a sentence in the

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<sup>9</sup> China and Ryūkyū initially judged that the incident had been already settled between them, following the 'rules and procedures' of their well-established amicable relations. As far as they were concerned, Japan had no direct relevance to the matter (Taira 1997: 155).



treaty document regarding Ryūkyū people as ‘Japanese’ (Oguma 1998: 25–6).

While settling this incident, in October 1872, Japan’s foreign minister gave the Ryūkyūan envoys an emperor’s order to create the Domain of Ryūkyū (*Ryūkyū han*) and to make King Sho Tai domain king (*han-ō*), to which the Ryūkyūans ‘could do nothing but express gratitude’ (Smits 1999: 144). In 1879, a dispatch from the Meiji government brought in 400 soldiers and 160 police officers to formally abolish the Ryūkyū kingdom. The King, Sho Tai, was captured and forced to live in Tokyo. This action was called the *Ryūkyū Shobun*, which ended the Ryūkyū kingdom.

China made an official protest to Japan for its assault on Ryūkyū’s diplomatic rights, which the Japanese government practically ignored. Chinese rule over Ryūkyū had for a long time been little more than nominal, and the ownership of Ryūkyū, a group of small islands, was hardly vital for the Qing dynasty, itself deeply concerned about foreign aggression. Nevertheless, China’s biggest concern was that the annexation of Ryūkyū would assist Japan’s military advance towards Korea and Taiwan. Therefore, China and Japan engaged in prolonged diplomatic negotiations over its takeover of Ryūkyū, with US President Grant as a mediator (Smits 1999: 146). Hundreds of former aristocrats and *samurai* fled to China. These people formed a group called the *kōdōkai*, headed by a former Ryūkyū prince, and engaged in petition activities in order to bring about the restoration of the old order of the Ryūkyū kingdom. The group ‘garnered 72,767 signatures, and a delegation of nine went to Tokyo to present their proposal to Interior Minister Matsukata, who rejected it immediately’ (Smits 1999: 149).

During negotiation with China over the status of Okinawa after Ryūkyū Shobun, the Japanese government offered to cut off Miyako and Yaeyama islands from Okinawa prefecture, and to give them to China in exchange for the most favoured nation status in trade, equivalent to that enjoyed by European and American powers.<sup>10</sup> This plan to divide Okinawa, Ōta Masahide<sup>11</sup> argues, encapsulates what

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<sup>10</sup> China rejected this plan, because of its reluctance to award Japan equal privileges with the Western powers.

<sup>11</sup> See note 1 in chapter 1.

Okinawa essentially has become for Japan since the Ryūkyū Shobun: a pawn that can be dispensed with whenever necessary for the survival of the state (Ōta 1972: 115). Ōta stresses that the Japanese authority took advantage of the marginalised positions of Miyako and Yaeyama within Okinawa, where people had been oppressed with the onerous poll tax by the Ryūkyū authorities in Shuri (located in Naha today, on Okinawa Main Island). In this sense, Miyako and Yaeyama's position *vis-à-vis* central Okinawa paralleled that of Okinawa's *vis-à-vis* mainland Japan, and still does.

### **Becoming 'Japanese': 1880–1945**

#### *The Assimilation Policy*

Between Ryūkyū Shobun and WWII, the Meiji state implemented Japanese administration by sending mainland Japanese officers to Okinawa. All pre-war governors of Okinawa were from outside the prefecture assigned by the central government; opportunities for employment in public offices, the police force, schools and local business were closed to most Okinawans. The members of the former ruling class in Ryūkyū society feared that their privileges and social power were being dismantled, and were fiercely opposed to the political changes, as demonstrated by the *Kōdōkai*. The Japanese state attempted to appease the former ruling class, by preserving an old institutional and legal framework (called the 'preserving old customs' policy), which deliberately delayed the introduction of new political institutions and reforms (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Delayed institutional reforms in Okinawa

	<b>Japan</b>	<b>Okinawa</b>
Land Tax Reform	1873	1899–1903
Abolition of <i>Han</i> System	1871	1879
Introduction of Municipal System	1879	1908
Establishment of Prefecture System	1879	1909
Military Conscription	1872	1898
Prefectural Assembly Election	1890	1909
Parliamentary Election	1890	1912

Source: Higa, Shimota and Shinsato. *Okinawa*. Iwanami, Tokyo, 1963

The delay of political and social reform compared to elsewhere in Japan was allegedly based on the 'low level of civil maturity' of the Okinawan public (Morris-

Suzuki 1998: 27–8). The logic the government used was that modern institutions guaranteeing more civil rights would be introduced when the Okinawans were considered sufficiently assimilated. Morris-Suzuki points out that Japan's dealings with the Ryūkyūans (and the Ainu and Ogasawarans) were framed by a view that equated the spatial distance of these places from the mainland (*naichi*) to lower stages of civilisation (*bunmei*):<sup>12</sup>

So the vision of a world made up of concentric circles, where foreignness increased the farther one moved from the centre, came to be replaced by a vision of a single nation where 'development' and 'modernity' diminished the farther one moved from the capital toward the geographic extremities (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 29).

That is, geographically isolated Okinawa was considered to be in a stage of civilisation lower than central Japan.<sup>13</sup> The status of the Ryūkyūans *vis-à-vis* Japan became a point of debate among anthropologists, archaeologists and other scholars (Siddle 1998, Yonetani 2000). However, Siddle notes that in contrast with the Ainu inhabitants, who 'remained completely outside history', scholars tended to see Ryūkyūans were on their way to becoming Japanese (Siddle 1998: 125, Tomiyama 1998). The assimilation policy in Okinawa was underpinned by the view that Okinawa-specific cultural artefacts embodied backwardness. This extended through a range of manners of dress, lifestyle matters such as young people's beach parties (*moashibi*), male hairstyle (*kata-kashira*), and female hand tattoos (*hajichi*).

Meiji was the period, particularly in the 1880s, when nationalism based on collective worship of the emperor as a divine being was steadily being formed. Multiple organisations and ideologues contributed to proselytising the idea of a unified nation, with the emperor at the top of the entire hierarchy, through all kinds of social networks (See Fujitani 1998, Gluck 1985). Education was one of the most

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<sup>12</sup> Morris-Suzuki refers to Fukuzawa Yukichi's (famous theorist and educationist in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) notion of civilisation as involving 'successive stages of development' (Morris-Suzuki 1998: 24), starting from the state of closest affinity to nature, progressing to the achievement of freedom from natural restriction by way of technology and production (Fukuzawa 1997 [1875]).

<sup>13</sup> Smits refers to Anderson's account of nationalism (Anderson 1991, Duara 1995) in explaining the development of nationalism in Japan in the Meiji period and the role played by the 'spatial and temporary imagining', that is, integration of distant communities beyond immediate human contacts into a Japanese nation. This placed Ryūkyū at the tail end of cultural progress in the scale of 'linear and progressive' advancement of the time (Smits 1999: 151).

effective vehicles, together with newly introduced rituals, the construction of shrines, increased publications, and community events. The ‘emperor-centred moral education (*kominka*)’ was introduced across the newly acquired Japanese territories and colonies (Christy 1993: 608). In contrast to the much-delayed political and social reform, the new education system with the strongest emphasis on nationalism was introduced to Okinawa.<sup>14</sup> The government campaigned for the use of the Japanese language — the Tokyo dialect was adopted as the official ‘national standard’ — instead of the distinct Okinawan language and dialect. During this period, the government opened ‘Japanese conversation schools’ (using Tokyo dialect) all over Okinawa, just as there are ‘English conversation schools’ everywhere in Japan today (Oguma 1997: 35).

The most important signifier of assimilation was how much Okinawans adjusted to the notion of becoming ‘the emperor’s people’. The new educational system placed most value on the importance of turning ‘Japanese’ and ‘the emperor’s people’ over any other practical kinds of knowledge. The greatest effort was put into raising primary education enrolments. When standard Japanese was introduced in Okinawa initially, for the majority of Okinawans speaking Japanese was not considered a particularly useful social skill because most people spoke the local dialect in the late nineteenth century. However, it took only a generation for the new educational policies to take effect in Okinawa. In 1907, 93 per cent of Okinawan children were enrolled in primary schools (Oguma 1998: 39).

The ‘preserving old customs’ policy had a significant impact on the local economy. The new land-tax system obliged farmers to own land and pay tax in cash, not in kind. As a result, sugar farming was widely introduced to meet the tax demands, which the farmers quickly became dependent on. After the turn of the century, many farmers converted rice paddies and sweet-potato fields into cane fields, obtaining immediate cash to buy food and household products. However, most of the goods were made in mainland Japan, brought in by the old merchants — including the royal Shō family — who preserved exclusive commercial trading rights

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<sup>14</sup> Portraits of the emperor were distributed in Okinawan schools first (Oguma 1998: 38).

with mainland Japan and dominated the Okinawan market. This hindered the growth of a local industry sector and promoted an over-dependence on small-scale sugar farming.<sup>15</sup> Thus, before World War I, under the ‘preserving old customs’ policy, Tomiyama argues that the Okinawan economy had developed its structural vulnerability (1997: 77–8).

After World War I, the price of sugar fell on a worldwide scale to devastating levels. Many farmers were forced to sell their lands, or their children as future servants, to a handful of rich landowners.<sup>16</sup> In the 1920s, Okinawan peasants faced a severe famine described as ‘a palm-tree hell’ (*sotetsu jigoku*) because many died eating the starch taken from wild-grown cycad (*sotetsu*) palms, which is fatally poisonous if not processed extremely carefully. As Tomiyama explains, the vulnerability of the Okinawan sugar farmers to the price fall was due to the ‘preserve the old customs’ policy: the persistence of oligarchic domination of the local market by a small expatriate commercial class truncated the locals’ commerce. Manufacturing activities had not benefited from the boost in the sugar price before the crisis either. Moreover, the government put in place no protective policy — with tariffs and subsidies as were common in the European countries — for Okinawa against the low sugar price in the world economy. On the contrary, Japanese imports of cheaper sugar from Java doubled (Tomiyama 1997: 76-82). The palm-tree hell, in this sense, symbolises the unfair protection given to the Okinawans’ welfare, therefore, a notable example of Okinawans’ marginalisation.

#### *Okinawans’ Responses to Assimilation*

Cut off from the embrace of the religious and moral order centred around China, it took a long time for a ‘Ryūkyū’ or ‘Okinawan’ identity to develop. In the late nineteenth century, after annexation, although Okinawa was brought under Japanese administrative control, Okinawans predominantly lived as members of smaller communities, namely, villages called *magiri*, where they were born, worked and

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<sup>15</sup> Unlike in Taiwan, cost-effective plantation-style sugar farming was not implemented in Okinawa (Tomiyama 1997: 80).

<sup>16</sup> These wealthy landowners became eligible voters, constituting a very limited part of the population who paid more than 5 yen tax.

died, without seeing the world beyond it. The idea of a separate Okinawa or Ryūkyū as a nation based on common distinguishable attributes such as geographical coherence, history, culture and language developed much later (Siddle 1998: 124). Geographical diffusion and linguistic differences extending across islands remote from Okinawa Main Island contributed to this, as well as class divides among the population.

Military conscription was introduced in 1898, preceding other reforms. Socially influential local figures such as schoolteachers and *Ryūkyū Shimpō* journalists promoted Okinawan participation in the military;<sup>17</sup> they saw it necessary to entitle Okinawans to equal political rights and reforms as the mainland Japanese (Yoshiwara 196–7). On the other hand, many Okinawans refused or escaped conscription by fleeing to remote islands or to China,<sup>18</sup> migrating overseas, or pretending to be ill or disabled. This happened also to mainland Japanese people, especially in rural communities. In Okinawa, nevertheless, refusing to join the Japanese military had quite different meanings: most Okinawans could not speak fluent standard Japanese and were still attached to Qing China (Yoshiwara 1973: 201). Even though Okinawan soldiers had been educated with an overwhelming emphasis on loyalty to the emperor and in the standard Japanese language, they faced discrimination within the military. Many Okinawan soldiers tried to prove they were ‘Japanese’ by dedicating themselves to combat activities, often at the expense of their own lives (Arakawa 1973: 190, Shinjo 1998: 172).<sup>19</sup> The local elite severely attacked conscription avoidance, especially in the *Ryūkyū Shimpō* columns and articles (Yoshiwara 1973: 196–7, also see Ōta 1967: chapter 2). The conscription issue is a window to the contesting perspectives on assimilation and reluctance to it, which divided the population.

As a major consequence of the devastating poverty and famine caused by the

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<sup>17</sup> Significantly, primary school teachers were recruited for six-week service in 1896, before other sectors of the population (Shinjo 1998: 1972).

<sup>18</sup> Between 1898 and 1915, 774 were prosecuted (including jail sentences) for avoiding conscription (Yoshiwara 1973: 198).

<sup>19</sup> Out of some 2,000 Okinawan soldiers, 205 died in the Japan-Russo war. *Ryūkyū Shimpō* appraised this as a proof of Okinawans’ loyalty and courage (Yoshiwara 1973: 197).

sugar price, thousands of Okinawans went to mainland Japan and emigrated overseas, especially to Hawaii and South America in search of jobs and cash incomes, which was promoted by government policy as a solution to the economic crisis. Thousands of Okinawans moved to mainland Japan as factory workers in the chemical and other manufacturing and textile industries (Tomiyama 1997: 94-98). In mainland Japan, Okinawans were called '*Ryūkyū-jin*' and similar names by other Japanese, and faced all sorts of discrimination, similarly but somewhat differently from, for example, Koreans in mainland Japan. Experience of discrimination contributed to the construction of an 'Okinawan' identity based on marginalisation, that bound everyone together, who were hitherto contained in respective communities within Okinawa and very much separated from each other, *vis-à-vis* mainland Japan (*yamato* or *naichi*).

Tomiyama (1997) has conducted research on Okinawans' emigration into Osaka as labourers following the sugar price fall in the 1920s, and the Kansai Okinawans' Organisation (*Kansai Okinawa Kenjin-kai*). Tomiyama maintains that the *Kenjin-kai*, established by the Okinawan emigrants, was engaged in 'a social movement': the organisation's main activities were to provide general pastoral care for, and to facilitate mutual communications among, the Okinawans who came to live in the area, which included finding accommodation and work. However, it also behaved like a labour union by promoting the interests of workers from Okinawa, especially in the areas of work conditions and labour rights. Initially, the *Kenjin-kai* encouraged self-expression of members as '*uchinanchu*' (Okinawans), that is, the pride in being 'Okinawan', in their interaction with other Japanese. The subject of *Kenjin-kai*, in other words, members' definition of who 'we' were, was expressed in terms of the unique attributes of 'being Okinawans'. However, as Okinawans' labourers' difficulties were explained in terms of discrimination — being from Okinawa determined where to live and work, and qualities of living and working conditions (group employment for Okinawans, segregated dormitory rooms, different meals and schedules for Okinawans etc.) — the main mission of *Kenjin-kai* shifted towards eliminating discrimination against Okinawans in workplaces, by

encouraging them to become ‘competent workers’ and rewarding those who did. Tomiyama points out that the yardstick of ‘competent workers’ was the extent to which Okinawan workers eliminated the characters and features of their own ‘Okinawanness’, in order to become more ‘Japanese’.

What did it mean to ‘become Japanese’? According to Tomiyama’s research, it meant ‘correcting’ physical aspects of lifestyle that are associated with being ‘Okinawan’: namely, clothes, hygienic practices, ‘flocking’ among themselves apart from other Japanese, tendency to stay up late, enjoying Okinawan music, dramas and dancing, and amongst others, speaking in Okinawan dialect. On the other hand, obedience was rewarded as a positive ‘Okinawan’ attribute for promoting Okinawans’ Japanisation, which was also understood as a process of ‘awakening into a class consciousness’ (Tomiyama 1997: 167). ‘Becoming Japanese’ for Okinawans in this period in Osaka required such punishing physical and emotional self-discipline. In the 1930s, the self-correcting effort of the assimilation-oriented Okinawans developed into a so-called ‘life improvement movement’ (*Seikatsu Kaizen Undo*) among migrants from Okinawa in Japan in general.

Nevertheless, Tomiyama stresses the gap between the elite Okinawans who eagerly advocated Japanisation and other non-elite Okinawans who remained silent; many Okinawans quietly carried their animosity towards the dominant degradation of Okinawan cultural characteristics, which surfaced occasionally, for example, in an episode of female Okinawan workers at a spinning mill making fun of factory managers with a familiar folk song, described as ‘the Okinawan *kimigayo*’ (Japan’s national anthem) (Higa 1988 cited in Tomiyama 1997: 150-151).

The ‘House of the Peoples’ incident at the Fifth Industrial Exhibition in Osaka in 1903 shows how an increasing number of Okinawans were eager to see themselves as ‘proper Japanese’, distinguishing themselves from ‘other Asians’, through exposure to the new educational system.

...a man with a whip presided over a display of Koreans, Ainu, Taiwanese aborigines, and two Okinawan women ... .Okinawan newspapers reacted to the display with rage, claiming that lining up Okinawans with primitives and inferior ethnic groups was a slur against



the Okinawans, who were ‘real Japanese’ (Christy 1993: 608).

The strong reaction of the Okinawan public to this ‘incident’ suggests the possibility that Okinawan identity was not only constructed by authoritative enforcement from above, but also by themselves, in favour of their new position within the modern and powerful Japanese state. The prominent members of the former aristocratic class argued for the urgent need to adjust to the new Japanese rule, in order to maximize Okinawans’ interests through assimilation with mainland Japan. Ōta Chōfu, for example, an Okinawan elite of an aristocratic descendant, who started a local newspaper, *Ryūkyū Shimpō* (with *Okinawa Times*, one of the two widely read local papers today in Okinawa), represented those who eagerly promoted the benefit of becoming like the Japanese, and even preached to imitate their sneezing (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 24 September 1917 quoted in Ōta 1972: 122).<sup>20</sup>

#### *Jahana Noboru’s ‘People’s Rights Movement’*

As more people slowly started to realise the existence of more powerful political authorities than the Shuri royal court or the local Okinawan government, voluntary political activism began to take place (Arakawa 1973: 105). The first protest movement of the farmers since the Ryūkyū ‘Disposal’ was organised in Miyako Island in 1893 against the local officers and aristocrats who were still benefiting from the Ryūkyūan custom of poll tax still imposed on the farmers in Miyako and Yaeyama. The Japanese government’s policy to preserve the old customs in Okinawa in order to appease the pro-Chinese former ruling class included the preservation of the three-hundred-year-old poll tax system in these remote islands. Therefore, even after the end of the Ryūkyū kingdom, the poll tax obligated each person to pay punishing duties each year to produce rice, traditional hand-woven fabric and other products as well as labour service for the local officials. The leaders of the farmers’ protest were Gusukuma Seian from Naha and Nakamura Jissaku from Niigata in mainland Japan, who were staying in Miyako for other purposes. The slave-like lives of Miyako farmers infuriated these two outsiders, who influenced the

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<sup>20</sup> However, Ōta should not be understood as simply ‘assimilationist’. Hiyane (1996) points out that the greatest goal of Ōta was to establish awareness for Okinawa’s independent history, and his advocacy for assimilation was meant to be secondary to this greater role.

locals into directly appealing to the Japanese government. They sent a delegation to Tokyo, to lobby the Parliament members and the newspapers, appealing to end the poll tax and introduce a land tax system in remote islands (for details see Arakawa 1973: 119–58). In the end, even though the new land tax system continued to burden the farmers, the movement was successful and the poll tax was abolished (Arakawa 1973: 158, Yoshiwara 1973: 113).

Closer to the local government on Okinawa Island, a similar strategy of directly appealing to the state government to reform the oppressive local policy was taken by the ‘People’s Rights’ movement led by an agronomist, Jahana Noboru. In comparison to the Miyako protest, nevertheless, Jahana’s movement created much more serious disputes among Okinawans, in terms of how to understand the implications for later struggles in Okinawa. Jahana has been one of the most idolised historical figures in Okinawa for his achievement in becoming a high-profile local government bureaucrat from a peasant background, for his battles with Governor Narahara and the conservative group of former aristocrats influential in the local government, and for his isolation and tragic death from mental illness (Ōsato 1969, Smits 2002).

Jahana was born a farmers’ son in Kochinda village in southern Okinawa in 1865, and was selected as the only one with a rural background of the first five government-funded Okinawan university students to study in Tokyo with other sons of aristocrats, including Ōta Chōfu, founder of the local newspaper, *Ryūkyū Shimpō*. The villagers made Jahana a local hero and a symbol of hard work for the village. In Tokyo Jahana majored in agriculture, in particular, fertilising in sugar farming. Returning to Okinawa, he became a high-rank officer in charge of agricultural issues in the local administration of a mainland Japanese governor, which again was an unprecedented achievement for someone with a non-aristocratic background.

Ōsato’s biography of Jahana, *Gijin Jahana Noboru Den* (Jahana Noboru, a righteous man), first published in 1938, was influential in creating a heroic image of Jahana as representative of the peasant class, as well as someone who worked hard and died for the political rights of the Okinawan people, battling against the

aristocratic oligarchy in the local government and Narahara, a demonised governor (1892–1908) from Kagoshima. Narahara had strong connections with the central government, and ‘ruled with such a firm hand that he earned the nickname “King of Ryūkyū”’ (Smits 2002: 103). However, Jahana resigned the position in 1898 after severe disagreements with Narahara’s plan to privatise traditional communal forests in northern Okinawa, called *somayama*, to be distributed to the unemployed former lower officials of the Ryūkyū court who were economically struggling. Yoshiwara (1973: 41–66), in line with Ōsato’s story, explains that the *somoyama* development allowed Narahara and his aristocratic acolytes to gain more wealth, depriving peasants of essential resources such as timber and water resources, to which Jahana was opposed and advocated peasant ownership instead. This image of Jahana as guardian of the peasants has, however, been disputed by Arakawa (1996: 204-206), who argues that the historical records more strongly suggest Jahana was initially the promoter of the *somayama* cultivation with Narahara, and the land issue was not his main concern. In Arakawa’s view (1996: 207), Jahana was no longer acting as a ‘peasant’s son’ by this time, and his primary concern was overcoming the class-oriented old regime with extremely limited room for promoting someone like him, degraded as a commoner, up the social ladder. This was the reason why he resigned from his post, and his ultimate goal was his battle, not only with Narahara, but also with a group of other conservative local bureaucrats of Ryūkyūan aristocratic descent, including Ōta Chōfu, who had once been sent to Tokyo with Jahana to study, and leader of *Kōdōkai* (Smits 2002: 106).

*Kōdōkai* led an anachronistic movement that petitioned the Parliament in Tokyo to bring back the last Ryūkyūan king, Sho Tai, as Governor, which quickly failed. Consequently, the members concentrated on enhancing power in local politics by forming an alliance with the Narahara administration, and Ōta became an advocate of promoting assimilation and the Okinawan identity as ‘proper Japanese’. Jahana opposed the *Kōdōkai* from the vantage point of a non-aristocratic local elite, then made enemies with the conservative alliance of Narahara and the former *Kōdōkai* members and, eventually, became isolated in the local government and

resigned in December 1898. However, in November 1898, Jahana was elected one of the directors of the Okinawa Agricultural Bank, which was a public bank set up in each prefecture, and Jahana had contributed to its establishment while in the post. At the same time, Jahana and his colleagues made trips to Tokyo to appeal for Narahara's resignation and land reform in Okinawa to Diet members, in particular, gaining the sympathy of Home Minister Itagaki Taisuke (Isa 1998: 192). In January 1899, Jahana formed the Okinawa Club in Tokyo with several young colleagues similarly from peasant families, and published a journal, *Okinawa Jiron*, in which he criticised the domination of social privilege in Okinawan society by Narahara and his local aristocratic allies. On the other hand, Ōta Chōfu, who worked as a reporter for *Ryūkyū Shimpo*, also constantly attacked Jahana's movement in his newspaper.

In February in Tokyo, Jahana and another Okinawa Club member, Uema Kōsuke, submitted a petition to the Lower House to introduce suffrage to allow Okinawans to elect representatives to the Diet. In Okinawa, delayed introduction of suffrage, like delayed land reform, was one of the central government's attempts to preserve the interests of the former Ryūkyūan class. The conservative elites were opposed to the election of Okinawan delegates to the Diet, which would lead to fundamental political and social change that favoured merit-based promotion to powerful positions, and to the fear of the former ruling class members of losing their inherited positions of influence. Jahana and his colleagues realised that participation in national politics and having access to power in the central government were important in order to remove Narahara and the old conservatives' domination in Okinawa.<sup>21</sup> Jahana's movement is often referred to as an 'Okinawan version' of the Liberty and People's Rights movement that was burgeoning in mainland Japan in the 1880s involving Ishizuka Shoko and others (Smits 2002: 107).

However, their political campaign yielded disappointing results for the Okinawa Club members. The Lower House decided to introduce the election of two Diet members from Okinawa by issuing an Imperial Edict 'when the time arrives';

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<sup>21</sup> In January 1899, Jahana became a member of the Japanese political party, Kenseito (Constitutional Political Party) (Isa 1998: 336).

however, it was postponed indefinitely, even though Okinawa's political participation had been agreed upon in the Lower House in 1899, as a result of the direct lobbying of Jahana's group. Parliamentary elections commenced formally in 1912 in Okinawa, by which time only two members, as opposed to five from other prefectures, were to be elected from Okinawa. Furthermore, the Miyako and Yaeyama regions were excluded from national elections until 1919.<sup>22</sup>

In March 1900, Jahana proposed an increase in rural representatives to counter the domination of Narahara and his allies in the Bank and, as a result, was removed from the director's position at the Okinawa Agricultural Bank. Some of his Okinawa Club members switched sides to co-operate with the conservatives (Ōsato 1969: 225-6). This incident made Jahana more isolated than ever. Unable to find employment because of Narahara's influence, he no longer had a place in Okinawa. Jahana died at the age of 43 in 1908.

Jahana is often regarded as the pioneer of modern Okinawans' struggles against discrimination and resistance and of protest by later Okinawan leftist activists. An Okinawan citizens' newsletter, *Okinawa Minken* (Okinawan Liberty and People's Rights), which was launched in 1977, interpreted Jahana and his legacy of the Okinawa Liberty and People's Rights movement as the origin of the 'Okinawa Struggle (*Okinawa tōsō*)', and connected with various contemporary protests that concerned the Okinawan activists at the time: opposition to *kimigayo*,<sup>23</sup> the Kin Bay anti-oil refinery movement, boycotting the Self Defense Force job advertising in Okinawa, protest against US military training, and opposition to the New Ishigaki Airport (Isa 1998: 253).

Arakawa, however, in his article written in 1970 (reprinted in 1996), strongly criticised the view that regards Jahana as the 'origin of the Okinawa Struggle', expressed by, for example, Kohazu Eikou, editor of the *Okinawa Minken* newsletter

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<sup>22</sup> The reasons for excluding Okinawa from the self-government procedure that existed in other parts of Japan, and from national elections, are unclear. Parliamentary discussion on this topic was suppressed by other agendas that were considered more urgent, such as diplomatic concerns. Ōta argues that this case is an example of the traditional discriminatory treatment against Okinawa, which has been a consistent feature in Japanese politics until today (Ōta 1996a: 189–190).

<sup>23</sup> Many Okinawans oppose the use of *Kimigayo*, the national anthem during Imperial Japan, which has still been sung at official ceremonies, and became formally a national anthem in May 1999.

(Kohazu 1971 cited in Arakawa 1996: 207). Kohazu describes Jahana as the pioneer of 'the Okinawa Struggle', which, according to Arakawa, revealed the common strategy of Jahana's movement and the reversion movement: the protest strategy to overcome predicaments by way of integrating with the state, mentally and institutionally. In my view, Arakawa's criticism of the interpretation of Jahana's struggle as pioneering the Okinawa Struggle is also directed at the personification of Jahana's struggle as the struggle of 'Okinawans' in general.

Chapter 5 will examine Arakawa's point further, in relation to the critique against the strategy, organisation and collective identity of the reversion movement. A famous Japanese writer, Oe Kenzaburo, during his sojourn in Okinawa in 1969–70, observed at the time, 'the image of Jahana Noboru was revived, which in turn re-defined the outline and shades of the Okinawans' reversion movement to the Homeland' (cited in Ōsato 1996: 623). Isa comments that only a few articles on Jahana were published each year until 1968. However, the number increased to 16 in 1969, 20 in 1970, and 38 in 1971, reflecting the heightening public concern towards the reversion, the reversion movement and what it meant to Okinawans. However, by the late 1990s, only low levels of interest in Jahana were demonstrated (Isa 1998: 252–4, Ōsato 1996). The high level of interest in Jahana during the reversion movement period indicated the strengthened collective identity of a 'movement' of the Okinawan people, drawing on Jahana as a symbolic figure of oppression. Nevertheless, significantly, Arakawa's strong discomfort reveals that the construction of this collective identity was a subject of dispute in the community of protest, even when interest in Jahana was at its peak in 1970.

Smits provides an important analysis in English, which regards Jahana's struggle in terms of Okinawa's ambiguous relations with Japan, as well as the ambiguity of Japan itself as a nation in the late nineteenth century. Importantly, Smits also points out that Jahana's struggle, far from being an all-encompassing 'Okinawan' movement, was a struggle against class divisions within Okinawan society (2002: 112). His isolation was mainly due to his conflict with members of the former aristocratic elite, who stuck to the old Ryūkyūan social order.

Furthermore, Jahana's progressive movement was almost detached from the rest of the society. The Okinawan People's Rights movement was basically a local elite's movement, that had knowledge of, and access to, the academic and political world on the mainland. In this sense, Jahana's 'Okinawa Struggle' was isolated from the ordinary mass Okinawan population, for example, the farmers in Okinawan villages where he had his roots (Arakawa 1996: 207).

In the contemporary context, it should be stressed that evaluation of Jahana's movement continues to constitute an important point of dispute over institutional integration with the state for political reform, as a strategy of protest. Arakawa (1973, 1996, 2000) has most fiercely expressed his opposition to the strategy of institutionally integrating with the body politic of Japan, which gives priority to achieving integration in equal terms with mainland Japan. Furthermore, some of the anti-base organisations and protest groups today struggle to reach the general public, that is, to politically involve non-affiliated citizens in their collective action. Identifying with Jahana's movement as the 'pioneer of the Okinawa Struggle' may have ramifications for the contemporary protest actors, by repeating similar isolation from the mass members of the Okinawan society.

#### *'Okinawan Studies'*

In the post-annexation period, 'Okinawan Studies' (*Okinawa gaku*) played an important role in promoting the idea of Okinawa as part of Japan, by exploring commonalities between Japan and Ryūkyū in ancient records of local literature and culture. Meiji Japanese scholars, including anthropologists such as Tashiro Antei, Torii Ryūzō and Tsuboi Shōgorō (see Yonetani 2000), and later, Iha Fuyu, contributed to the concept of Ryūkyūans as ethnically an integral part of Japan, with evidence of remaining Japanese ancient elements in Ryūkyūan society (Siddle 1998: 124–5, also see Tomiyama 1998). Since the early twentieth century, Okinawan intellectuals including Iha Fuyu, Higashionna Kanjun, and Nakahara Zenchū contributed to the research on Okinawan indigenous cultural history and literature, represented most notably by the study of the *Omoro sōshi*, a collection of local folk

verses written during the Early Ryūkyū period.<sup>24</sup> Iha Fuyu, often referred to as the ‘father of Okinawan Studies’,<sup>25</sup> emphasised the common heritage of the Okinawan and Japanese languages, which locates his argument in line with Haneji and Giowan’s *Nichiryū dōso ron*.<sup>26</sup>

However, the political standpoint of Iha was often contradictory, and indicative of the internal differences in defining collective identity in today’s anti-base protest on Okinawa. Iha’s work basically supported the Okinawans’ evolutionary path of ‘becoming Japanese’. However, he developed a strong commitment to establishing a clear sense of Okinawa being one united entity, which had yet to be developed at the end of the nineteenth century. Iha contributed to constructing what Oguma calls the emergence of ‘Okinawan nationalism’, transcending internal regional differences (Oguma 1998: 293).

However, in his study of Ryūkyū’s linguistic, historical and cultural ancestry, Iha could not be free from an ulterior mission to promote the interest of Okinawans in general, by stressing the ‘same’ elements between Ryūkyū and Japan. Yonetani (2000: 17) explains that the expression of Ryūkyūan identity in terms of homogeneity with Japan was infused with what she calls a ‘politics of sameness’, since the underlying intent was to minimise discrimination of Okinawa based on distinctiveness from mainland Japan; interpreted as rationalisation for further discrimination. Nevertheless, the argument of ‘sameness’ left considerable room for interpretation in terms of Ryūkyū’s distinctiveness (Yonetani 2000: 31). Tomiyama (1998: 170) emphasises that Iha was on ‘the quest for ‘a common ancestor’ as a third category that is neither “Japanese” nor “Ryūkyūan”’, which preserves ‘dissimilarity’, that is, Ryūkyū’s uniqueness, on which he based ‘Okinawan’ identity.<sup>27</sup> In his later works, he positioned Ryūkyū amongst other ‘southern islanders’ including

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<sup>24</sup> Okinawan studies as a field is analysed in detail in numerous works (Hiyane 1981, 1996, Hokama 2002, Kano 1993, Kinjo & Takara 1984, in English Siddle 1998, Tomiyama 1998, Yonetani 2000)

<sup>25</sup> For example Iha 1942, 1974-76.

<sup>26</sup> Ryūkyūan pro-Japanese politicians such as Haneji Choshu in 1673 and Giwan Chōhō in the 1870s had insisted on the common ancestry of Ryūkyū and mainland Japan (*Nichiryū dōso ron*). Linguistic exploration made by a British scholar, Basil Hall Chamberlain, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century backed this perspective (Siddle 1998: 125).

<sup>27</sup> Iha was strongly influenced by Torii’s research regarding this emphasis. For relations between Torii and Iha’s works, see Tomiyama 1998.



indigenous Taiwanese, Malays and the Ainu<sup>28</sup> and also pointed out the mainland Japanese ancestral connection with the ‘southern islanders’, emphasising the ‘sameness’ there (Iha 1974–6: vol. 11). However, he attempted to establish ‘Okinawa’ as a unique entity within ‘the pluralist vision of the Japanese state’, which consisted of many nations and peoples in Asia (Siddle 1998: 126).<sup>29</sup> Through his work, Iha attempted to provide ‘evidence of Ryūkyūan cultural achievements upon which a sense of local pride could be based’ (Christy 1993: 624), that is, his wish was to establish a strong sense of a ‘Ryūkyūan’ subject, to be carried by the generations to come in modern Okinawa.

Influential as Iha’s work and his arguments were in Okinawan studies, Iha’s version of ‘Ryūkyūan’ identity did not necessarily amount to a general consensus among Okinawan analysts. Shimabukuro Zenpatsu (1888–1953), an intellectual who came after Iha, called attention to the ‘ethnic self-perception’ of the people themselves.

Ordinary Ryūkyūans call mainland Japanese people ‘*yamatonchu*’ (*yamato* people) and differentiate them from ‘*uchinanchu*’ (Ryūkyūans). This sense of distinction has existed since early Meiji. Isn’t it sensible to think Ryūkyūans are quite intimately connected to the *yamato* people, but nevertheless belong to a different ethnicity? (Yakabi 1998: 121)

Giving credit to Iha and others’ ‘scientific’ approach to the question of ‘Okinawan’ identity based on ‘objective’ findings from a wide range of academic research in anthropology, linguistics, ethnology, religion and history, Shimabukuro stressed the importance of the ‘subjective’ element, that is, what ordinary locals normally felt and perceived about who they were (Yakabi 1998: 122). Shimabukuro’s argument highlights the difficulty in forming a consensus among critical local intellectuals and activists regarding the self-definition of ‘Okinawans’, which continues today:

... despite the rhetoric of many anti-base activists and the emotional power of their message, Okinawans are not themselves united in their understanding of the past and have not succeeded in forging a ‘nation’ in Okinawa ... [T]hese divisions are a continuation of an older discourse on

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<sup>28</sup> However, in his earlier work, Iha distinguished Ryūkyūans from the Ainu and the indigenous Taiwanese in that the latter two were described as ‘peoples’ whereas Ryūkyū was a ‘nation’ (Tomiya 1998: 171).

<sup>29</sup> See ‘Ko-Ryūkyū no Seiji’ (1922) in Iha 1974–6: vol.1.

colonialism and modernisation, identity and history, that stretches back to the early days of Okinawa Prefecture (Siddle 1998: 133).

Defining 'Ryūkyū' as a nation through a sense of an historical 'Ryūkyūan' subject was Iha's major achievement. However, the emergence of an 'Okinawan' identity within Japan was such that it perpetuated the endless possibility of contention, in terms of how Okinawa is separate from, or an integral part of, *yamato*. Importantly, the increasing tendency of defining 'Ryūkyū' and 'Okinawan' identity within the framework of a dichotomous contrast with mainland Japan (i.e. non-Okinawan Japan, expressed as *yamato*) had become prominent by the early twentieth century.

#### *The Linguistic Debate*

Japanese folk scholars such as Yanagita Kunio and Origuchi Shinobu also argued what they considered as essential Japaneseness resided in Okinawan religious practices, dialect, music and crafts. Representation of Okinawan culture as the archaic and primitive version of Japan, however, was not agreeable to many local Okinawans, especially the elite, who felt the need to overcome political exclusion within Japan at a time of imperialist nation-building and modernisation.

A linguistic debate in 1940 indicates that the necessity for integration into the nation, in the era leading up to the Pacific War, was a contentious concern among Okinawans. Yanagi Muneyoshi attacked the language standardisation policy and the extreme measures it involved. When Okinawan-specific vocabulary or dialect slipped out of their mouth, children were given a *hogen-fuda* (dialect sign) to hang from their neck as a punishment until they found another classmate who made the same mistake. As a founder of the Folk Art Association, Yanagi urged Okinawans to be proud of Okinawan characteristics, not only their language but also traditional Ryūkyūan dress and architecture. Yanagi was 'a nationalist seeking to forge a Japanese identity from the diversity of regional cultures which could be found within the Japanese empire' (Clarke 1997: 193).<sup>30</sup> Yanagi's view on Okinawa reflects his cultural-nationalist concern that rapid modernisation and Westernisation were stifling the variety of ascetic and spiritual characteristics that resided in regional cultures,

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<sup>30</sup> He often clashed with political authority for his criticism of the oppression of local language, art and culture, not only in Okinawa, but also in Korea, Taiwan and northern Japan (Clarke 1997: 194).

which he thought should constitute a Japanese identity.

Yanagi's opinion, expressed at a symposium, developed into a nation-wide debate involving Okinawan and mainland newspapers. The locals were predominantly opposed to Yanagi's idea. They thought his view was that of an outsider, or of a romantic tourist who did not comprehend many Okinawans' understanding of assimilation as something that would assist them to overcome economic hardship and discrimination. Some locals supported Yanagi's position, but they were outnumbered (Clarke 1997: 194–5). Representation of Okinawan culture as the archaic and primitive version of Japan was not agreeable to the local Okinawans, especially the elite. As in other places in Japan, social pressure for sacrificing individual interests to the state's military activities was growing, and the myth of the divine emperor was being strengthened. The pressure to assimilate with Japan, at least partly, explains the tragedy of the battle of Okinawa in 1945, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the pre-WWII period since Okinawa's annexation. Many Okinawans came to actively accept the need to overcome their 'backwardness' as perceived in the context of the new special and temporal imagining of the Japanese nation. The 'assimilationist' orientation of the Okinawans, which emerged in this period, was later expressed more aggressively by the reversion movement in the 1950s and 1960s (Tomiyama 1997: 270). Even after reversion to Japan, this orientation has influenced the content and strategy of protest, especially in seeking entitlement to the Japanese Constitution (Arakawa 1996b).

Nevertheless, the idea of Okinawa as a separate entity from Japan with unique 'Okinawan' denominators was gradually emerging. To what extent Okinawans should assimilate into Japan remains a source of disagreement among Okinawans. Self-perception of 'Okinawa' as distinct from mainland Japan continues to provide an important fissuring point amongst the actors of contemporary political struggle in Okinawa today. The contention over defining 'Okinawa' dates back to the historical development of the Okinawan subject, as evidenced by the writers

examined in this chapter.

This dissertation suggests, nevertheless, that insofar as discrimination, disadvantages and hardships in this period were explained as a result of being ‘Okinawan’ — different from Japanese — they contributed to the development of a historical narrative of Okinawa’s marginalisation. These are deep historical roots to the myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ against marginalisation that different actors within the community of protest can tap into. Jahana’s struggle for equal political rights, in particular, was important in forming the early part of the myth of the ‘Okinawan struggle’.

## **The Battle of Okinawa and ‘Okinawan Pacifism’**

### **Introduction**

The Battle of Okinawa, recalled by the US military as the ‘bloodiest battle in the Pacific’, took place in 1945, and killed at least one quarter of the local population. It is one of the most important events in Okinawan history. Most Okinawan survivors’ lives were severely interrupted in one way or another by losing members of family, houses, and having to relocate where they lived after the battle.

This chapter examines how the war experience — the most powerfully inscribed component of the Okinawan narrative of marginalisation — has been converted into political action and contemporary protest against the US military bases. The ‘Okinawan’ brand of pacifism derived from the residents’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa has been a significant source of collective identity, and has helped develop the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ or the general notion of a continuous, singular ‘movement’.

In the Okinawan community of protest, social movements towards ‘correct’ representation of the residents’ experiences in the Battle through ‘peace guides’ and war site tourism have been a simultaneous expression of anti-base protest in the contemporary context. This chapter points out that, for many local activists, the issue of representing history and protest against the US bases have been synonymous.

However, strategically, organisationally and in terms of reform agendas, these struggles have nevertheless been separate. When discussed in the context of the critique of the Ministry of Education’s and other authorities’ attempts to conceal or downplay Japan’s past atrocities towards minority citizens (in Okinawa) in WWII, the ‘Okinawan’ anti-war messages have merged with the pacifist post-war Constitution and mainstream post-war anti-militarism in Japan. That is, the

Okinawan and Japanese experiences in WWII as ‘victims’ are combined into a qualitatively similar anti-war message for ‘peace’, connected to similar reform agendas, to those addressed by the Japanese left. Yet, the political activism that derives from the Okinawans’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa cannot be contained in a sub-compartment of a larger framework of the Japanese peace movement. In the Okinawan community of protest, the citizens’ efforts to represent the experience of the Battle of Okinawa in certain ways has always been related to the historical struggle of the Okinawan people against other forms of marginalisation: in particular, the continuing subjection to the dominant military presence. However, residents’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa has not quite functioned as a basis of an organisational coalition for the all-encompassing struggles of ‘Okinawans’ against all forms of marginalisation.

Nevertheless, a distinctive Okinawan version of pacifism, derived from civilians’ experience in the Battle, has been a source of inspiration for anti-war and anti-base messages and collective action, if not an organisational basis of a unified coalition. It is the presence of a ‘myth’ of one continuous struggle against various forms of marginalisation that links the ‘Okinawan’ version of pacifism to the present opposition to the US bases in Okinawa. The Battle of Okinawa offers significant clues to what constitutes the *idea* of a unified struggle of the Okinawan people, which continues to be valid and convincing, for the locals.

This chapter first examines the activities of the ‘peace guides’ against suppression of residents’ perspectives on the Battle of Okinawa, particularly on the cruelty and aggression of the Japanese military, directed at unarmed residents. The second section reviews the residents’ experiences, as represented commonly in the community of protest. The third section examines specific examples of Okinawan peace movements: challenging the idea of ‘collective suicides’ and preserving audiovisual records on what the Battle of Okinawa was really like. The fourth section analyses the ‘absolute pacifism’ as a ‘framing’ of protest, and what makes it uniquely ‘Okinawan’. It then examines the implications of the recent debate on the alteration of the new Peace Memorial displays, for Okinawan-specific pacifism and

its potential for a unified coalition among different protest actors and for the coherent struggles of ‘Okinawans’.

### **‘Peace Guides’**

War memorials and old battle sites from the 1945 warfare concentrated in the southern region are publicly treated as important historical and cultural assets in Okinawa. The Okinawan tourist industry, non-government organisations and municipal governments provide special tours for groups and individuals travelling to Okinawa from outside to learn about the only ground battle on Japanese territory in WWII. Often called the ‘peace study (*heiwa gakushū*) tours’, these educational tours involve taking participant groups on buses to selected areas of the Battle of Okinawa including bomb shelter remains, battlefields, war memorials, and stories of people’s lives under fire related to particular war sites.

These tours are promoted by the Okinawan prefectural government, particularly after the construction of the new Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum (*Heiwa Kinen Shiryōkan*) in 1999, and are organised by non-government organisations including the Okinawa Prefecture Tourist Volunteer Guides’ Society (*Okinawa Ken Kankō Borantia Gaido Tomo no Kai*)<sup>1</sup>, and also by some government organisations such as the Okinawa Foundation (*Okinawa Kyōkai*)<sup>2</sup> and the Naha City Council. The ‘peace guides’ are mostly volunteers or workers at the City Council; targeted visitors include secondary schools who choose Okinawa as a school excursion destination,<sup>3</sup> workplace unions and citizens’ groups with a strong interest in war and other social issues.

War site tourism in Okinawa has gone through significant transformations to take its current shape. Itokazu Keiko is a respected anti-war figure in the Okinawan community of protest, and member of the Socialist Mass Party, a popular local

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<sup>1</sup> The Okinawa Prefecture Tourist Volunteer Guides’ Society (*Okinawa Ken Kankō Borantia Gaido Tomo no Kai*) was founded by the Okinawa Convention and Visitors’ Bureau, an organisation engaged in research activities related to marketing tourism in Okinawa.

<sup>2</sup> The Okinawa Foundation (*Okinawa Kyōkai*) is under the auspices of the Japanese government (the Cabinet Office). Until 1972, it was formally known as the Southern Brethren Support Society (*Nanpō Dōhō Engokai*), formed in mainland Japan in support of Okinawa’s repatriation to Japan.

<sup>3</sup> According to a local newspaper article, some 130,000 students on average visit Okinawa in a year (*Ryūkyū Shimpo* 25 May 2001).

political party with a general anti-war, anti-base policy. She was a pioneer ‘peace guide’ before being elected as the only female member of the Prefectural Assembly in 1992. Since 1966, Itokazu had worked for a tourist bus company as a ‘bus guide’, working on buses wearing a uniform and holding a microphone, giving tourists explanations and stories related to the war remains. At the time, it was a standard practice of the bus companies in Okinawa that organised tours for Japanese tourists to deliver stories with emphases on heroic deaths of the mainland soldiers in the battle sites concentrated in southern Okinawa.

When Itokazu’s mother died, for the first time she heard from her aunts about her mother’s experience in the Battle of Okinawa. When evacuating to the northern region to escape gunfire, Itokazu’s late mother lost her two small children from malnutrition, lost her sanity and held her dead son’s body for days. Itokazu, born in 1947, remembered her mother only as a cheerful person; she never talked about war, like many other war survivors. It was then that she started to question the ways in which battle sites and war memorials were presented at tourist destinations in Okinawa. Itokazu’s feeling was backed up by emerging local critical voices in the late 1980s, against suppressed and insufficient recognition given to the civilian Okinawans’ experiences in the Battle. In the early 1980s, *Monbushō* (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) removed from history textbooks the part that described Japanese soldiers’ atrocities directed at Okinawan residents together with other cases of Japan’s aggression towards civilians in Asia, including the Nanking Massacre during WWII. Since criticism amplified towards the revisionist falsification of Japanese history books, Okinawan and mainland Japanese critics had publicly called for recognition of cruelties imposed on the Okinawan residents by the Japanese military (see Taira 1998).

Such criticism was also directed at the local ‘bus guides’ for glorifying mainland Japanese soldiers and local residents’ deaths in the Battle, without addressing the responsibility of the state. At one of the local discussion groups, she gained support from Ishihara Masaie, history professor at the Okinawa International University, who had been working on residents-centred history of the Battle. Itokazu



and her colleagues started a study group on Okinawan residents' experiences and the Japanese military's behaviour, and staged a campaign to change Okinawan war site tourism. This included battles with the bus companies by introducing stories of Okinawan residents, Korean forced labourers and also 'comfort women' in the Battle.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1992, Itokazu has been a member of the Prefectural Assembly (in 2003 in her third term), and one of two representatives of the Okinawan Women Act against Military and Violence, a local women's protest organisation against the US bases (see chapter 8). Her political platform centres around peace, environmental protection and women's rights (Barrel & Tanaka 1997: 10–5). Being a peace activist and an opponent to the military bases is accepted in the community of Okinawa as a natural combination of political positions that does not require explanation.

The Okinawa Peace Network is a non-governmental association of volunteer 'peace guides'. Its approximately 180 members share a common interest in learning and promoting education on residents' experiences in the Battle of Okinawa. The main activities of the members are operating as 'peace guides', holding talk sessions on war experiences given by survivors, and other activities related to preserving historical assets such as war remains (An Okinawa Peace Network member, Interview, February 2002). According to one of the oldest members, Kawamitsu Akihiro, the Network is a very loose association, with a wide range of members' social status, age, gender, occupation and political and ideological views, which it makes no effort to influence or survey.<sup>5</sup> However, the minimal guideline of the Network is 'not to glorify "voluntary" deaths for the victory of Japan as courageous or honourable. We do not endorse views that romanticise the aestheticism of civilians' deaths, for example, those in the Himeyuri Troop,<sup>6</sup> which we sometimes encounter' (Kawamitsu, Interview, February 2002).

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<sup>4</sup>See her website, <http://www5a.biglobe.ne.jp/~keiko-i/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Kawamitsu says when the Network was formed in the early 1990s, most members were schoolteachers, but nowadays, members who are 'mothers' seem to constitute a conspicuous portion (Interview, February 2002).

<sup>6</sup>Himeyuri (Princess Lily) Troops were one of the schoolgirl troops who worked during the Battle as 'field nurses', who died tragically in the Battle and are commemorated in a museum, Himeyuri Peace Memorial (*Himeyuri Heiwa Kinenkan*), specially dedicated to them. They are perhaps the most

Within the circle of ‘peace guides’ and people concerned with the Battle of Okinawa today, there is a strong determination to reveal, learn and educate people about the Okinawan residents’ experiences in the Battle, against glorification of war, referred to as ‘Yasukunification’ by the Okinawa Peace Network, after the famous shrine for the war dead in Tokyo (Figal 2001). This has resulted from a social movement since the early 1980s, staged by Okinawans like Itokazu and her colleagues, which was helped by the growing criticism in mainland Japan against the Japanese government on the textbook debate, which worked as a political opportunity. Since then, greater efforts have been made by local historians, war survivors and their families to record stories that place emphases on the Okinawan citizens’ experiences. The former administration under Ōta Masahide (1990–98) — also a significant historian of Okinawa — was dedicated to a ‘peace promotion policy’, highlighted by the construction of a monument located on Mabuni Hill, called the Cornerstone of Peace (*Heiwa no Ishiji*), which shows the names of casualties in the battles, of all nationalities (Figal 1997, 2001). Descriptions of the Battle of Okinawa below follow the general story lines of the volunteer ‘peace guides’, local historians, and especially Ōta and other anti-base and peace activists.

### **Okinawan Residents in the Battle of Okinawa**

After the US forces crushed the Japanese navy in the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway in May and June 1942, the US applied a strategy of ‘island-hopping’, which concentrated the total forces of the army, navy and in the air, to corner and destroy Japanese forces, to ‘seize small island targets, which could then be used as bases to cover the next similar advance’ (Beasley 1990: 209). In response, the Japanese military started to enhance their air forces all over the Okinawa islands and Taiwan. Local farmlands and residences were turned into airfields, and residents had to provide labour for base construction.

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famous war victims in Japan, widely publicised by a film, the *Tower of Himeyuri* (*Himeyuri no tō*) remade in 1982. On victimisation of the Himeyuri Troop, and its replication in the rape case of a 12-year-old girl in 1995, see Angst (2002).

The overseas settlers were among the first Okinawan war casualties in WWII.<sup>7</sup> In 1942, the South Sea Islands were severely attacked by the US forces. A considerable number of civilians, including many Okinawans, were killed directly by the Japanese soldiers, or forced to commit suicide by the Japanese military authorities, before being captured by the enemy. More than 12,000 Okinawans died in the South Sea Island colonies. In August 1943, *Tsushima-maru*, a ship with 1,700 people on board, including 800 schoolchildren, which left Naha port to evacuate from possible US air attacks, was sunk by a US submarine near Amami Island, and killed 1,500. This remains a particularly tragic event in the local history.<sup>8</sup> In March 1944, the 32nd Okinawa Defense Troop was established to defend the Southwest Islands (*Nansei Shoto*) of Japan, including Okinawa. In July, combat soldiers were brought into this region from mainland Japan, and local houses, schools and community centres were occupied by the military and turned into barracks. In October, US B-29 planes raided and burned down 90 per cent of Naha City.<sup>9</sup>

George Kerr summarises Japan's policy on Okinawa immediately before the US landing:

Tokyo gave little thought to the civil economy on distant Okinawa and did virtually nothing to prepare it for the crisis of invasion ... Okinawa retained importance only as a potential field of battle, a distant border area in which the oncoming enemy could be checked, pinned down, and ultimately destroyed (Kerr 1958: 466).

The point Kerr makes is that the safety of Okinawa was given low priority from the beginning.<sup>10</sup> For the civilian political leaders in mainland Japan, the mission of the Okinawan Defense Troops was to delay, if not to stop completely, the allied advance towards Japan. Consistently throughout the event, extremely little attention was paid to the defence of Okinawa itself, and there was no agreed preparation made between the military and the civilian leaders in Tokyo on the overall combat strategy to be

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<sup>7</sup> In the 1930s, Okinawans were encouraged to move to new Japanese colonies in Manchuria and the South Sea Islands (Mariana, Palau, Caroline and Marshall).

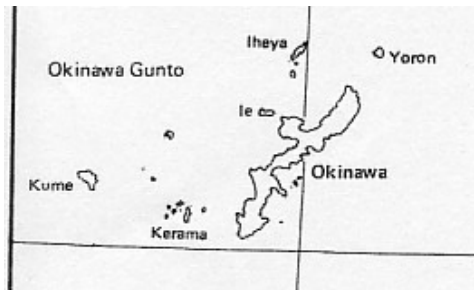
<sup>8</sup> Many other ships had been sunk before this particular incident, but the military kept those incidents secret from Okinawans (Shinjo 1997: 203).

<sup>9</sup> This October air raid forced 60,000 Okinawans to flee to Kyūshū, and 20,000 to Taiwan, before March 1945 (Shinjo 1997: 203).

<sup>10</sup> See Ōta 1996: 77.

adopted in the case of a US landing. Japanese troops on Okinawa were composed of no more than about 86,400 soldiers and 10,000 sailors from the mainland, plus locally recruited Okinawan adults and middle-school children, who received no more than instant combat training and very primitive weapons. Meanwhile, 548,000 US soldiers in 1,500 warships landed on the tiny Kerama Islands on 26 March 1945 (the total population of Okinawa was 450,000 at that time) (Map 3.1).

Map 3.1 Kerama Islands (Richard J. Pearson, *Archaeology of the Ryūkyū Islands*, University of Hawaii Press, 1969: 15)



One of the most tragic aspects of the Battle that is emphasised in local stories of the Okinawan ‘peace guides’ and anti-base activists is the forced mass suicides. The Japanese military commanders and the imperial education had indoctrinated the non-combatant citizens to end their lives ‘bravely’, rather than being captured by the enemy. In the small islands of Kerama, the imperial education and assimilation policies had ensured that the virtue of self-sacrifice had prevailed. In Tokashiki Island and Zamami Island, in the Kerama Islands, only a small fraction of Japanese forces were deployed. The local Japanese troop leaders ordered about 700 islanders to commit suicide ‘with determination, so that the combat activities of the troops would not be disturbed by the non-combatants’ (Ōta 1996: 92). The villagers accepted the order, and killed their own family and village members, and themselves, using household objects such as axes, razors, hoes, rat poisons and wooden rods. However, Ōta argues that in retrospect the suicides were unnecessary, considering the leaders and core members of the Japanese troops survived, and surrendered to the US soldiers after the villagers died (Ōta 1996: 96). Most villagers believed dying for the emperor and the state was the right thing to do; the residents believed they would be raped and killed if caught by the US soldiers. A member of the Okinawan

Women Act Against Military and Violence, Miyagi Harumi, writes that in Zamami Island soldiers had told the residents their 'hero stories' (*buyūden*) of raping and killing in the Chinese battlefields (Miyagi 2000: 146–7). Similar individual and group suicides took place in other parts of the islands of Okinawa.

On 1 April, Americans landed on the Okinawa Main Island. Central and southern regions of Okinawa Island turned into a combat zone, but only 30,000 people managed to flee to the northern region. The majority of the 450,000 population were left behind and were caught in the middle of the face-to-face combat zone where the American and Japanese soldiers were fighting. The residents, a majority of them females and adolescents, were seriously engaged in combat training with bamboo sticks picked from the surrounding islands immediately prior to the US landing (Ōta 1996: 83, 86).

As the American raids intensified, bullets destroyed almost everything on the earth, an experience remembered as the 'typhoon of steel'. The residents took refuge inside family tombs,<sup>11</sup> and in natural or emergency caves (*gama*) that they had dug in between their farming and construction obligations. Some accommodated more than a thousand people, and were also used as hospitals. In May, the Japanese forces were reduced by 80 per cent, and the officers and soldiers desperately escaped into these caves and tombs. The officers usually occupied the least dangerous and most comfortable areas inside; scarce food was kept and cooked for them; many residents were assigned tiny areas next to the entrance, and were exposed to the explosives and fire attacks of the US soldiers. It was common for non-combatant residents to be refused entry into the emergency caves and left to die in the middle of US machinegun and bomb attacks. Concerned that the Americans would locate the caves by hearing them, soldiers immediately killed crying children with their swords, or ordered the parents to stifle children under three.

Many Okinawans believed that it would be safer to stay close to the soldiers, and remained on the central-southern Okinawa Island. They were wrong. 'Okinawa Defense Troops' looted, raped and killed

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<sup>11</sup> Similar to the Chinese style, Okinawan tombs are traditionally as big as a small house, accommodating generations of family members.

ordinary people whom they were supposed to be defending. The residents soon came to see the Japanese soldiers as a much greater threat than the enemy US soldiers (Oshiro 1998: 479).

Contrary to the image of barbaric rapists spread by the Japanese war propaganda, Ōta recalls the US forces' well-planned rescue activities to provide the local non-combatant residents with safety, materials for surviving and equipment to maintain basic hygiene. US wartime policies towards non-combatants did save thousands of residents' lives, out of an interest in controlling the residents and in managing the islands congenially to their strategic advantage (Ōta 1996: 106).

Because of the lack of agricultural land and rapid population growth, Okinawans had been dependent on imported foodstuff from other parts of Japan before the war. Since all the ships were taken by the military and used for military purposes, and sea transportation was blocked, food was desperately short.<sup>12</sup> In this critical situation, when everyone was starving, the Japanese military staff had free access to food. They ordered the residents to provide what small amount they had, such as brown sugar saved for emergencies. Thus, a significant number of the non-combatant population helplessly died of malnutrition and malaria. This time, deaths from eating poisonous *sotetsu* palm tree extract were too common to shock anyone (Ōta 1997: 50–1). The military also justified the need to provide for the sexual needs of the soldiers. Some of the officers took 'comfort women' into the caves with them. The military set up as many as 130 official brothels ('comfort stations') all over the archipelago. Local Okinawan women were recruited, and approximately 1,000 Korean women were transported by sea, to be subjected to violence and sexual slavery (Takazato 1998).

While encouraging and forcing residents to commit mass suicides to prove loyalty to the emperor, the Japanese soldiers saw that Okinawans were essentially different from the Japanese, hence, inclined to be disloyal. There were a considerable number of returnees from emigration to Hawaii, South America, and

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<sup>12</sup> The local population was obliged to provide food both for the soldiers and for themselves. Foodstuffs or any living necessities were under strict military control, allowing the locals little free access to them. The residents worked at construction sites digging caves and building airfields from early in the morning, and in the fields, farming, until midnight. After the US attacks commenced in the islands, people who took refuge in northern Okinawa had no means to survive, other than stealing crops from the local farmers, creating deadly tensions within the civilian population (Ōta 1997: 50–1).

other places, which added to the perception that the Okinawan population contained ‘non-Japanese’ elements.<sup>13</sup> After the US landing, the Japanese Defense Troops announced that the use of any language other than standard Japanese was banned and communication in Okinawan language would be regarded as spying and punished accordingly (Ōta 1996: 179). Mainland soldiers and officers privately and officially executed many local civilians for ‘spying activities’ without solid evidence.

After Japan surrendered on 15 August in the mainland, the Japanese naval forces also executed several locally conscripted soldiers as spies for simply suggesting their wills to stop futile attempts to fight further. In most cases, all the family members of the soldiers, including infants, were suddenly attacked and killed. The ‘spies’ in many cases were locals who were caught and released by US soldiers. The Japanese soldiers shot them from behind when they surrendered to the Americans (Ōta 1996: 127–30).<sup>14</sup> These stories are important reminder that the Okinawans had to fulfil their obligations as ‘Japanese’, but were never fully trusted or protected as such.

The most common view is that the Battle of Okinawa commenced on 1 April 1945, when US troops landed on Okinawa Main Island, and ended on 23 June with the suicides of the commanding officers of the Japanese defending army. By setting the dates this way, Ōta argues that important events that happened before and after the supposed beginning and end of the Battle are overlooked. ‘Collective suicides’ of the residents in the Kerama islands, and resident killing in Kume Island, both instigated by Japanese military personnel, happened, respectively, after the US landings on 26 March and 26 June. Until 7 September, desperate resistance against the US forces by the armed Japanese and local officers, soldiers and local non-

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<sup>13</sup> Ishii Torao, a commander assigned to Okinawa, described the Okinawan general public in a 1934 military document addressed to a mainland army officer: ‘obedient and tame reflecting the tropical upbringing, but lacking in independent characters, therefore, not to be expected to devote their lives to defend the state’ (Ōta 1996: 60–1).

<sup>14</sup> In one such incident on Kume Island in June 1945, a post office clerk was executed as a spy, for being captured by the US troops and carrying the Americans’ letter, that recommended capitulation, to the Japanese navy troop hiding in the mountain (Ōta 1996: 133–46).

combatant citizens continued (Ōta 2000: 13–5). The Battle of Okinawa killed more than 147,959 Okinawans,<sup>15</sup> nearly a third of the whole Okinawan population.

### **The Battle of Okinawa: the Cornerstone of the ‘Okinawan Struggle’?**

#### *Challenging the Idea of ‘Collective Suicide’*

As the ‘bus guide’ Itokazu Keiko encountered, the ‘screening’ of Japanese school history textbooks by *Monbushō* in the early 1980s caused a dispute about the textbook description of Japanese soldiers’ aggression towards Okinawan civilians. The ‘screening’ initially invited protests from the Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China for deleting and modifying descriptions of Japan’s invasions and aggressions against civilians during WWII.<sup>16</sup> Then, the dispute encompassed many Okinawan members of the community, because *Monbushō* also ‘screened’ descriptions of Japanese behaviour during the Battle of Okinawa, significantly reducing the number of civilian deaths, and removed references to residents murdered by Japanese troops. Historian Ienaga Saburo took the *Monbushō*’s screening of his history textbook to court.<sup>17</sup> With regards to Okinawa, he made a point that the textbooks should make clear that the collective suicides of the civilians were imposed by the military (Taira 1999: 39–40). The local newspaper *Okinawa Times* featured this debate on the front page on 4 July 1982, and the Okinawan Teachers’ Union and other citizens’ groups, as well as the Village Assembly of Kitanakagusuku village in central Okinawa, made a protest statement against *Monbushō* (Arasaki 1992: 184).

The ways in which ‘collective suicides’ were depicted was controversial, and perhaps the most frustrating and painful topic for the war survivors and families of

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<sup>15</sup> The figure is the number of identified casualties engraved on the Cornerstone of Peace in Mabuni Hill (Okinawa Heiwa Network 1998 [1997]: 60–1).

<sup>16</sup> *Monbushō* proposed (but did not enforce, due to claims from other countries) following changes with regards to these countries: agitation for Korean independence following the 1910 annexation by Japan be described as ‘rioting’; that the movement of the Japanese army into the Asian continent in the 1930s be described as an ‘advance’ rather than an ‘invasion’; and that in accounts of the 1937 episode known in the West as the Rape of Nanking, when Japanese forces entered that city and 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese women, children and POWs were left dead, the event be described as an effect of the ‘confusion’ of the times and the casualty figures be reduced (Field 1993: 62–3).

<sup>17</sup> Since 1965, Ienaga filed three lawsuits. The first suit was settled as late as in 1993: the Supreme Court judged in favour of the constitutionality of the state’s textbook screening (Nozaki & Inokuchi 114–9).



war casualties on Okinawa. Taira explains that using the word *jiketsu* (suicide) for civilians' collective suicides distorts the meaning of it. As opposed to the word *jisatsu*, which is normally used for 'suicide', 'to call someone's suicide *jiketsu* is to honour and glorify the person who had the extraordinary courage to kill himself or herself in this manner' (Taira 1999: 42). Descriptions endorsed by *Monbushō* choose to separate the death by suicide from other forms of civilian deaths, particularly from murders committed by the military. *Monbushō* insisted on collective *jiketsu* 'being added to any description of the Battle of Okinawa' (Taira 1999: 44). This way, the state's culpability of imposing deaths is smoke-screened by the volunteer act of 'nobility' and bravery of *jiketsu*, making 'civilian deaths comparable to military death' (Field 1993: 63). Field emphasises, 'the civilian atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese army and the collective suicide committed by Okinawan civilians are inseparable' (1993: 66).<sup>18</sup>

It has been common among Okinawan war survivors not to wish to talk about the sufferings they experienced during the Battle. Caution towards their experience being distorted and misrepresented partly explains their reluctance (Taira 1998: 2). The reasons for their silence were complex: not only out of consideration for those who were victimised, but also for the deep psychological wounds of those who unwillingly killed their families, believing in the need for the (forced) suicides to avoid being captured by the enemy. However, the textbook dispute contributed to the rise in the early 1980s of citizens' movements in Okinawan civil society to investigate, record and publicise 'residents' experiences in the Battle.

In 1983, Chibana Shōichi, a villager of Yomitan, for the first time conducted in-depth research on the case of a collective 'compulsory suicide' that happened in *Chibichiri gama* in Yomitan village, based on the stories of the survivors. Villagers and families of the dead knew what happened in the *gama*, but the topic had been

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<sup>18</sup> Field heard the stories of the survivors:

Not only did Japanese soldiers drive Okinawans from their shelters into certain death, suffocate their crying babies, and kill those who had already surrendered and were then sent back by Americans to persuade their fellows to do the same; their presence both explicitly and tacitly prompted episodes of Okinawan collective suicide (Field 1993: 63).

taboo in the village ‘because everyone knew that talking about it would hurt someone’ (Chibana 1988: 140–1). Chibana, born after the war, a mainland Japanese writer Shimojima Tetsurō, and the representative of the *Chibichirigama* Bereaved Families’ Association, Higa Heishin, could break the silence among Yomitan survivors, because none of them lost direct members of their family in the event (Chibana 1988: 140–1).<sup>19</sup> Chibana received more than 500 visitors to the *gama* in one month in 1988, and revived the event of ‘compulsory suicide’ that happened (Chibana 1988: 144).

Chibana, at the time a supermarket owner, also burnt the *hinomaru* flag at the Annual Sports’ Event in 1987 held in Yomitan village, in protest against the pressure exerted on the villagers to use the flag for the event, ignoring the sentiment of the villagers (Field 1993). The villagers’ silence on the subject of ‘compulsory collective suicide’ was in the background of the 1987 flag burning incident. Particularly, many in Asian regions invaded and occupied by the Japanese military have considered the *hinomaru* flag the symbol of war, invasion and murder of the Japanese Empire. For Okinawans, too, Chibana explains, the flag represents the old Japanese Army and the Emperor’s (Hirohito’s) military, which forced the Battle of Okinawa on the people (Chibana 1988: 181). He was a student activist before the reversion, and is an anti-war landowner, who has been demanding the return of an inherited private property inside a US communication facility in Yomitan. Chibana has engaged in multi-faceted protest: the ‘peace guide’ activity; the campaign against the *hinomaru* flag; and against the US military bases, which in his life naturally appear to converge into one struggle: the ‘Okinawan struggle’.

*The One Foot Movement (Okinawa Historical Film Society)*

In 1983, even after 11 years since reversion to Japan, Nakamura Fumiko recalls, the survivors ‘firmly kept their silence about their own experience’ (Nakamura Fumiko, Interview, February 2002). Nakamura is Secretary General of the Okinawa Historical Film Society, a citizens’ group that has been engaged in raising funds and

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<sup>19</sup> The villagers also had a project to build a Statue of Peace made of plaster by sculpture artist Kinjo Minoru, in which a whole village was involved, completed in 1987 (Chibana 1988: 144–7).

purchasing film records of Okinawan residents in the Battle, recorded by US photographers from the National Archive in Washington, D.C., in order to revive and maintain the image of the Battle of Okinawa, with an anti-war message.

The Okinawa Historical Film Society has an office on the fourth floor of a tiny building in a back street of the central district of Naha, which is full of films, books and videotapes. It has only one part-time worker who attends to phone and media inquiries. Nakamura, an eloquent and vibrant 88-year-old retired schoolteacher,<sup>20</sup> says the movement started as a general campaign to promote retelling and recording of the memories of what the Okinawan war survivor residents experienced in the Battle of Okinawa before they pass away.

The group was formed on 8 December 1983. Nakamura says, ‘8 December is a very important day for our group. Very few Okinawan children know the date of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, of which the Battle of Okinawa was a consequence of (Interview, February 2002). Nakamura was vice president of the Okinawan Women’s Association, affiliated to the Japanese Women’s Association. At its Annual General Meeting, held in Naha in December 1983, the Japanese Women’s Association announced an official support for the Okinawan Historical Film Society and its campaign of recording WWII survivors’ war experiences. The Film Society has only 12–13 members, all of whom are on the executive committee today; most of them are prominent members of the Okinawan community, including the president of the local newspaper, *Okinawa Times*, university professors such as Ōta, Miyagi Etsujiro, Aniya Masaaki and Ishihara Masaie, and Fukuchi Hiroaki, who has been the leader of the Okinawa Human Rights Council (see chapter 4), as well as other long-time members of the Society such as folk singer Oshiro Shinya.

The idea of purchasing US footages came from former exchange students and local academics who returned from US universities and had learned about the large collection of film records of the Battle stored in Washington. Younger members in Okinawa in the Naha City Workers’ Union and the Okinawa Teachers’ Union contributed to the work involved in the establishment of the Society. Nakasone

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<sup>20</sup>For her biographical record in English see Keyso 2000.

Seizen, a well-known witness of the Battle as a chaperon of the Himeyuri Troops, was selected as representative of the Society. The Society sent Ōta Masahide and Miyagi Etsujiro to the US National Archive in May 1984 to choose the footages. The Japanese name of the Society, ‘One Foot Movement Organisation’ (*Ichi Fiito Undō no Kai*), was inspired by the ‘Ten Feet Movement’, a campaign in Hiroshima that similarly purchased footages from the US. But in Okinawa, Nakamura says, ‘the film records were to become the asset of all Okinawans, so we named it One Foot purchased by every Okinawan, including a small child, for one hundred yen’ (Interview, February 2002).

In May 1984, the film arrived from the US. The Society showed the footages with no sound or narration at the Naha Citizens’ Hall immediately. Despite the heavy storm and rain, the room was full and the audience was pushed out into the corridor. Many elderly people — who would have known the war, but normally never say anything on the topic — were riveted to the screen, and Nakamura still remembers the eerie atmosphere in the room. Films arrived one after another from the US. Consequently, more than five million yen was raised and after the first movie was made with narration, there was no need to raise funds because the videotapes sold explosively and interest even came from the US military stationed on Okinawa (Interview, February 2002).

The Okinawa-specific expression, ‘Life is Treasure’ (*Nuchi du Takara*), today summarises the anti-war and anti-base connection between life, war and peace.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Nakamura was a schoolteacher for forty years is important. Not only have schoolteachers been the leaders of ‘peace education’ (*Heiwa Gakushū*) in Okinawan schools; they also led the reversion movement as well as the anti-war and anti-base movements in post-war Okinawa (see chapter 4). Most Okinawan schoolteachers, like their Japanese counterparts, supported Japan’s war, and taught pupils to be loyal, patriotic and cooperative with the war effort. Nakamura herself recalls, ‘As a teacher I was responsible for instructing the children

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<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the expression was also used for a traffic safety campaign for the Automobile Licensing Centre in 2002.

to respect and honour the country and the Emperor ... I regret to this day that I had to say such things' (Keyso 2000: 39). Nakamura says, after she went back to teaching when the war finished, nobody looked after her children so she had to teach with her baby on her back, and on her way back home she had to find food in the field. It was hard days of surviving but when she thought about the children who died in the war, and the thought that they would never come back struck her like an arrow, with a feeling of remorse for encouraging them to die for the country. Many teachers throughout Japan share the same regret for encouraging dying for the state and victory, Nakamura believes. Then she explained the Japanese Teachers' Union's pacifist slogan, 'We would never send another child to a battlefield', and that Article 9 in the post-war Japanese Constitution was the most important element of her post-war anti-militarism (Interview, February 2002).

The Okinawa Historical Film Society's activities have contributed to establishing a milestone for the peace movements in Okinawa, which is the 'desire for peace, with action' (Nakamura, Interview, February 2002). The main strategy is telling the stories of atrocity and hardships caused by war, which is supposed to naturally lead to the idea that war must be avoided under all circumstances; therefore, the US or any military bases cannot be accepted in Okinawa. Chibana also believes that resurrection of the *gama* stories and construction of the statue will help the viewers realise that in the event of war, the first sufferers are the powerless, such as children and older people, and that war cannot be repeated ever again (Chibana 1988: 144). These peace activists' practices are grounded in the assumption that, at least for most people, it is natural to think this way.

The Okinawa Historical Film Society's role is not to directly oppose any particular US military bases; however, the organisation is very closely associated with the anti-base community of protest in Okinawa. Some Historical Film Society members are also members of other anti-war and anti-base groups such as the *Onetsubo* Anti-War Landowners' Organisation (formed in the same year as the Society, see chapter 6). Furthermore, the Society is one of 34 anti-war and anti-base citizens' (non-party, non-union) organisations that joined the Citizens' Council for Peace

(*Heiwa Shimin Renrakukai*), formed in October 1999 in the lead-up to the 2000 G8 Summit, in opposition to the central government's scheme to relocate Futenma Air Station on Okinawa (<http://www.jca.apc.org/heiwa-sr/jp/nani.html>).<sup>22</sup> The nominal participation of the Film Society in the group of anti-relocation organisations is mainly symbolic and has very little practical influence on the reform agenda. Nevertheless, the matter-of-fact integration between struggles about the present and the past indicates that the Battle of Okinawa does provide a potential frame of protest and a substance of unity among the different protest actors.

*'Absolute Pacifism' as a Framing of Protest*

If the Okinawans had not experienced the Battle of Okinawa, the meanings associated with the act of anti-base protest would have been quite different. Residents' experiences in the Battle of Okinawa have been an ideological resource for the political action. The Battle of Okinawa gives reasons behind the resistance and meaning to the protest action against the bases, the war machinery of the contemporary period. The Battle also represents what makes anti-base protest in Okinawa a social movement, rather than a NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) opposition to hazardous facilities that nobody wants to live near.

Many local activists' recollections and statements on the Battle of Okinawa presented in local newspapers, anti-war literature, and in works of arts displayed, for example, in the Sakima Museum in Futenma<sup>23</sup>, are simultaneously protest expressions against the US military bases on Okinawa. Miyagi Yasuhiro, a leading figure of the protest movement against the construction of a new sea-based US base on the east coast of Nago City, reflects on the Battle and his political action:

My mother raised my brother and I running a small daily necessity shop and a *tempura* shop. Only in her 20s at the time, she survived the Battle of Okinawa and the difficult days after the war holding my brother in her arms. Soon to turn 70, my mother has always avoided showing her political position to society because of her small business. But she does

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<sup>22</sup> Nakamura is one of the representatives of this coalition, together with other prominent and regular activists such as Arasaki Moriteru, Sakihara Seishū and Taira Osamu (*one-tsubo* landowners).

<sup>23</sup> Sakima Museum is located adjacent to the Futenma Air Base. The museum was built on private property owned by Sakima Michio, who demanded the US return his property for the museum construction, which eventuated in November 1994 (Ikehara, Chibana, Sakima & Matayoshi 1996, Sakima 1997).

not hesitate to express publicly her absolute opposition to making another base in Okinawa. Okinawan survivors like my mother all make fun of themselves as being the leftover of the warship bombardments in the Battle. After these people go, Okinawa is bound to change. I don't know in a good way or otherwise. *But as long as they are alive, I am determined to do what I can do with them, to stop the pathways to war [my emphasis]* (Miyagi 1999).

The Battle of Okinawa punctuates and articulates meanings to protest against war and further war preparation and, therefore, the existence of US bases (or any military bases and war equipment) on Okinawan Island. I call this 'absolute pacifism', which has been a strong basis of Okinawan pacifism, which most Okinawans can more or less relate to.

As discussed in chapter 1, a 'frame' of collective action gives specific meaning to the act of protest, by locating, perceiving, identifying, and labelling 'events within their life space or the world at large' (Goffman 1974: 21, cited in Snow & Benford 1992: 137), thereby giving specific meaning to the act of protest. Actors of protest are also 'actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning' of collective action' (Snow & Benford 1992: 136). It is possible to understand the discourses of the Battle of Okinawa operating as a 'frame' of protest that embodies the core driving force of anti-war collective action. In this sense, memory of the residents' experience in the Battle of Okinawa works as a gathering point: it contains an essence that conjures up a sense of 'Okinawa' as a unitary entity among different kinds of Okinawans. The following section looks further into this 'absolute pacifism'.

#### *Relevance of 'Absolute Pacifism' to the 'Okinawan' struggle*

'Absolute pacifism' as a framing of collective action represents a perspective based on residents' experience in the Battle of Okinawa: the military does not protect ordinary people. The stories in the battlefield stress that the state's military, contrary to protecting its people, not only disregarded, but also actively violated the lives and security of ordinary residents in an attempt to secure victory. This applies to any military of any states, even to Okinawans who participated in Japan's warfare, which is the second element in the 'absolute pacifism'. Nakamura, for example, stresses the death of June Arakawa, an American of Okinawan descent, hit in Pearl Harbour

by a stray shot from the US forces that responded to the Japanese attack. She says, 'We emphasise that war kills you whichever side you are on, either your enemy or your country would kill or harm you. Therefore, war itself needs to be avoided' (Interview, February 2002). 'Absolute pacifism' entails a rejection of the state and its military as the protector of the people, as well as heeding to the possibility that Okinawans themselves can turn into aggressors or war culprits.

Instead of the privileging of Okinawans' experiences as victims, it is part of the Okinawan version of 'absolute pacifism' to address the pain of being the 'aggressor' as that of killing one's own child in a cave. For the Okinawan peace activists, it has been a long-term theme to resist pacifism solely based on victimisation. Many Okinawans were willing to, and did, participate in Japan's military expansion and atrocities, all the more so because they wished to overcome the position of being 'second-class Japanese' (Ōta 1996: 133–46). Self-criticism against victimisation, refusal of war from an aggressor's perspective and determination not to repeat the aggression have turned into significant characteristics of Okinawan pacifism: it also enables the pacifism based on the experience of the Battle of Okinawa to be applied against war in other places.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that emphasis on the horrendous experience as victims of war often dominates the critical attitude against the state, and rejection of the state as the protector of the people. This parallels the Japanese people's war experience as victims, which has been the cornerstone of post-war Japanese discourse of 'peace', most outstandingly in the mass murders by the US atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Dower 1999: 198–9, Orr 2001). Indeed, Japanese nationalism in the post-war period has encompassed principles of democracy and peace, 'given' by the American Occupation, written in the 1947 Japanese Constitution (Dower 1999). Not only has this version of nationalist pacifism effectively covered up the state's responsibility for causing war and conducting invasions, it also had an effect of playing down the hardships Japan's war inflicted on *non-Japanese* civilians, including the forced labour and 'comfort women' brought from Korea and other colonies, and on civilians and colonial



subjects in Okinawa, effectively removed from the mainstream memory of Japan's war (Hein & Selden 1997, McCormack, 2001, Yoneyama 1999). Ienaga's lawsuits on textbook screening 'resonated with the voices of war victims in China, Korea, and other Asian countries' (Nozaki & Inokuchi 2000: 120), as well as the mainland Japanese critics.

Viewed in this way, Okinawans' protest against the revisionist representation of history can be understood as not unique to Okinawa. Hein points out, 'poor farmers throughout Japan's mountain villages' experienced similar 'aggressive programs of linguistic and cultural assimilation' as well as 'great casualties in the war' (2001: 34). Okinawan pacifism may well be (a minor) part of mainland Japanese pacifism, with its spiritual centres in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which Figal (2001) describes as 'Hiroshima-Nagasaki-fication' using the Okinawa Peace Network's terminology.<sup>24</sup> Describing Okinawans' experience as that of all Japanese in WWII writ large also 'de-Okinawises' the residents' experience of the Battle of Okinawa.

What then, is uniquely 'Okinawan' about the experience? According to Arasaki, the reason why Okinawans should revisit the Battle of Okinawa is, *'though it may sound like a simplification and may create misunderstanding* [representing Okinawans' experience in the Battle] [my emphasis], it is a method of anti-base struggle' (Arasaki 1994: 17). Protest against the still-dominant presence of the US bases is suggested here as the major component of the unique Okinawan brand of pacifism. Figal also notes:

At least in Okinawan public discourse, to engage in the history and memorialisation of the battle is — whether intended or not — to engage in (the politics of) peace promotion. These politics inevitably raise the issue of US bases regardless of one's position on them.... And this in turn has everything to do with past, present and future relations between Okinawa and the central Japanese government that has presided over a history of invasion, annexation, subordination, devastation and occupation of the Ryūkyū Islands (2001: 65).

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<sup>24</sup> However, the Peace Network mainly uses this term to describe the commercialised, superficial type of tourism seen in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which is a path that the peace tourism in Okinawa aspires to avoid (Figal 2001: 45).

It is not a coincidence that the destinations of ‘peace education tours’ organised by the Okinawa Peace Network include major US military bases, such as the Kadena Air Base (albeit viewed only from outside the fences and guarded gates) together with the Battle remains.<sup>25</sup>

But the question is whether this unique, critical aspect of ‘Okinawan’ pacifism connected to the present and future of the US bases manifests itself in the strategic and organisational context of protest. However, Arasaki shows hesitation (see italics in his quote) about directly identifying the two struggles. This hesitation, perhaps shared in the community of protest, reflects the feeling that so far, Okinawans’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa has not been combined effectively with the opposition to the US military bases. The Battle of Okinawa might have been the most vital event that characterises the historical narrative of marginalisation, but is certainly not to be separated from other important events, for instance, the residents’ battle against US land acquisition in the 1950s. What makes ‘Okinawan pacifism’ distinctive is the emphasis on the continuity from what Okinawans experienced during the Battle to the current political battles, in particular, the protest against the US military presence.

#### *The ‘Peace Memorial Museum’ Debate*

The controversy over the new Peace Memorial Museum was a significant challenge that put Okinawan pacifism to the test. Several months into the new prefectural government’s inauguration, Okinawan Governor Inamine and two Deputy Governors ordered the manufacturers to remove and change a significant number of historical materials prepared for display at the new opening of the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, planned in March 2001, a project inherited from the Ōta administration. Originally, for example, the local supervisory committee responsible for the Museum display included a diorama of a Japanese soldier directing a rifle at

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<sup>25</sup> A typical itinerary of a peace education course designed for high school students includes visiting major caves (such as *Itokazugō*, *Garabigō* and *Chibichirigama*), where civilians and soldiers were accommodated away from the US attacks; the Cornerstone of Peace; the Okinawa Peace Memorial Museum; the Himeyuri Peace Memorial Museum; the Shuri Castle; Kakazu Hill (a major battle site); the Kadena Air Station and Torii Station (US bases). At these sites, war survivors and anti-war landowners give talks to the participants (Okinawa Heiwa Network 1998: 153).

an Okinawan family in the cave, and a soldier forcing a wounded resident to drink poisoned milk to commit suicide. The rifle was removed from the soldier's hands, and the soldier with milk entirely disappeared. Also, original captions that specifically indicated the aggression of the Japanese military towards civilians were changed, for example, from 'an old woman slaughtered by the Japanese military' to 'an old female casualty' (*Okinawa Times, Evening Edition* 3 October 1999).

The Okinawan dispute over the 1999 Peace Museum issue is often discussed in the context of the ongoing controversy in Japan to do with justification of war through glorifying self-sacrifice and death, as well as debate on representation of Japanese aggression and atrocity directed at civilians (Angst 1997, Figal 2001, Hein & Selden 2000, Yonetani 2000b). Since 1996, some LDP highly-ranked members had shown their commitment to the 'revisionist history' movement, which criticises representing wrongs committed by the Japanese state and military, labelled as 'prejudiced' and 'masochistic' (See McCormack 2000). In 1996, at other peace museums elsewhere in Japan, in particular, in Osaka, Kanagawa, Nagasaki and Hiroshima, there was pressure from the nationalist-revisionists — represented by right-wing organisations such as the Japan Conference (*nihon kaigi*) and conservative politicians including former Prime Minister Hashimoto — on exhibiting materials that show cruel Japanese military war conduct in the Asia-Pacific, particularly related to the Nanking massacre and 'comfort women' (Nakakita 2000: 233–4). Nakakita refers to the 'Peace Memorial Museum' controversy in Okinawa in the context of a 'national' debate, to do with the 'historical revisionist' movement (Nakakita 2000: 234). Within the framework of a nation-wide controversy, the Okinawan Peace Museum issue tends to be represented as a sideshow of the mainland Japanese issue.

However, in the Okinawan community of protest, the Museum issue caused an internal dispute to do with changing attitudes towards war among the Okinawan population. Yakabi points out there were more than 50 articles on the Okinawan Peace Memorial Museum controversy in the two local newspapers in Okinawa, which indicated the significance with which the Okinawans regarded this issue, as

opposed to only a few in the mainland Japanese media (Yakabi 1999: 18). The Governor and Deputies' censorship offended the passion shared by many Okinawans towards ensuring the residents' experiences in the Battle were properly represented. This passion towards preserving residents' experience of the Japanese state and its military's aggression and cruelty towards its own citizens, which developed into an opposition to all acts of war, has been understood as a uniquely Okinawan feature, an important ingredient of 'absolute pacifism'. In this sense, the Museum issue in the local context significantly challenged the collective identity of the Okinawan community of protest.

The Museum issue revealed that some Okinawans were willing to adjust this 'Okinawan spirit' to more economic-centred, 'realistic' priorities. The Okinawan prefectural government's secret alterations of the Museum displays demonstrated that 'peace' can be presented from a quite conservative political orientation (Ishihara 2000, Yonetani 2000). Governor Inamine stressed that there were a number of valid ways in which the reality of war can be perceived, interpreted or represented, including that which does not offend the general Japanese public and the LDP (Yonetani 2000: 163). The pro-alteration local LDP representatives in the Parliamentary Assembly stressed the need to present the image of Okinawa as 'positive and bright' (Yonetani 2000: 158), that is, an image that can attract tourists from the mainland, and suggests greater economic-related promises. The 'Okinawan spirit for peace', 'since the 'Golden Age of Trade' (from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century) when men from the tiny Kingdom of Ryūkyū travelled without weapons, armed only with words, consideration, and good nature...' (Figal 2001: 41–2), can be used as a catch phrase to advertise Okinawa as an appealing destination, without any critical political manifestations against the current state's security policy. This internal dispute indicates the structural change in Okinawa after more than 27 years since reversion in 1972, where the population born after the reversion outnumbers the war survivors, for whom the emotional connection to memories of the Battle are increasingly indirect and abstract (Okamoto & Yakabi 2000: 20).

Furthermore, in Okinawa, protest against Inamine's conduct on this issue was, at the same time, protest against his policy to 'butter up' the Japanese government and the LDP. Elected in place of Ōta Masahide in November 1998, the priority of Governor Inamine and his administration, supported by the LDP, had been clearly to keep the economic link with the mainland Japanese intact. In April 1999, Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo, to everyone's surprise, selected Okinawa and Kyushu as the host of the G8 Summit Meeting in 2000; amongst others, Nago City, the preferred location where the alternative Marine Corps Air Station to Futenma was to be constructed, which had been announced by the US and Japan as the main venue. This selection was generally accepted as a scheme of the Japanese government to humour the Okinawans and the prefectural government into accepting the new Air Station, which was veneered with the rhetoric of Obuchi's 'passionate compassion' towards Okinawa. Consequently in December 1999, Nago mayor Kishimoto officially accepted the heliport construction in Nago. Inamine admitted, although not having directly ordered changing the contents, he had 'communicated his concern' with exhibiting the facts of cruelty and aggression on civilians that could be interpreted as 'anti-Japanese' (*Okinawa Times* 6 October 1999), expecting a rush of visitors from overseas and mainland Japan, before and after the Summit (*Okinawa Times* 7 October 1999). Okamoto comments that the Museum issue was a consequence of Okinawa's long-term, continuous dependence for economic survival on public works provided by the central government (dialogue with Yakabi in Okamoto & Yakabi 2000: 20).

During the 1998 election campaign for the position of Okinawan Governor, the major competing point was Inamine's 'realistic' policy to negotiate the economic regeneration policy with the central government, by accepting the construction of an alternative to the Futenma Air Station in Nago. Inamine and the LDP supporters attacked Ōta for mismanaging relations with the central government with his oppositional stance regarding the Futenma relocation with the prefecture, which was linked to the economic downturn due to the reduction in the state's economic subsidies and public works that the Okinawan economy had been heavily dependent

on. The anti-base community in Okinawa almost unilaterally supported the incumbent candidate Ōta who opposed the alternative base construction in Okinawa. In the midst of severe economic recession, however, the Okinawan general public chose Inamine in the hope of more public works and economic regeneration programs for the local economy.

Thus, at the time, the obvious — but indirect — background political agenda was the construction of a new US military base on the east coast of Nago. Iha Yoichi, a member of the Okinawan Prefectural Assembly and mayor of Ginowan City since 2003, spearheaded the accusations against the Inamine administration by making opposition statements at the Assembly. Iha was a member of *Yui no Kai*, made up of three Assembly members not affiliated to political parties. On the second day of the Assembly Meeting on 4 October, the oppositional parties (the Japan Communist Party, the Japan Social Democratic Party, *Komeito*, and the Okinawa Socialist Mass Party, *Yui no Kai* and other independent members) boycotted the meeting in protest against Inamine's 'false' explanations on the alteration of displays made to the Assembly earlier, which denied his direction and influence. Inamine finally admitted, apologised for, and disclosed the content of alterations and the way in which they were made (*Okinawa Times* 6 October 1999).

The protest action at the Prefectural Assembly, and the controversy itself, demonstrated that the 'Okinawan spirit for peace' is at least shared among different groups and organisations in the community of protest against militarism in Okinawa. However, apart from the collective boycott at the Prefectural Assembly, local political parties (JCP, JSDP, Komeitō, OSMP), workers' unions (such as *Kenshokurō*, the Okinawa Peace Centre), and other peace organisations (including the Historical Film Society and the Okinawa Peace Network), engaged in protest activities separately. A member of the Okinawan Women Act against Military and Violence recalled:

When the Museum opened in April, we held a protest rally in front of the Prefectural Hall. Other organisations (for example, the Okinawa Peace Centre) did the same, but on their own. Organisations in Okinawa, in

general, do not mingle with each other. They protest on their own, separately, according to their own schedule (Interview March 2002).

Even though the Museum issue was intertwined with the base issue, a coalition that effectively addresses both issues remained to be seen. Nor did the Museum debate become a political opportunity to turn around the base relocation issue. The unanimous opposition across the community of protest to Governor Inamine's alteration of the Peace Museum displays did not translate into strengthening an effective, united coalition against the Futenma relocation to Nago. Inamine was re-elected as Governor in 2002 despite the Museum blunder that upset the community. As will be discussed in chapter 8, the local political debate on the base issue has been reduced to a matter of tolerating an unwanted heliport, in return for more public works to boost the sluggish local economy. In comparison, 'absolute pacifism', identified with the experience in the Battle of Okinawa — although most Okinawans can relate to it — is increasingly detached from the politics of Futenma relocation. The construction of a new US military base became more and more firmly contained in the small community of Nago city, away from the concern of the Okinawan general public. This does not deny, however, that for those Okinawans who oppose the construction of the new heliport, direct and indirect associations with the personal experiences in the Battle of Okinawa continue to be a sentimental reason why they protest.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the Okinawans' residents' perspective on the Battle of Okinawa, represented in the community of protest, and its political implications for the contemporary base issue. The chapter concludes that different organisations and activists in Okinawa inside the community of protest who oppose war, the military and the bases share the Okinawan brand of 'absolute pacifism' derived from the war experience. This is the backbone of the historical narrative of Okinawan marginalisation in the post-war period. In the context of the continuous struggle of an 'Okinawan' people against marginalisation, this Okinawan pacifism gives meaning to the struggle and, at the same time, defines collective identity: who 'we'

are. The relevance of representing and preserving residents' experience in the Battle of Okinawa for the anti-base protest is self-evident for the Okinawan organisations and individuals engaged in such collective action.

However, outside the Okinawan community of protest, the reform agenda of Okinawan pacifism is merged with that of mainland Japanese pacifism and aversion to war, in which Okinawan experience plays a partial role. Furthermore, struggles for 'correct' representation of history and protest against the US bases are conducted by different organisations and involve separate activities. This chapter argues that Okinawan pacifism based on experiences in the Battle of Okinawa is not capable of providing a unified coalition among different protest actors, for the coherent struggle of 'Okinawans' and, even less, among the general Okinawan population. Nevertheless, the Battle of Okinawa is still important because it spiritually connects everyone in the community of protest.



## **Part II**

### **Forming One Okinawa: Birth of the 'Okinawan Struggle'**

## **The First-Wave ‘Okinawan Struggle’: The Land Struggle (tochi tōsō)**

### **Introduction**

Barely ten years after the Battle of Okinawa, the US military threatened residents’ livelihoods yet again with bulldozers, tanks and soldiers. Their forceful confiscation of privately owned properties for military base construction and training was added to the Okinawan historical narrative of marginalisation. Local residents started to organise protest actions against the US military, and gave rise to what Arasaki describes as the first-wave ‘Okinawa Struggle’. This cycle of protest is popularly known as the ‘all-island struggle’ (*shimagurumi toso*), and is constantly recalled as the earliest, and perhaps the most powerful, evidence of the locals’ ability to wage united collective action against the authorities. The all-island struggle contributed significantly to the myth of a struggle of the Okinawan people as a united, single entity.

This chapter examines the rise and fall of the ‘first-wave’ Okinawa Struggle, and its significance for the myth of an ‘Okinawan’ movement. The first-wave island-wide struggle was a formative period of a self-conscious ‘Okinawan’ collective identity of protest, and its exploitation by protest groups. In fact, the unity and power demonstrated by the first-wave mass protest was perhaps the greatest ever in post-war Okinawan history. This chapter asks, why, even if temporarily, different political parties, unions, and other organisations were able to act united as ‘Okinawans’ vis-à-vis the US military, forming a coalition that banded together different actors, and the reason why the coalition was not sustained.

First, it examines the local political organisations under the US military administration: political parties, workers’ unions, landowners’ organisation, teachers’ organisations. Secondly, it focuses on the process of the emergence of the reversion movement among the progressive party members, workers and teachers, in particular,

after the San Francisco Peace Treaty separated Okinawa from Japan and subjected it to indefinite US military administration without entitlement to constitutional rights. Thirdly, it examines the US military's forceful land acquisition and land policy that ignored local land rights, and the emergence of landowners' organisations and collective action, especially the farmers' struggle on Ie-jima. Then it examines how actors across all sectors managed to form a temporary coalition to fight against the draconian US land policy, including the conservative sector, which left a long-lasting legacy of an island-wide struggle of a united 'Okinawan' people.

### **Organising for Resistance: Teachers, the Communist Party, Landowners, Farmers and Workers**

*Okinawa after the Battle: Liberation', Independence or Colony of the US military?*

Since the Battle of Okinawa, the islands of Okinawa were placed under direct US military administration, based on US Military Directive No.1, issued by Admiral Nimitz on the US landing on the Kerama Islands on 26 March 1945. As early as 1945, US President Roosevelt and surrounding government staff were in agreement that 'the United States should preserve its 'national security interests' by indefinitely controlling key islands in the Pacific', and to take 'the full power of arming them and using them to protect the peace and ourselves during any war that may come', and 'a definition of trusteeships or mandates' of these islands would be necessary at a Peace Conference in San Francisco (Dower 1971 [1969]: 155–6). However, Okinawa was outside the US trusteeship for Micronesia passed by the United Nations in 1947 and, as the result of Japan's defeat, needed clear definition by the peace treaty. Negotiation for a peace treaty started early, nevertheless, it was a lengthy process.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was partly because of the disagreements between the US State Department and military officers, on how to formalise US rule over Okinawa to maximise US security interests, in consideration of the developing Cold War. The State Department recommended the international trusteeship of Okinawa under the United Nations charter rather than unilateral occupation (Miyazato 2000: 45), which would be more agreeable to the Soviet Union and China. However, Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), and George Kennan, who headed the Policy Planning Staff and an advocate of the 'containment' policy towards the Soviet Union, fiercely criticised this view. MacArthur defined Okinawa as crucial for US air and amphibious capabilities in the Pacific defence cordon (Miyazato 2000: 27), which included Hawaii, Guam, Micronesia and The Philippines (Dower 1971[1969]: 161). Kennan also enthusiastically stressed the strategic importance of the US military force deployed on Okinawa for the Cold War security formula. Moreover, with frequent labour strikes and continuing economic crises and the potential major influence of communism in Japan, the US military presence was justified to deter political instability (Eldridge 1999: 165).

The US military accommodated in makeshift tents the Okinawan people who survived the Battle and the returnees who had evacuated to mainland Japan. There was no operating local administration representing the Okinawan population. Nevertheless, when the Navy was in charge of the military government in Okinawa initially, there was a degree of positive attitude on the US side to respect the will of the Okinawan people in political representation (Kano 1987: 69–71). On 15 August 1945, the day Hirohito made the official surrender, the military summoned 128 Okinawans from 39 concentration camps all over Okinawa Main Island, to hold the first session of the Okinawans' Consultative Assembly (*Okinawajin Shijunkai*) that existed until April 1946. This Assembly was a transitory consultation body to be responsible for the US military government's queries on local affairs,<sup>2</sup> for planning future central political institutions for local residents, and communicating locals' requests to the military (Asato 2001: 74). However, basically, the US military's administration in Okinawa was arbitrary and highly authoritarian: Navy commander Watkins famously compared the Okinawan local autonomy to that of a mouse, only given to the extent that the cat (the US military government) allows (Kano 1987: 69). From July 1947, a division of the US Army took over the administration, which called itself RYCOM (Ryūkyū Command).

Amidst ruins and rubbles, confusion and uncertainty in the aftermath of the Battle, local residents started to form political organisations. In 1947, the Okinawa People's Party (OPP) and the conservative Okinawa Democratic League were formed in July,<sup>3</sup> and the Okinawa Socialist Party followed in October (Warner 1995: 60). The OPP was a communist party with Marxist-Leninist ideas and links with the Japan Communist Party (JCP), and the major target of US control and punishment. Its party members were mainly workers, farmers and intellectuals. In the immediate post-war years, Okinawa's independence from Japan, as a republic under the guardianship of the US or UN trusteeship, was seriously considered a viable option. At its Fifth

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<sup>2</sup> Their tasks included looking after daily affairs such as provision of food rations, school matters, residential registration and the removal of residents from camps.

<sup>3</sup> In December 1949, the OPP had 200 members, whereas the Okinawa Democratic League had 2,000 (Nakano 1969: 64).

General Conference, the Japanese Communist Party issued a 'Message to Celebrate the Independence of the Okinawan People', which hailed the end of Japan's colonial domination over Okinawans as a 'democratic revolution'. This message defined the US occupation force as a 'liberation force'.<sup>4</sup> At the OPP commencement ceremony, the Party expressed its gratitude to the US military, described as a 'liberating force' from Japanese colonial rule (Nakano 1969: 64). Major local political parties including the Okinawa Democratic League, the Okinawa People's Party, the Okinawa Socialist Party, and the Miyako Socialist Party in Miyako Island, initially supported Okinawa's independence (Oguma 1998: 483–9).

However, as the reality of the military administration sank in, the independence of Okinawa relying on the goodwill of the US tutelage quickly became less popular as an option. The US military administration started to tighten control over various civil and political rights of the residents and restricted their activities. In August 1948, the locals who worked for the Naha Military Port stopped coming to work because of the demanding labour and low pay. In response, RYCOM closed the community grocery stores and threatened to stop the residents' food ration, which worsened the already serious material shortage. Following this incident, the military government issued a directive to introduce a criminal law, which restricted publications, travel, after-hours activities and the use of *hinomaru* flags without permission (Gabe 1996: 95–6). The OPP members organised the waterside workers and protests against RYCOM for stopping the food rations. They also used speeches and local small meetings in different villages and towns to organise residents into opposition (Okinawa Henkan Domei 1969: 67).

The food ration incident strengthened the locals' demand for elected legislatures and governors (Nakano 1969: 26–7). In August 1948, RYCOM consulted with SCAP,<sup>5</sup> in response to the strong wish of the locals, on a plan to introduce local autonomy in Okinawa, to set up a constitution, and organise a federal

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<sup>4</sup> The 'Celebration Message for the Independence of the Okinawan People' was published in 1946 in *Akahata*, 20, 6 March (Arasaki 1969: 40–1).

<sup>5</sup> Miyazato quotes 'Rycom to SCAP, August 6, 1948, RG 407 Ryūkyū Command, Box 879' (Miyazato 2000: 40).

government with four elected legislatures, governors and local governments representing each *Guntō* (groups of islands), namely, Okinawa, Yaeyama, Amami and Miyako. According to the report from RYCOM to SCAP, the Okinawans displayed strong interest in the ongoing democratisation in mainland Japan and discontent with the absence of the same processes in Okinawa (Miyazato 2000: 32). Basically, SCAP agreed with the limited and gradual introduction of elections, in order to prevent the locals' discontent and communist influence, which was already detected in Okinawa (Miyazato 2000: 35).

While the peace treaty was yet to be formalised,<sup>6</sup> Okinawa's uncertain status as a territory, neither part of Japan or the US — and its future as a nation — gradually became a major topic of Okinawan public debate. For example, the conservative Okinawan Democratic League members, who advocated independence, expected US patronage for economic benefits. Arasaki points out that there had been alternative attempts to seek autonomy, such as the suggestions made by the OPP before 1950 to request compensation from the Japanese government for war losses, and to draft a constitution just for the 'Ryūkyūans'.<sup>7</sup>

Hiyane points out that the US civil administration was inherently vulnerable to legitimacy crises in ruling people who were culturally, economically and socially foreign (Hiyane 1982: 281). The US administration applied a 'cultural policy' to separate Okinawans from the mainland Japanese and revived the pre-modern title 'Ryūkyū' and 'the Ryūkyūs' instead of 'Okinawa'. It promoted traditional Ryūkyūan culture, such as local cloth-making, theatre arts and pottery, through government publications such as *Konnichi no Ryūkyū* and *Shurei no Hikari* (Kano 1987: 176).<sup>8</sup>, in order to separate the Okinawan identity from mainland Japan. However, an option of

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<sup>6</sup> Conditions of the Peace Treaty and the process of separating Okinawa from Japan are studied in detail in (Eldridge 2001, Miyazato 2000, Watanabe 1970).

<sup>7</sup> These ideas were expressed in Senaga Kamejiro's essays in the local newspaper *Uruma Shimpo* and journal *Jinmin Bunka* (Arasaki 1976: 39).

<sup>8</sup> Articles in *Konnichi no Ryūkyū* were dominated by material issues in order to divert Okinawans' interests from political activism against US military rule and toward 'pragmatic' and 'constructive' issues related to re-constructing the local economy under the existing political framework. These official publications were an advertising vehicle, for the Okinawan audience, of the US efforts such as construction projects and economic aid, as well as American-inspired 'democratisation' ideals (Kano 1987, 166–99).

‘self-determination’ was hardly ever explored, and was too easily replaced by the goal of reversion (Arasaki 1976: 40–2). Why was this the case?

As the locals’ grievance against the dictatorial US military administration increased, the aspiration for independence came to be interpreted as a ‘mistake’ in the community of protest (Arasaki 1976: 38). In the immediate post-war days, Gabe explains that ‘ethnic pride’ was emerging among Okinawans under US rule, which was a complex mixture of ‘aversion to war following the Battle of Okinawa, and consciousness towards their rights, against the US draconian policies, especially on the locals’ rights to their land’ (Gabe 1969: 42–3). Okinawan ‘ethnic pride’ was at the heart of the public debate on where Okinawa should go; however, independence ceased to appeal to most politically involved Okinawans as a feasible option. Instead, dominant opinion was in favour of overcoming ‘foreign’ military rule by returning to Japan: reversion to Japan came to appear as a hopeful option to turn around the predicament and improve the conditions of everyday life. ‘Okinawans’ defined as ‘Japanese’ — always a contentious element of Okinawan collective identity since the late nineteenth century — became much more amplified and dominant in the protest against US authorities and the campaign for reversion. The dominance of the new goal of reverting to Japan as the ‘home country’ was such that it overtook and silenced a debate on Okinawa’s self-determination.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Burgeoning Public Debates for Reversion*

In the aftermath of war, the US military government placed extremely low priority on education of Okinawan children (Warner 1995: 52). Okinawan schoolteachers, under the US administration, continued to educate children as if they were ‘Japanese’. They continued the pre-war educational emphasis on the development of Okinawan pupils as Japanese citizens. Destroyed in the Battle, there were almost no school buildings, books and other essential materials such as paper and pencils. Teachers gathered children on the beaches and taught by writing on the sand, under the trees,

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<sup>9</sup> Tomiyama associates this point with his research on the self-censorship against asserting Okinawan-specific attributes among the Okinawan migrants in mainland Japan in the 1930s (Tomiyama 1997).

and in the tents and barracks provided by the US military, using textbooks picked up from bomb shelters in the battlefields (Yara 1968: 16).

In the process of establishing a new school system, the teachers formed teachers' organisations, which started to engage in the political campaign for Okinawa's reversion to Japan. The first teachers' organisation, the Okinawa Federation of Education (*Okinawa Kyōiku Rengōkai*), was formed in February 1947. An increasing number of Okinawan teachers were also involved in local politics. More than 80 local assembly members were teachers in the late 1940s. An OSMP member and teacher, Taira Kōichi,<sup>10</sup> for example, became mayor of Nishihara village, teachers likewise became mayors in other villages and cities such as Nakagusuku, Shuri and Chinen (Yara 1968: 19–21).

From early on, schoolteachers were the strongest advocates for Okinawa's return to Japan. In February 1950, Senaga Kamejiro, Chair of OPP, articulated his party's policy to aim for 'racial self-determination' and democracy, and argued that 'Ryūkyūans'<sup>11</sup> were Japanese, and they should return to Japan (Okinawa Jinminto 1985 in Nakachi 1996: 34). However, it was the Okinawa Socialist Mass Party (OSMP) that most vocally appealed to the reversion supporters, in particular, to the schoolteachers (Nakano 1969: 36). After the elections in September 1950, Taira Tatsuo became the first Governor of Okinawa *Guntō*. In Amami and Yaeyama *Guntō*, residents also elected governors and members of parliament who were reversion advocates.

Taira Tatsuo immediately established the OSMP and, from the start, stressed the party goal of Okinawa's reversion to Japan. In February 1951, the *Okinawa Guntō* Assembly held a meeting specifically on Okinawans' future. The new conservative Republican Party spoke for independence, the Socialist Party for a US trusteeship, and the OPP and the OSMP argued for Okinawa's reversion to Japan. In March, the Assembly made a resolution by majority expressing agreement on the

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<sup>10</sup> Taira was one of the founders of the Okinawa Socialist Mass Party, a member of the Ryūkyū Legislature and Prefectural Assembly for 26 years, and a Governor of Okinawa from 1976–78.

<sup>11</sup> In this period, 'the Ryūkyūs' and 'Okinawa' appeared to have been used interchangeably among the residents, perhaps mainly because the US military administration abolished 'Okinawa' during Japanese administration.



members' will for reversion (Nakano 1969: 70). In April 1951, the OPP and OSMP formed a coalition for reversion, called the Preparatory Council for Promoting Reversion (*Nihon Fukki Sokushin Kiseikai*).

The Preparatory Council was formed with the specific aim to collect signatures from the Okinawans older than twenty, to endorse Okinawa's reversion to Japan. Taira Tatsuo, Chair of the OSMP and Governor of the *Guntō* administration, was the leader of this project. He depended on the younger OPP and OSMP members, public servants who worked for the *Guntō* administration, and community youth groups (*seinenkai*) for the physical work, to do rounds from door to door every day and night. The collected signatures totalled 276,677, about 72.1 per cent of the Okinawan adult population (Toma 1987: 394–5). The labour-intensive work of collecting signatures was established as one of the earliest repertoires of collective action among the OSMP, OPP, youth groups and other organisations in the community of protest, which continues today.

With this mission accomplished, the Preparatory Council dissolved. On September 1951, the *Guntō* Assembly sent the list of signatures to the San Francisco Peace Conference, addressed to US Ambassador Dulles and Prime Minister Yoshida (Nakano 1969: 72). The signatures did not affect the contents of the Treaty itself. However, the signature collecting marked an important consensus towards reversion among the population, eliminating the 'independence' and 'trusteeship' option (Tōma 1987: 395).

#### *The San Francisco Peace Treaty (28 April, 1952)*

At the San Francisco Conference in 1951, a peace treaty was signed, defining the US 'right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of these islands', while recognising Japan's 'residual sovereignty', came into effect on 28 April 1952. The US–Japan Security Treaty, signed simultaneously with the peace treaty, assured the rights of the US forces 'to be stationed all the time in and about Japan', 'to contribute to the security of Japan against armed attack from without (Article 1, US–Japan Security Treaty)'.<sup>12</sup> President

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<sup>12</sup> In 1953, US Secretary of State Dulles announced the return of the Amami Islands to Japan, and spoke

Eisenhower proclaimed in his State of the Union Message, ‘The Ryūkyū Islands will be held for an indefinite period’ (Warner 1995: 96).

Thus, Okinawa was separated formally and indefinitely from Japan. In the community of protest, the great impact of this day (28 April), marked as a ‘day of humiliation’ is important to the historical narrative of marginalisation of the Okinawan people. The day, on which the peace treaty became effective, has also been remembered as the second *Ryūkyū shobun*, that is, another ‘punishment’ of Okinawa by Japan. A legacy of the ‘day of humiliation’ is that Okinawa was deserted as an expendable pawn, for the sake of *yamato*’s survival and independence. This day punctuates the start of a new period in the lineage of the collective struggle of the Okinawan people — the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ — mainly characterised by the residents’ efforts to realise Okinawa’s repatriation to Japan. On this day, every year, in the community of protest, it has become customary to hold protest rallies and meetings (Arasaki 1995: 27–8).

Indicating the importance of this day, the original text of the ‘Emperor’s message’, which conveyed the Showa Emperor’s (Hirohito) view on post-war Okinawa’s status, caused controversy in Okinawa when it was discovered in 1979 at the US National Archive. This ‘message’ was originally handed in September 1947 from Hirohito’s aide, Terasaki Hidenari, to the US Chief of Diplomatic Section, William Sebald. In this message, Hirohito expressed to MacArthur his concern for a potential communist threat, domestic instability and Japan’s vulnerability in the international security environment, and his preference for the US occupation of Okinawa as a ‘long-term lease ... with sovereignty reserved to Japan’ (Taira 1997: 158). The Emperor’s message provided the base for a scheme whereby Okinawa nominally stayed ‘Japanese’ but practically allowed access to the islands to meet US security needs. In Okinawa, the discovery of this message caused a turmoil for it proved that the Emperor encouraged the US occupation of Okinawa in order to protect mainland Japan against the threat of the Soviet Union and to maintain Japan’s ‘social

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of the necessity of continuing US power and the right to administer the ‘remaining’ Ryūkyū Islands ‘so long as conditions of threat and tension exist in the Far East’ (US Department of State Bulletin 1954: 17 quoted in Nakachi 1996: 62).

stability' (Arashiro 1997: 225), in the same fashion that the Emperor went ahead with the Battle of Okinawa as a means to delay anticipated ground battles in mainland Japan. It stimulated ill feeling against the Emperor for 'sacrificing Okinawa' to the US in order to escape being punished in the Tokyo Trials for his wartime crimes.<sup>13</sup>

Based on the records of negotiation processes between the Japanese and US diplomats and ministers, Eldridge (1999, 2001) points out the inadequacy of this view. According to Eldridge, under the circumstances, the Japanese leaders made their best effort to retain Okinawa, and to maximise the possibility of regaining it as part of Japan (Eldridge 1999, 2001).<sup>14</sup> This point, however, should not be interpreted that the peace treaty did not contribute to creating the post-war Okinawan predicament. As Eldridge's book title suggests (*The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem: Okinawa in post-war US-Japan relations 1945-1952*), the arrangement made between the US and Japan in 1952 did create the origin of the problem that still exists: Okinawa is still discriminated against, with its burden of US military presence, which originates from the bilateral security alliance solidified at this time.

For understanding Okinawans' protests, rather than focusing on the Japanese state's leaders' sincerity towards maintaining sovereignty over Okinawa, it is more relevant to read Eldridge's study as indicative of the double-edged implications of the 'day of humiliation'. For the campaigners for reversion, the importance placed on the 'day of humiliation' emphasises the unfair treatment of Okinawa as an expendable part of Japan. This emphasis was an expression of Okinawa's collective desire for repatriation to Japan. The focus on treatment of Okinawa as an expendable part of Japan on 28 April 1952, is an expression of the value attached to Okinawa's complete assimilation to Japan as a desirable collective political destination. The significance placed on this day rationalised the campaign for reversion, or any sort of collective action demanding rights and equal treatment as 'Japanese'. On the other hand, the Okinawans' claim for integration to, and protection from, the 'home country' may

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<sup>13</sup> The Emperor's involvement in the secret territorial deal was against the new Constitution issued in May 1947. The Constitution defines the role of the Emperor as 'symbolic', and does not allow him the right to make political decisions (Aniya Arakaki et al. 1996: 64-5).

<sup>14</sup> For an opposite view, see (Shindo 1979a, 1979b, Toyoshita 1996).

have set a course for further marginalisation. Eldridge's work demonstrates how prepared the Japanese and US leaders appear to have been to respond to the Okinawans' sentimental affiliation to Japan, nurtured out of the, at times, painful process of assimilation since the late nineteenth century. It should be noted that political 'reversion' is not the same as 'assimilation' in cultural and emotional terms. Namely, it would be quite reasonable to want a political reversion without supporting the loss of Okinawan cultural distinctiveness. However, during the height of reversion campaign, those who supported the political goal of reversion tended to also support the importance of cultural assimilation to Japan, as seen in the teachers' enthusiasm to educate Okinawan children as 'Japanese'. As long as the hope for reversion was attractive to the Okinawans, there was room for negotiation by the Japanese government to make necessary arrangements for maintaining the US bases in the islands, as was proved by the reversion in 1972.

Whether strategically sound or not in retrospect, it is significant to note that the painful amputation of Okinawa from Japan on 28 April 1952 left another influential legacy in the historical narrative of Okinawa's marginalisation. Among others, the most hurtful effect of this day was the exclusion of Okinawa from the entitlement to constitutional democracy, freedom of expression, local autonomy, gender equality, protection of basic human rights and, over all, renouncement of war, stipulated in the new Japanese Constitution. Okinawans were placed outside the 'peace clause' of the new Constitution that renounced 'war as a sovereign right of the nation' forever (Article 9).<sup>15</sup> The Japanese public supported the peace clause of the Constitution out of their experience of hardships during and after the war, but the legacy of 28 April reminded Okinawans, who were among the most devastatingly damaged and exhausted by the war, that they were excluded from enjoying what would have seemed a 'positive' post-war change.

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<sup>15</sup> Introduced by General Douglas MacArthur, this clause became a problem for Japanese conservatives and for the US regional security planners for it became an obstacle for Japan to contribute military forces in the Cold War regional security order. However, the peace clause survived, supported by the general public in Japan weary of war and militarism, and by the neighbourhood countries invaded by Japan during the Pacific War.

### *Emergence of the Okinawan Labour Movement*

By 1949, a consensus had been reached 'within the US government' on the vital importance of Okinawa as a US security outpost, in the advent of the Cold War (Eldridge 2001: 233). In the autumn of 1949, the State Department and Congress approved the allocation of a \$58 million US federal budget for base construction on Okinawa (Dower 1971: 193). After the commencement of the Korean War, construction companies, about half of which were from mainland Japan, were looking for business opportunities in building US base facilities on Okinawa. These companies employed local labour and workers from Amami Island, who immigrated in search of jobs. Exploitation of local labour was an essential factor in the construction of US military bases in such a short period. More than 250 workers at a time were accommodated in big buildings, which was described as a 'pigsty' (*butagoya*) by the locals. The barracks were built directly on the ground without floorboards, with leaky roofs and no basic facilities such as bathrooms (Nagumo 1996: 30, Senaga 1959: 244). Local workers had to pay for the accommodation, food and maid services,<sup>16</sup> and received little wages after these deductions, which were often suspended arbitrarily. In 1952 and 1953, road workers and construction workers went on a series of strikes, demanding improvement of basic conditions such as decent accommodation and payment of suspended wages. In June 1952 local road workers went on strike against the Nihon Road Company (*Nihon Doro Gaisha*), a subsidiary company of the Shimizu Construction Company (*Shimizu Kensetsu*), and in 1953 at a macadamisation site in Motobu (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 65).

As soon as the strikes were publicised in newspapers, the issue of labour exploitation attracted strong empathy from the Okinawan public. In public places, including public baths, barbershops and pubs, people discussed the conditions of the workers: 'They are treated like domestic animals', 'How much money do they make, I wonder?' 'There's no toilets and at night they can't sleep because of the mosquitos', 'We must save the workers from the pigsty!', 'Let the workers breathe fresh air!'

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<sup>16</sup> These maids who worked for the construction workers were presumably under similar conditions, however, had no organisational representation. In Senaga's (1959) accounts of Okinawan workers, they are invisible apart from in a passing association with the construction workers.

(Senaga 1959: 246–7). The construction companies took advantage of Okinawan labour that was unprotected by legal restrictions on low wages and poor working conditions. The Okinawan workers attributed their predicament to the non-existence of legal means to protect them (Nakachi 1996: 68). If they became ‘Japanese’ the Okinawan workers could receive more than twice as much wages than they did at the time.

For the Okinawan general public, life in mainland Japan under the new Constitution, which guaranteed the protection of basic human rights including labour rights, became a source of envy. The poor working conditions of many Okinawans were combined with poverty, unemployment and overpopulation with significantly decreased arable land surface taken by the military. Most families were struggling to make ends meet, subjected to low wages and long working hours. Importantly, the post-war ‘democratisation’ and ‘peace’ principles of the new Japanese Constitution transformed the image of Japan from that of an imperialist, militarist and authoritarian state before and during WWII to a democratic and de-militarised post-war society. Much of the Okinawans’ request for reversion was associated with the right to benefit from the mainland Japanese rapid economic recovery and improved material conditions, a welfare system and labour legislation. On Okinawa’s first May Day in 1952, the participants issued a statement requesting immediate reversion to Japan, as well as legislation to protect basic labour rights (Oguma 1998: 502–6).

It was the OPP and OSMP parliamentarians who commenced the campaign for basic labour legislation. In November 1952, despite a USCAR warning, the GRI legislature passed bills to establish three labour-related laws, namely, the Labour Union Law, the Labour Standard Law and the Labour Relations Regulations Law. These laws, in mainland Japan, had been implemented by SCAP as part of the post-war social reform during the occupation. The protagonists argued that the Okinawans deserved the same rights as the mainland Japanese to form a labour union and to collective bargaining.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In December 1952, Commanding General Lewis of USCAR pressured G.R.I. Chief Executive Higa into rejecting the legislation. Nevertheless, waterside workers and G.R.I. public servants formed their own labour unions in 1953. The second May Day rally in the same year turned into a major occasion,

Against the emerging locals' demand for labour rights, USCAR issued Ordinance No. 116, which stipulated that the three labour laws that passed the G.R.I. legislature would not apply to workers employed by the military bases. Moreover, Ordinance No. 145 made it an obligation to obtain permission from USCAR to form a union and obtain recognition for the union executives. The abolition of these ordinances became one of the most important goals for the workers, especially the Okinawan workers employed by the US bases. The labour movement grew into the most active of political sectors in 1950s Okinawa, and the organisations that emerged from the workers' struggle spread all over Okinawa.

#### *Emergence of the Okinawan Teachers' Campaign for Reversion*

After the Preparatory Council for Promoting Reversion dissolved, the schoolteachers formed the central organisational force that led the campaign for reversion. In 1951, the Okinawan Principals' Organisation (*Kōchōkai*) made a resolution to request Okinawa's reversion to Japan. One of the principals read a Ryūkyūan poem, which received a standing ovation: '*Mushika America, nuchikandon ariba, uchina mangatami/ yamato watara*' ('If America does not listen to our request, let's carry Okinawa on our shoulders and move across to *yamato*') (Yara 1968: 28).

The Okinawa Federation of Education reorganised itself into the Okinawa Teachers' Association (OTA) in 1952. Yara Chōbyō, a former chemistry teacher, was a pioneer of the re-construction of education in post-war Okinawa, and Chair of the Okinawa Teachers' Association. When he served as Chief of the Education and Cultural Affairs of the Okinawa *Guntō* government, Yara travelled to the mainland for funding and consciousness raising about the poor educational conditions in Okinawa. As the material differences between the Okinawan and mainland education environment became obvious, including teachers' salaries, Yara was convinced reversion was necessary. Yara, Kyan Shinei and other members who travelled to the mainland for 'educational field trips' stressed how 'rapidly the education system was changing in mainland Japan, and that Okinawa is lagging behind' (Yara 1968: 27).

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attracting more than 1,000 workers, the OPP and OSMP members and some Ryūkyū University students. Encouraged by these events, for the second time the legislature passed the three labour laws and the Chief Executive signed for their enactment in October 1953 (Nakachi 1996: 69).

Local principals and the Okinawa *Guntō* government Educational Section jointly requested USCAR to permit Okinawan teachers' travel to participate in training programmes in the mainland (Yara 1968: 26–7). Yara and his OTA colleagues thus came to be regarded as the main instigators of the reversion movement on the education front, which enabled them to mobilise schoolchildren and parents into their campaign for reversion.

In January 1953, OTA formed the Okinawa Islands Reversion to the Home Country Preparatory Council (*Okinawashoto Sokoku Fukki Kiseikai*), together with the Youth Group Council, the Parents' Association, and the Women's Association. The Council declined membership of the pro-reversion political parties, such as the OPP and OSMP, in order to avoid being recognised as a political movement by the US authorities. The Association's strategy was not to offend the US administration, by staying away from being ideologically associated with the political parties, especially the OPP (Oguma 1998: 560–1). Indeed, the teachers involved in the reversion movement were mainly driven by educational concerns. The only vaguely ideological characteristic that the teachers showed was their frequent argument that the Okinawans were originally Japanese, and they should have the right to be educated as Japanese. Even then, the Preparatory Council could not sustain their activities under the draconian US policies against any activities connected to the reversion movement, before engaging in any substantial activities. The US authorities rejected Yara's passport to travel to Japan in 1954, which prohibited him from going to the mainland to collect school reconstruction aid, and paralysed the Preparatory Council.

Alongside the growth of the Okinawans' campaign for reversion, authoritarian control over Okinawa was strengthened in the early 1950s, and upgraded further with the introduction of a High Commissioner. As of 15 December 1950, the military government changed its name to the US Civil Administration of the Ryūkyū Islands (USCAR).<sup>18</sup> In April 1952 a central government representing the locals, called the

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<sup>18</sup> Governorship was held by SCAP in mainland Japan, and Military Governors of RYCOM assumed the highest authority in the Ryūkyūs as Deputy Governors.



Government of the Ryūkyū Islands — G.R.I., (*Ryūkyū Gyōseifu*) — was created in the Legislative Plaza in Naha, and USCAR appointed Higa Shuhei its Chief Executive. The elected Legislature (*Rippōin*) and the Judicial Branch, with the G.R.I., constituted the central government representing the Okinawan residents, within the USCAR veto power. Locally elected four *Guntō* (Okinawa, Amami, Yaeyama and Miyako) governments were abolished.

In January 1953, USCAR announced the deferral of public elections of Okinawan Governors indefinitely and in the meantime USCAR would appoint Chief Executives. The local government's function was limited to administrations following US military directives, proclamations and ordinances, which were above the authority of any local government institutions (Miyazato 2000: 63–5, Warner, 1995: 87). Furthermore, US President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10713, which introduced the post of High Commissioner in the Ryūkyūs, starting with Major General James Moore in July 1957 (Nakachi 1996: 93). Until 1972, six High Commissioners were conferred almost omnipotent rights over administration of Okinawa, which authorised them to 'force elected officials from office, block G.R.I. legislation, and overrule the judgments of its courts' (Rabson 1989: 16). The aim of this order was to confine to one person the power to make decisions on any kind of military, legislative, judiciary system and administrative affairs.<sup>19</sup>

### **Bulldozers and Bayonets: Forceful US Acquisition of Privately Owned Land**

#### *Farmers and Landowners Organise for Land*

While residents were accommodated in the concentration camps, the US had occupied 45,000 acres of land for base construction. The areas occupied by the US Forces were mostly farmlands, the military required flat, spacious land surfaces, which were scarce on Okinawa Island and crucial for local agriculture. Particularly in the central region of Okinawa Island, many residents never returned to their old homes that had been separated by US fences and barbed wire (Arasaki 1995: 23). No compensation

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<sup>19</sup> Until the position of High Commissioner was introduced, the Deputy Commander held the highest position of the military government in Ryūkyū. The Deputy Commander's position was next to, and was designated by, the Commander-in-Chief of SCAP in Tokyo. The Deputy Commander's range of authority was not as wide as that of the High Commissioner's. For detailed study on the responsibilities and influence of the High Commissioners on Okinawa, see Ōta 1996a.

was made for former landowners: the US military government at this stage regarded Okinawans as ‘the enemy’ (Warner 1995: 47), and the land thus acquired was considered American property.<sup>20</sup> The US military staff basically viewed Okinawa as justly acquired at the sacrifice and casualties of American youth in the Battle of Okinawa.

As the Cold War took clearer shape with the 1949 revolution and establishment of the People’s Republic of China, new Deputy Governor Major General Sheets renewed the administration policy in Okinawa, with priority placed on speeding up military base construction in Okinawa. From the newly constructed US bases in Okinawa, B-29s were already raiding North Korea, contributing to the Korean War that started in 1950 (Miyazato 2000: 49). The US authorities defended the legitimacy of military land acquisition *vis-à-vis* the Okinawan residents by stressing the strategic importance of Okinawa’s location for defending regional security against the communist bloc.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, in central Okinawa, where the US land acquisition of private properties was most common, those who lost their land to the military started to form an organisation to demand rent payments.<sup>22</sup> The Ryūkyū Legislature summoned mayors from twelve villages to discuss the military land issue, whereupon it was decided to form a land committee in each village, and integrated the committees all over the island into one interest group, *Tochiren* (*Tochi Rengokai*, the Landowners’ Union) in June 1953. The aim of *Tochiren* was ‘an amicable settlement of the land dispute’ (Hiyane 1982: 267–8). It lobbied the US military for landowners’ interests, and was the central force of the 1950s’ land struggle, it has continued to represent landowners to the present, from the perspective of preserving existing landowners’ rent incomes.

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<sup>20</sup> The legal justification was ‘the Hague Convention no. 4, of 18 October 1907’ (Section III, Article 52) (Watanabe 1970: 36).

<sup>21</sup> From 1952 on, nevertheless, when the US administration of Okinawa was formalised, USCAR regarded land acquisition as a legal activity that required private contracts (Arasaki 1995: 27). The price of land estimated by the Army for 3.3m<sup>2</sup> could only buy one-fifth of a soft drink at the time. Not surprisingly, about 98 per cent of the landowners refused to sign leases (Okinawaken 1996).

<sup>22</sup> In November 1951, a landowner, Kuwae Chōkō, placed an advertisement in the *Okinawa Times* to suggest the establishment of a bigger group for all Okinawan landowners (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 206).

With the USCAR Ordinance 109 on land acquisition issued in April 1953, the US military conducted further land expropriation. Within ten days from the issue of Ordinance 109, armed soldiers and bulldozers entered, flattening farmlands and houses in Aja and Mekaru hamlets in Mawashi village, followed by the use of tanks and tear gas in Gushi hamlet in Oroku village (Arasaki 1995: 39). In these regions that were severely destroyed by the Battle of Okinawa, the local farmers were trying to reconstruct their livelihoods with what was left after the war.

Farmers, therefore, were the most desperate protest actors against the forced US land acquisition. In the small islands of Okinawa, people, especially farmers, traditionally stayed in one place for many generations. For many Okinawans, Ōta argues, land is something that was inherited from fathers to sons, not an object of speculation or investment (Ōta 1996: 141–2). Particularly after virtually everything was destroyed in the Battle, land inherited from ancestors was the only asset they could rely on, and agriculture was the most substantive source of income. The residents' slogan, '*Kane wa Ittoki, Tochi wa Mannen*' (Money is temporary, land is permanent), seen all over Okinawa Island during the forced US land acquisitions, expressed the farmers' 'unlimited attachment to land' (Arasaki 1976: 136) and, also, how insufficient the US compensations were. Against the resistant landowners, the US military did not hesitate to use force to obtain de facto land access. In the community of protest, the US military bulldozers and soldiers armed with firearms and bayonets are identified with the painful memory of land acquisition. Images of bulldozers and bayonets *vis-à-vis* the desperate and helpless farmers symbolise another significant event in the historical narrative of marginalisation of 'Okinawa'.

One of the US military's most ruthless takeovers happened in Isahama. Anticipating the forced acquisition of their hamlet, farmers formed the Isahama Landowners' Committee against Military Acquisition (*Isahama Gunyochi Taisaku Iinkai*) (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 230–1). According to a former resident, 85-year-old Tazato Tomoyasu, Isahama hamlet in Ginowan village in central Okinawa provided abundant water and used to have good rice paddies (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 230). In July 1955, the local council told the farmers to evacuate the paddy

fields because of the danger of infection from mosquito spawning. Predicting Isahama was targeted for the next forced US land acquisition, hundreds and thousands of supporters from all over the island came to ‘protect’ the farmers in Isahama from the US Forces. Kokuba Kotaro, a former OPP member who was supporting the Isahama farmers’ struggle, recalls:

At around 3am, when most supporters of the resistance had gone home, there were only 200–300 hamlet residents left. Slowly, one after another, bulldozers with their headlights off and military trucks filled with armed soldiers entered the hamlet. Off the coast, I could hear the sound of pipelines being connected to a military vessel to drain in the sand and water taken from the ocean. It was just like war. At dawn, all the supporters helplessly watched the paddy fields being destroyed by soldiers across barbed wires. Farmers were still inside the last 32 houses, but were finally dragged out at gunpoint. The bulldozers went over and flattened the houses, timbers and roof tiles of the houses were collected to be discarded in the ocean. Women were screaming at this sight, and I could not help my tears (quoted in Arasaki 1995: 63–5).

The Isahama farmers were relocated to the highland areas about ten kilometres away, where it was impossible to continue farming. Many of them moved to the Yaeyama region and, with some mediation of the US military, overseas to Latin America (Arasaki 1995: 65). These emigrants’ new lives were often extremely difficult, trying to make livelihoods out of often barren and uncultivated land in foreign countries, and many of them returned to Okinawa.<sup>23</sup> Others who lost their land commonly found jobs in the US military bases (Nagumo 1996: 28). Isahama symbolised the Okinawans’ tragedy caused by US land acquisition, which Arasaki analyses, ‘definitely contributed to sparking the all-island struggle’ (Arasaki 1995: 65), what he calls the first-wave ‘Okinawa Struggle’.

#### *Ie-jima: The Legendary Farmers’ Struggle*

The farmers’ struggle on Ie Island (Ie-jima) was another legendary struggle against forced US land acquisition, which also sparked the rise of the ‘first wave’ island-wide mass protest in the mid-1950s. The Ie-jima farmers demonstrated their capability of collective action and of making political demands. The following description and analysis of the Ie-jima land struggle is mainly derived from the records and memoirs

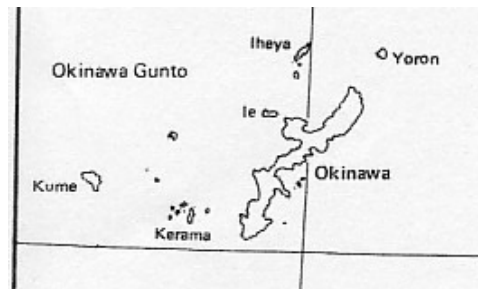
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<sup>23</sup> On Okinawan emigrants’ lives in Bolivia, see Amemiya 1999a, 1999b.

of an Ie-jima resident and peace activist, Ahagon Shōkō,<sup>24</sup> who died in May 2002. Because of his publications, personality and continuation of activities to promote peace and anti-militarism, the legend of the Ie-jima farmers' struggle has almost been equated singularly with that of Ahagon, who is among the most respected figures in the community of protest. The Ie-jima Struggle influenced the anti-base protest on Okinawa Mainland and attracted sympathy from mainland Japan.

Ie-jima is a small island (23 square kilometres) located only nine kilometres northwest of Okinawa Island (Map 4.1). It has a relatively flat land surface, suited for both farming and military purposes, such as shooting ranges and airfields. Ie-jima was among the most severely destroyed areas in the Battle of Okinawa when the US Forces conducted some of the bloodiest raids, which killed about 1,500 villagers out of a population of 7,500, as well as 2,000 Japanese soldiers and 800 Americans. About 100 households in Maja before the war were reduced to 75. After the Japanese Army surrendered, in the Maja District, the villagers were moved around many times to other islands and returned to their homes in March 1947. The residents tried to put the past behind and concentrate on farming (Ahagon 1973: 16–7).

Map 4.1 Ie Island (Richard J. Pearson, *Archaeology of the Ryūkyū Islands*, University of Hawaii Press, 1969: 15)



Ahagon recalled that the farmers were so naïve and ignorant that they believed if they co-operated with the US military the Americans would help the villagers recover from

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<sup>24</sup> Ahagon was, on record, born in 1901 in Motobu village on Okinawa. He was a farmer, but not by any means a typical peasant figure. Ahagon became a Christian at 17. Being a farmer did not appeal to him: he wished to receive an education but his family did not have the money to send him to school. In the period when many Okinawans were encouraged by the government to migrate overseas during the post-WWI depression years, Ahagon spent ten years in Cuba and Peru, still hoping to make money for studying one day. He worked for a sugar farm and as a barber but the wages were too low to save even to return to Okinawa. He returned at the age of 32, moved to Ie-jima, started a small community shop, and bought a block of land in Maja hamlet.

the war.<sup>25</sup> The US military took full advantage of the isolation and ignorance of the farmers. In July 1953, a US inspector first came to the island and asked the residents to fill in some survey forms and sign them. Later the farmers found that they had signed contract documents for evacuation. A US missile practice range was built, and the US Forces told them that the evacuees (four households at the time) would receive plenty of compensation and could continue normal farming. However, the amount of compensation was startlingly low.<sup>26</sup> As soon as the missile practice started, the farmers' crops and fields were damaged and farming became impossible, for which no compensation was provided. In September 1954, a US inspector announced further land acquisition and a plan to evacuate 152 households and land within a 5,000 feet radius from the planned military site where Maja and Nishizaki Districts were located. Finally the farmers realised they had been deceived (Ahagon 1973: 23).

The Maja and Nishizaki villagers gathered and discussed what to do. The residents' meetings provided individual villagers opportunities to express opinions and confirm their collective will. They realised that part of the problem was they had no knowledge about the unilaterally issued USCAR ordinances and decrees related to land acquisition, such as Ordinance 109.

For many farmers, the choice was either land or death. At the meeting, everyone agreed, 'if we are taken away from our land, we will only die like fish taken out of water' (Ahagon 1973: 33). A Maja farmer, Namizato Seiji, said his family could not drink tea or smoke anymore because the military dug a hole in the middle of his field. He said when the winter came, 'I will stand up against the bullets'. Another villager, Chinen Kokichi, said that the farmers could not afford to be intimidated by bullets, otherwise entire families in the communities would starve to death.

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<sup>25</sup> Maja farmers were first glad it was the Americans, not the Japanese who won the war. The Japanese soldiers treated Ie-jima residents with contempt killed them and subjected them to harsh labour during the war. 'We were reminded of American democracy and Lincoln by the US delegates who visited Ie-jima who seemed much more generous and civilised than they had been taught before the war' (Ahagon 1973: 21).

<sup>26</sup> Generally, the amount paid by the US was only 2–3 per cent of average revenue gained from growing crops (Arasaki 1995: 56).

Communications with other farmers, who were going through similar ordeals of land acquisition, such as in Isahama and Oroku hamlets, encouraged the Ie-jima farmers. They gathered, talked and read out poems to each other about their common experiences and exchanged knowledge on how to negotiate effectively, such as writing petition letters. 'Interactions with other farmers gave us confidence and made us even more solidly determined to hang on to our land' (Ahagon 1973: 81–2).

The farmers continuously negotiated with the military, USCAR, G.R.I., the Legislature, and *Tochiren* staff in Naha. In October 1954, about 80 farmers, the mayor and Ie village council members travelled to Naha, and made direct petitions to the US authority not to evacuate the villagers. At the negotiation table, the USCAR officers responded to the mayor's petition that they recognised the difficulties villagers were going through, and until further clarification, villagers were allowed to work on their farms as usual. The mayor told other villagers 'the USCAR and the Air Force basically allowed us to maintain our farms and houses. Perhaps the Air Force is searching for an alternative site'. This sounded like a triumph to the villagers (Ahagon 1973: 35–40). However, they were deceived again. Within a month, military staff visited Ie-jima for a land survey. The statement of petition the farmers sent to the US Forces was still left inside a desk at a G.R.I. office, not even translated into English. Ahagon recalls, 'local staff hardly knew anything about the Ie-jima land acquisition, obviously they were worried that their jobs were at risk if they showed any sympathy to the farmers' (Ahagon 1973: 26). However, the farmers kept appealing to the local G.R.I. staff, including US-appointed Chief Executive Higa Shuhei, and elite *Tochiren* members, about the situation.

The farmers felt a psychological and socio-economic difference from other Okinawans, including city-dwelling landowners, and those who worked for the US administration. At their meetings, Ahagon observed,

the office workers in Naha and *Tochiren* landowners were all dressed in suits and ties, just like the Americans, whereas we were mostly barefoot, wore old secondhand, over-sized clothes obtained from US soldiers, and women had their hair tied with old tea towels (Ahagon 1973: 34).

G.R.I. Chief Executive Higa advised the Ie village mayor to solely trust the land dispute to G.R.I., and not to consult with any political parties, because it would complicate the problem and delay the solution (Ahagon 1973: 40). Higa's words indicated the already evident division between the pro-US locals and the 'progressive' political parties, such as the OPP and OSMP, which was not fully understood by the Ie-jima farmers at this stage. In the early stage of the struggle, the farmers were isolated, without connections or co-operative relations with political parties or other organisations representing common interests.

In January 1955, 15 Maja households were ordered to evacuate. The negotiations with the US military had significantly reduced the number, from 152 households in Maja and Nishizaki. The military shifted half of the training range from land to water. 'This was the result of our persistent negotiation and pleading, in retrospect' (Ahagon 1973: 66). At around 8am, 11 March 1955, three large landing vessels suddenly appeared off the east coast of Ie-jima.<sup>27</sup> On 14 March, the bulldozers entered Maja, and ran over

the sweet potatoes, peanuts, sugar cane and pine trees that we had carefully grown. Our houses, furniture and water tanks, which were so crucial for survival were covered by soil. Soldiers took helpless people outside, and set some houses on fire. Namizato Seiji, the owner of one of the 13 destroyed houses, pleaded to stop in front of the bulldozers, but the soldiers beat him up, arrested him and sent him to the military prison. Soldiers took sick children outside and picked up the owners of the houses, grabbed their arms and forced them to receive some cash (Ahagon 1973: 89-91).

Maja villagers started *suwarikomi* (sitting-in) 'though we did not know such a word at the time', in the G.R.I. corridor, requesting the payment of living allowances (Ahagon 1973: 98). After the local police tried to remove them, the villagers all went to the police headquarters and blocked all the paths to the building. The military allowed the farmers to work on their farm outside training hours, that is, in the early mornings, evenings and on Sundays, the G.R.I. agreed to pay minimal allowances lower than that of a prisoner's.

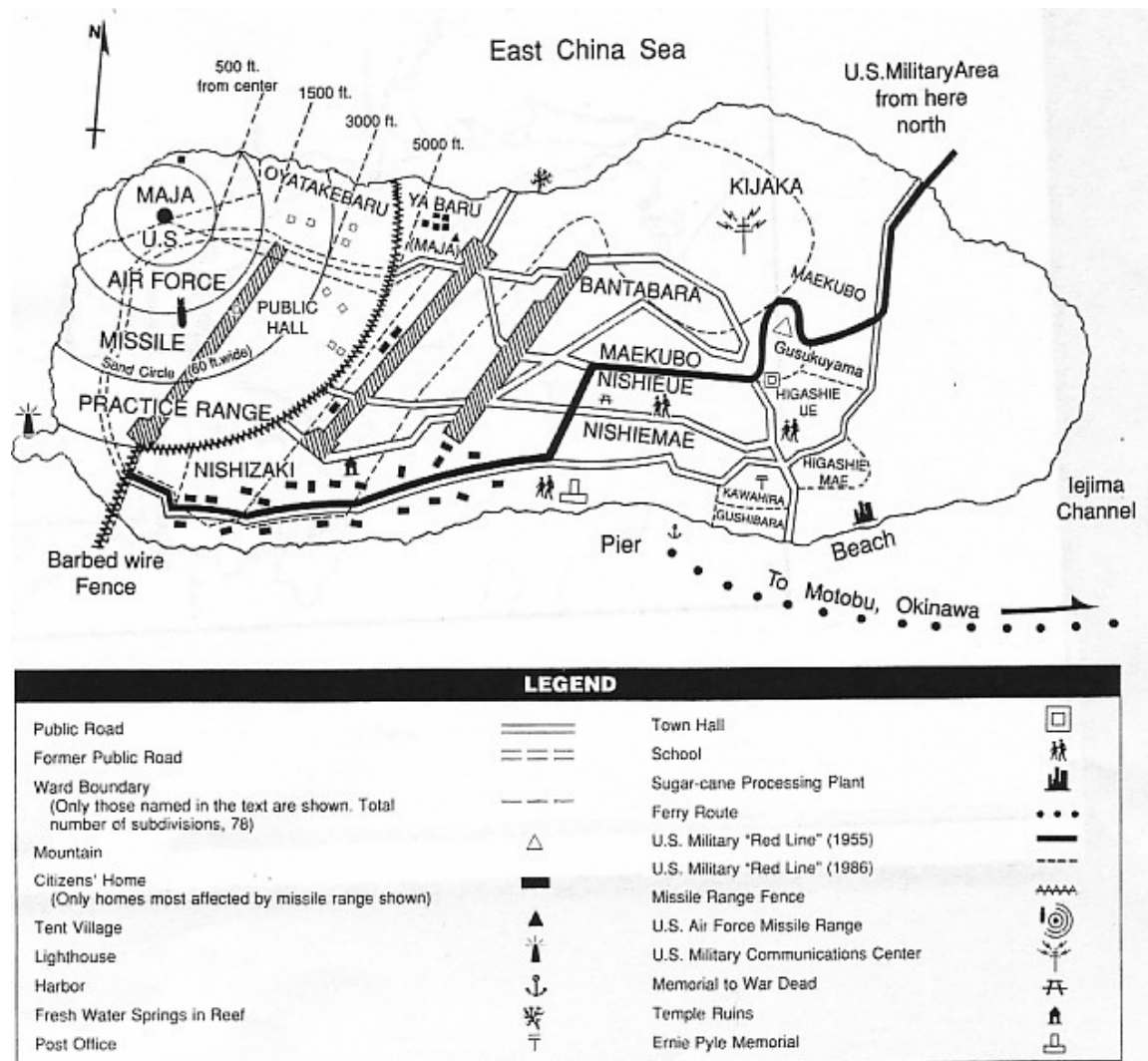
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<sup>27</sup> An estimated 300 armed soldiers with military vehicles, tear gas and stretchers surrounded the area. Tents and telephone systems were set up. The residents thought WW III had started. The military gave the mayor a notice, which ordered the evacuation of 15 households, and warned that individuals who attempted to get in the way would be arrested. (Ahagon 1973: 87).



The US missile practice range had been built next to Maja hamlet, and the farming areas were inside the military fence (Map 4.2).

Map 4.2 Maja Hamlet (Ahagon Shōkō, *The Island Where People Live*, Christian Conference of Asia Communications, 1989: i)



The land the US Forces designated as a substitute was mostly filled with fine stones, and it was impossible to grow anything. A total of 75 Maja villagers' houses and farmland, including Ahagon's house, were moved to 13 tents in an open field. In the tents, residents suffered from heat, lack of drinking water, and water seeping from the ground. Famine and poisonous snakes constantly threatened the people, and 87 percent of them became ill (Ahagon 1973: 92, Ahagon 1989: 22). The military

government stopped paying living allowances because the farmers kept lobbying against the land acquisition in Naha by appealing to other military landowners.

The Maja farmers wrote a letter addressed to '*Bokoku no Minasama*' ('people in the home country') about their predicament and asked for support, which was published in *Asahi Shinbun*.<sup>28</sup> The farmers emphasised their 'blood connection' with the Japanese in letters, speeches at rallies and petitions. Leaflets and pamphlets contained sentences such as, 'there is no doubt that we are Japanese. We cannot put up with *iminzoku shihai* (foreign domination) any more, and wish to return to Japan as soon as possible...We ask for support from the Japanese government to make the Americans pay back the damage we suffered...We deserve the same right for a peaceful life and humane treatment as the Japanese'(quoted in Arasaki 1969: 99–101). In 1969, Arasaki describes this strategy as a 'weakness' of the Ie-jima struggle (Arasaki 1969: 90). However, as he writes elsewhere (for example 1976: 142), at the time, Ie-jima farmers and Okinawans in general felt isolated from the rest of the world under US military authoritarianism, and sympathy from the mainland population was the only hope.

When two Maja women died of starvation, leaving behind ten children, the farmers decided to become beggars at a district meeting in July 1956. About 20–30 villagers, including some children, who were fit enough to travel went on a 'beggars' march' (*kojiki kōshin*) across Okinawa Island from Kunigami in the north to Itoman in the south. Their first objective was not only to obtain food and money, but also to tell people about the US Forces' treatment of the Ie-jima people. The farmers carried a flag that showed a summary of their predicament. They made speeches and read *Ryuka* (Ryūkyūan poetry)<sup>29</sup> to people in the street, and obtained food and money. The march effectively publicised the Ie-jima struggle and generated compassion in the Okinawan public (Ahagon 1973: 130–2).

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<sup>28</sup> *Asahi Shinbun*, 3 February 1955. They also wrote to mainland citizens' organisations such as *Jiyu Jinken Kyokai* (Freedom and Human Rights Association), *Nihon Seinendan Kyogikai*, (Japan Youth Group Association) (Ahagon 1973: 106).

<sup>29</sup> Ahagon tape-recorded the *Ryuka* read by elderly Maja women in the tents, in order to play them to the people who might visit Ie-jima later from mainland Japan.

In this period, the US administration jailed many trade unionists and political activists (such as Senaga Kamejiro, the founder of the OPP), and all forms of publication were censored. Perhaps because the farmers did not attack the Americans and only talked about what happened, neither the military nor the police prohibited their activities. Children in the march attracted greater compassion, and often police officers and American soldiers secretly made contributions, asking bystanders to hand them to the farmers (Ahagon 1973: 130–2). The beggars' march was a tactic that avoided being labelled and suppressed as 'anti-Americanism' and 'communism' at the time (Arasaki 1995: 54). It was also a tactic to inculcate popular interest in the US land policy across Okinawa Island (Arasaki 1995: 55).

Maja farmers stressed they relied on non-violent negotiations, and that they were not associated with either communism or anti-Americanism. The farmers declared a 'Code of Regulations for Petition Activities' on 23 November 1954 at a Maja and Nishizaki District meeting with the basic principles of non-violence and politeness.<sup>30</sup> The farmers mainly resorted to non-violent forms of protest such as pleading and begging, because they knew that as long as the farmers did not resort to violence the military could not hurt them.<sup>31</sup> This was also because their struggle had no supporting organisations, newspapers, or witnesses. In an isolated, tiny island like Ie-jima, there was no other alternative to protect their livelihoods from the US Forces (Ahagon 1973: 54). At negotiations, the farmers often made it clear that they had no intention to obstruct the American military and its missions. They focused on arguing for a need to cultivate to survive, and stressed their intention to co-operate better with the Americans (Ahagon 1973: 59).

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<sup>30</sup> The Code of Regulation reads as follows: 'Do not be anti-American, do not be angry or criticise, do not talk too much, never lie, always be truthful, sit down when having a meeting, do not bring farming tools when having a meeting, never put your hands above your ears, do not shout, speak calmly, negotiate according to morality and humanitarian and religious values (these are beyond US decrees and orders), never be afraid of the military, we are superior to the military people, and we should be ready to guide them to the right way, stick to these rules to the end' (Ahagon 1973: 50–1). Being a Christian, Ahagon frequently used the word 'God' and borrowed expressions from the Bible.

<sup>31</sup> The farmers surrounded the inspectors and prohibited land surveys, shed tears and begged, 'Please, stop. Please.' Some gave inspectors eggs from the village as a gift, which successfully hindered the job. Newspapers described these actions as 'farmers' violence toward land survey' (Arasaki 1995: 47).

US explosives and armed soldiers frequently killed residents collecting scrap metal around the bases for a living,<sup>32</sup> and missile practice and air training injured and killed several villagers, at least, every year during the intensifying military operations for the Vietnam War. More than 50 Maja villagers out of the population of 380 were arrested and jailed since 1955 (Ahagon 1998 [1992]: 32).<sup>33</sup> The military tried to regulate farmers to carry permits, but the farmers rejected this, because they considered themselves owners of the areas. The US forces burned the farmers' crops and forests within fenced areas (Arasaki 1995: 53–5). The military put signs on fences saying, 'Ryūkyūans Not Allowed', the farmers took them off and put up their own signs that said, 'Landowners Only'. Because of these endless daily scuffles the US made a policy of *mokunin kōsakuchi* ('overlooked farming area'), to allow farmers to work, as long as they did not prohibit military activities. *Mokunin kōsakuchi* is a scheme agreed between the military and the farmer landowners, common in many US military bases to the present.

Other communities in Okinawa, such as Isahama and Oroku hamlets, and later, in Konbu hamlet in Gushikawa village,<sup>34</sup> engaged in similar struggles for land against the US military, mostly forced into desperate material conditions and/or emigration. The land struggle was primarily a struggle for survival, not about political principles or ideologies. Only in retrospect, in his later book, *Inochikoso Takara: Okinawa Hansen no Kokoro* (1992 [1998]), Ahagon points out that 'absolute pacifism' predicated on the experiences in the Battle of Okinawa was at the heart of the Ie-jima version of Okinawan anti-militarism, cultivated in, and communicated from, Ie-jima. The Ie-jima struggle exemplifies the most desperate and powerful people's collective

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<sup>32</sup> Two male residents, aged 28 and 38, were killed when they were dismantling old US air force explosives to obtain scrap metal in 1959. The victims' families relied on incomes from selling US scrap materials, after their land was taken (Kamei 1999).

<sup>33</sup> This figure was included in the petition made in 1973 by the Ie Village Assembly, against the US use of defoliants.

<sup>34</sup> Since December 1965, 38 landowners in Konbu hamlet in Gushikawa village started their land struggle after the owners received notification of land acquisition from the US Forces. The Gushikawa Village Assembly made an opposition statement against the acquisition in February 1966, and the landowners formed the Konbu Land Protection Society (*Konbu Tochi o Mamoru Kai*), and built a 'struggle hut' (*toso goya*), where the landowners and supporters guarded their properties (Gushikawa Shiyakusho 1970: 908–10).

action. Ahagon was an influential figure, who significantly contributed to creating a legendary status of the Ie-jima struggle in the community of protest.

*The First-Wave 'Okinawa Struggle'*

In the community of protest on Okinawa Main Island, the landowners' right to privately owned land against US land acquisition was the most pressing issue. Exceptionally in the history of post-war Okinawan protest, both conservative and progressive local political parties and the Ryūkyū Legislature (*Rippo-in*) joined forces in generating the island-wide land struggle. The conservative Okinawa Democratic League and the communist Okinawa People's Party (OPP, *Jinminto*) first requested the US military government to pay rent to the landowners of occupied properties (*Uruma Shinpo* 11 May 1950). In November 1952, out of the 'necessity to protect their basic human right to live', the Ryūkyū Legislature opposed the forceful evacuation and supported residents' resistance action (Hiyane 1982: 270). In April 1954, the Legislature passed a resolution called the 'four principles for land protection': 1) no lump sum rent payment, 2) adequate compensation for the land already confiscated, 3) indemnity payments for forced land acquisition, 4) no further, additional land acquisition. The recovery of landowners' rights was a priority for most political parties, along with reversion to Japan.

However, because any act that objected to the American land policies was labelled as 'communist' and gave the US administration justification for persecution, the opposition forces limited their demands to refusing lump sum payments and opposing forced land acquisition, in order to protect minimal land rights. Apart from those of the OPP members, the mainstream discourses of the land struggle in the early 1950s avoided criticising the existence of US military bases in Okinawa itself, or the US–Japan security alliance (Oguma 1998: 511).

In March 1954, USCAR announced a plan to obtain permanent leases of the properties needed by the US Forces with lump sum rent payments made to individual private landowners at the rate arbitrarily set by the US military<sup>35</sup>, which virtually

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<sup>35</sup> The rent rate was set by the US military at 6 per cent of land value, for a duration of 16 years (Arasaki 1995: 31).

meant purchasing permanent land leases once and for all. This announcement alarmed the Okinawan landowners and the general public. In April, all the Ryūkyū Legislature members expressed support for ‘the four principles for land protection’.<sup>36</sup> The land committee members appointed by USCAR, the G.R.I., the Ryūkyū Legislature, and the Mayors’ Council formed the Four Group Coalition (*yonsha-kyo*) in order to demand the US authorities accept ‘the four principles’. The ‘four principles’ functioned as a slogan of the opposition to US land policy for all political sectors. The four principles, furthermore, provided a clear guideline for the residents’ demands and opposition activities.

Importantly, there were differences among the locals’ reasons for opposing US land acquisition. The landowners who were more inclined to economic maximisation and politically pro-US, such as the Okinawan Liberal Party members and *Tochiren* members, accepted the US lump sum payment policy and military land lease, which eventually destroyed the all-island coalition against land acquisition. Their main concern was to extract maximum profit by negotiating effectively with the US Forces. In contrast, the OPP and OSMP members opposed land acquisition, in order to block ‘the entrenchment of US colonialism in Okinawa’ (Arasaki 1976: 135). The slogan that land rights should not be given up for money appealed to the interests and sentiments of the Okinawan farmers. The political division on the land issue among the locals suggested that the special value attached to land that was particularly strong among farmers was not necessarily shared by all Okinawans. However, the four principles were agreeable to all sectors of the Okinawan polity, including the conservatives and, therefore, the land struggle became an ‘island-wide’ struggle.

Nevertheless, USCAR refused to change its policy of lump sum payment and permanent purchase.<sup>37</sup> In June 1956 the US House Armed Services Committee in

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<sup>36</sup> Arasaki infers the Liberal Party and the core members of *Tochiren*, which had formed a pro-US, conservative political grouping at the time, supported the ‘four principles’ in order to gain bargaining power against the US to maximise the amount of rent (Arasaki 1976: 137).

<sup>37</sup> In June 1955, USCAR permitted the Four Group Coalition to send a delegation to Washington to appeal for a governmental assessment. Arasaki infers that USCAR permitted this travel because it regarded the issue as strictly economic, thus unrelated to potentially dangerous communist thoughts, as well as to induce early settlement of the land issue by US interference (Arasaki 1995: 33, Arasaki 1976: 138).

Washington sent a delegation to Okinawa to conduct a two-day inspection on the land problem, and issued the 'Price Report' on 9 June. The Price Report reconfirmed the adequacy of the permanent lease of military land, lump sum payment of rent by the US, and the need for additional land acquisition.<sup>38</sup> This both disappointed and infuriated the Okinawan public. On 15 June, the G.R.I. and the Legislature members and mayors quit their positions in protest (Miyazato 1966: 99). Within two weeks, an estimated 160,000 to 200,000 local residents joined residents' rallies held in 56 cities, towns and villages (the population of Okinawa then was about 800,000). The rallies were an expression of the residents' rejection of the Price Report and their determination to protect the 'four principles'. In Koza City, 50,000 residents joined the rallies, and 100,000 in Naha. Students from the University of the Ryūkyūs, and other Okinawan students enrolled in universities in mainland Japan who were in Okinawa for summer holidays, demonstrated by yelling slogans in chorus (*Sprechchor*) — 'Yankees Go Home' — with placards carrying anti-US messages (Arasaki 1969: 135–7), which became a traditional style of mass demonstration in the community of protest.

The 19 June issue of *Okinawa Times* reported, 'Okinawa is burning, determined to defend the 'four principles'. Okinawans' perseverance for a decade finally exploded' (quoted in Miyazato 1966: 100). The Four Group Coalition developed into the Communication Council (*Renraku Kyogikai, Renkyo*), with 16 other citizens' groups.<sup>39</sup> The OTA and *Tochiren* were particularly active in galvanising people into joining demonstrations and rallies through using their networks in schools and land committees located in each community (Arasaki 1976: 157, Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 83–4). The 1956 protest involved all political forces, even US-appointed Chief Executive Higa Shuhei, albeit temporarily.

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<sup>38</sup> The Report justified the long-term necessity of securing the US bases on Okinawa for 1) allowing nuclear deployment (this was impossible in Japan because of its constitutional refusal to retain nuclear weapons), 2) for containing communism and, 3) for preventing regional warfare across East and Southeast Asia.

<sup>39</sup> These groups included the OTA, the Youth Group Association, the Women's Association, the Parents' Association, the OSMP, the OPP, the Okinawa Liberal Party, the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayors' Union and *Tochiren*.

*Growing Voices for Reversion*

Importantly, Okinawans' 'ethnic pride' against foreign domination (*iminzoku shihai*) underpinned the discourses of the land struggle. The first-wave Okinawa Struggle was definitely combined with the political campaign for reversion. Statements in residents' rallies and organisations identified protecting land rights on Okinawa with protecting the integrity of Japanese territory from US encroachment.<sup>40</sup> The statement produced at the Naha anti-Price Report rally argued that reversion was necessary to solve the land dispute, the protest against the US administration was conceptualised as a struggle for ethnic self-determination (Nakano 1969: 191). The land struggle gave an outlet to the emerging claim for Okinawan ethnic self-determination, defined as re-integration into Japan as the home country.

The land dispute also generated a greater degree of sympathy for Okinawans' hardship among the mainland Japanese public, which was until then almost non-existent, except from *Okinawa-jin Renmei* (the Okinawans' Association).<sup>41</sup> In June 1956 a delegate from the Four Group Coalition was sent to Tokyo to discuss the land issue with Japanese government officials. The delegate explained that their struggle was 'for protecting our own land, but at the same time, for protecting Japanese territory' (Hiyane 1982: 283). For the first time since the peace treaty, a major mainland Japanese newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, covered the US land acquisition with 'bulldozers and bayonets', exploitation of Okinawan labour, and deprivation of Okinawans' basic human rights under the US military administration in a series of articles starting from 13 January 1955. After *Asahi Shimbun* requested the government to take action to protect Okinawa, many Okinawans felt they 'gained a million supporters', and 'a beam of light entered in the Dark Age' (Arasaki 1976: 139–40).

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<sup>40</sup> For example, in the statement of the general meeting of *Tochiren* on 14 June, 1956 (Arasaki 1969: 111–2).

<sup>41</sup> *Okinawa-jin Renmei* (Okinawans' Association, later called *Okinawa Kenjin-kai*), a network of mainland residents of Okinawan origins, aimed to help Okinawans recover from war devastation and build democracy and reconstruction of Okinawa. *Okinawa-jin Renmei* criticised the Japanese government for deserting Okinawa, and sent a request to General MacArthur for support (Arasaki 1969: 24).



About 10,000 Japanese political party and trade union members came to a rally in Osaka and proclaimed their support for the four principles, Okinawa's reversion and protection of Okinawa as a part of Japanese territory. A similar rally was held in Tokyo. The participants of those rallies included more than 40 political parties and unions, including the most powerful Liberal Democratic Party (Hiyane 1982: 286). During the year 1955, political parties, trade unions and citizens' organisations in mainland Japan almost unilaterally supported Okinawa's reversion to Japan (Watanabe 1970: 109–19). The LDP, which was the main party, began to take firm action to promote Okinawa's reversion to its advantage.<sup>42</sup> The common argument was that Okinawa was part of national territory that was lost in WWII, together with other islands such as the Chishima and Ogasawara Islands, and should be recovered (Watanabe 1970: 111–6).<sup>43</sup> However, Japanese government officials, such as Prime Minister Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Shigemitsu, expressed concern that the US–Japan relationship would be spoiled if the land dispute turned into an 'anti-American movement', which involved the question of returning Okinawa to Japan (Hiyane 1982: 284). The Japanese government carefully avoided reference to the validity of Article 3 of the peace treaty, on the status of Okinawa, and simply conveyed to the US government the residents' petition to respect their land rights (Nakano 1969: 194–5).

#### *Decline of the 'First Wave' Okinawa Struggle*

In July 1956, solidarity among the anti-land acquisition coalition started to crumble. The point of division was over the coalition's strategy: whether to limit the land dispute to protection of private property or to develop it into a greater demand for a political solution. The Four Group Coalition had expanded to the Five Group

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<sup>42</sup> Watanabe (1970: 142) explains, although there were disagreements on the future status of the US military bases on the island, many mainland Japanese conservative politicians and business leaders supported Okinawa's reversion. Within the conservative ruling Liberal Democratic Party, there were opinions which stressed the strategic significance of maintaining US military capacity on Okinawa, and more moderate advocates for 'scaling down' the base facilities to the level comparable to bases on the mainland (Watanabe 1970: 133)

<sup>43</sup> The nationalistic Democratic Party and the right-wing division of the Socialist Party particularly promoted this argument. In this process, however, the LDP members were determined to keep the reversion issue separate from the influence of the JSP and JCP, and from the rising anti-American or anti-*Ampo* (US–Japan security alliance) movements (Watanabe 1970: 125).

Coalition joined by the League of Town, Village and City Council Chairs. Higa, Chief Executive of G.R.I. and the conservative Okinawa Liberal Party (OLP) members, which developed from the Okinawa Democratic League and the Republican Party and was the dominant party in the Legislature, disagreed with the Communication Council, which aspired to build a new political body representing the Okinawan population with elected legislative, administrative and judiciary institutions, instead of the G.R.I. and Ryūkyū Legislature under the US administration after the staff all resigned. However, the conservative sector expressed insecurity about discarding US-appointed political institutions (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 86–7). Chief Executive Higa, who was the leader of the OLP, cancelled his earlier decision to resign and argued that the Five Group Coalition should not be anything more than a mediating institution between the US military and the residents. Other OLP members, who formed the majority of the Legislature and the G.R.I., followed this decision. Furthermore, Naha mayor Tōma Jūgō commented, ‘Not all residents are opposed to the US lump sum payment policy’ in an interview with a US television station. Tōma represented the interests of those landowners suffering economically, and willing to receive rent all at once on the condition that they retained nominal property rights. Subsequent to the defection of the OLP members, the Communication Council became the Land Council (*tochikyō*), and replaced the Five Group Coalition. Yara Chōbyō from the Okinawa Teachers’ Association became the leader of this coalition and Ahagon Shokō, representing farmers of Ie-jima, became Deputy Chair.

USCAR indicated that it was prepared to switch to direct rule, and to abolish any institutions run by locals if the local administrative staff resigned. Moreover, the US military prohibited soldiers and families from entering civil districts in central Okinawa where the economy was dependent on American clientele, such as bars and shops. This ‘off limits’ policy inflicted severe economic damage especially on the local communities in central Okinawa. As a result, the Koza City mayor resigned from the Five Group Coalition. It was a tactic on the part of USCAR to divide the island-wide coalition (Miyazato 1966: 101–2).

At the same time, the US administration announced the suspension of university funding to suppress the protest activities of the University of the Ryūkyūs students. USCAR proclaimed the ‘off limits’ policy would be continued unless the University of the Ryūkyūs took proper action to punish and control its ‘communist’ students, to which the University executives responded by dismissing five students and suspending another student.<sup>44</sup> Pressure on the University of the Ryūkyūs turned into an effective instrument to settle the land dispute for US authorities (Arasaki 1969: 136). The Land Council was dissolved after only eight months, and the OTA, the OPP and other central reversion protagonist organisations receded from the land dispute. The land struggle no longer included all social sectors. It was reduced to an economic dispute among individual landowners, a majority of them *Tochiren* members, local land committees and the US military.

In April 1958, USCAR suspended the lump sum payment policy, which significantly improved the terms of contracts, if the landowners would accept their land being used by the US military. In May, six members, mainly concerned with landowners’ economic rights,<sup>45</sup> were sent to the US federal government, for the land dispute settlement. Before their departure, *Minren* (a new political faction made up of the Naha divisions of the OSMP and OPP) members strongly opposed to signing the land contract with the US, which would legitimise US domination of Okinawa and national (Japanese) territory. However, the delegates agreed with the new contract terms for land leases in Washington<sup>46</sup>. As a matter of fact, landowners were allowed to request lump sum payment of ten years rent and many did, which signalled the

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<sup>44</sup> The board of executives issued a statement:

The University Board and Chancellery rejects Communism based on Article 14 of the University clause of the Ryūkyū Education Law, and follows the instructions of the US as the protector of the free world against the Communist threat in the Orient. We regret the behaviour of our students who conducted anti-US demonstrations and their offence inflicted on all the Americans and the US staff stationed in the Ryūkyūs. The University is responsible for the demonstrations against the US, the founder and the financial source of the University... and hereby bans students from joining any activities on or off campus without permission (*Okinawa Times* 11 August, 1956 quoted in Miyazato 1966: 103).

<sup>45</sup> The delegates included the Chief Executive, Chair of the OLP, Chair of the Legislature, the Landowners’ representative, a local council representative, and a judiciary officer (Miyazato 1966: 130).

<sup>46</sup> With twice as much rent, paid yearly, and renewed every five years (Arasaki 1995: 36, Miyazato 1966: 130–1).

miserable defeat of the ‘four principles’ (Ahagon 1973: 160–1). Thus, most landowners accepted contracts with the US military, and many of them started receiving every year amounts of money they had never imagined. For example, Ie-jima farmers also signed lease contracts with the military and received lump sum payments. But Ahagon and others, mainly from Maja, refused to sign leases, and lived on farming and compensation from the US military for land use (not based on contracts). These Maja farmers became the earliest non-contract landowners, later called ‘anti-war landowners’ (see chapter 5).

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the unity of the coalition was based on the ‘materialist’ concern for regaining land as a means of livelihood, combined with ‘ethnic pride’ pitted against the high-handed, racist US rule and, importantly, aversion to war and militarism. The peace treaty and the US military’s ignorance of residents’ land rights made most Okinawans insecure about their political and economic future. Indeed, since the ‘day of humiliation’ — the San Francisco Peace Treaty (28 April, 1952) — separated Okinawa from Japanese administration, the pendulum of ambiguous Okinawans’ identity moved towards assimilation to Japan. This ‘ethnic pride’ resulted in an ‘all-island’ protest against the US military, which led to an assurance of rent incomes for the landowners. This ‘all-island’ struggle provides important evidence of the locals’ capability to achieve political change and has founded the myth of an ‘Okinawan’ movement.

However, the ‘all-island’ coalition soon collapsed, due to differences among conservative and progressive parties and unions’ ideas about how best to go about Okinawa’s reversion: whether it should entail cooperation with the US military or opposition to it. After the all-island struggle peaked in 1956, and the economic settlement was made, differences among local groups and organisations resurfaced and the temporary coalition dissolved.

Collective actions during the cycle of protest contributed organisationally to constructing the idea of a united ‘Okinawan’ movement, setting precedents for future struggles. Political organisations such as the OPP, OSMP, OTA, and *Tochiren*

established themselves, and became major leaders in political activism in the community of protest. Strategies and styles of collective action such as signature collection, demonstrating and chanting slogans in chorus, and non-violence have become part of the traditional repertoire in the Okinawan community of protest.

The farmers' protest on Ie Island (Ie-jima) was especially important, for it left a legacy of an 'Okinawans' struggle' against marginalisation, rooted in 'absolute pacifism' and the principle of non-violence. Experience in the Battle of Okinawa, and aversion to war derived from it, was something that everyone could relate to. It was the deeply emotional rejection of the military and war, as well as the daily humiliation and misery of being subjected to foreign rule and, especially, economic hardship that motivated locals' protest against the US military in this period.

However, this popular emotion directly based on surviving war — 'reversion nationalism' — did not precisely operate as a dominant framing of protest, or as a basis for a coalition. This gave rise to a strong 'nationalist' orientation against the 'foreign' military administration, which contributed to building a coalition for the next cycle of protest, all-inclusively called the 'reversion movement'. Reversion — rather than Okinawan 'absolute pacifism' or aversion to war — became the new basis for a political coalition.

Despite these internal differences and detachment of public sentiment and 'reversion nationalism', the 'first-wave' Okinawa Struggle indeed laid the foundation for the idea of a post-war 'Okinawan' movement against marginalisation. The memory of this land struggle, the 'all-island' mass protests and a political coalition encompassing the conservative and progressive organisations, has survived as evidence of Okinawans as unified protest actors, and the myth of an 'Okinawan struggle'.

## **The Second-Wave ‘Okinawan Struggle’: Towards Reversion**

### **Introduction**

The island-wide mass protests for land that peaked in 1956 are the foundation of the myth of an ‘Okinawan’ struggle in the post-war period. The following wave of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, namely, the ‘second wave’ that peaked with the attempted general strike in 1969, entrenched further the idea of ‘Okinawans’ as a united entity of protest against the historical narrative of marginalisation. The main theme of this cycle of protest was the campaign for Okinawa’s reversion to Japan. Together, the first and the second waves of the Okinawa Struggle represented the rare and crucial moments in which the community of protest claimed coherence and unity, which this dissertation understands as a myth of an ‘Okinawan’ struggle.

This chapter focuses on how the ‘second wave’ — comprehensively referred to as the ‘reversion movement’ — contributed to the formation of the myth. Organisationally, the goal of reversion provided the basis for a ‘progressive’ (*kakushin*) coalition, which encompassed all the progressive organisations.<sup>1</sup> This coalition became the lynchpin of the unitary ‘Okinawan’ movement. Nevertheless, this chapter also points out how tenuous this unity was, by highlighting crucial internal divisions within the progressive coalition.

The first section examines what constituted the ‘reversion movement’: organisations, development of collective identity, and the framing of protest. Specifically, it examines how political parties, trade unions, the teachers’ and other organisations, including the unionised base workers, formed a coalition under an umbrella organisation called the Okinawa Prefecture Council for Reversion to the Home Country (*fukki-kyo*). In particular, the idea of ‘reversion nationalism’ was

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<sup>1</sup> I use ‘progressive’ as opposed to ‘conservative’, to describe a political character to pursue political and social change, rather than maintaining status quo.

important for the collective identity and framing of the reversion movement. The second section focuses on a series of collective actions that entailed the Council's organisation and mobilisation in the Okinawan community of protest. Importantly, the Council's strategy pursued solidarity and conformity with the Japanese leftist movement and the government, as well as political confrontation with the US authorities and the pro-US Okinawan Liberal Party.

The third section examines the areas of citizens' concerns that the progressive coalition could not address properly — fear and frustration of living near the bases during the Vietnam War and, also, ambiguous feelings towards the implications of reversion, which was sharply addressed by the rising intellectual challenge to 'reversion nationalism'. The fourth section examines the growing difficulty in sustaining the status of the progressive coalition as the centre of a united 'movement' of Okinawans around the slogan of 'reversion nationalism'. The failure of the 1969 general strike and the violent eruption of the 1970 Koza riot, which occurred outside the structures of the organised parties and unions, was a powerful expression of popular grievances and frustrations which had been excluded from the agendas of the Council, parties and unions.

### **The Making of the Second-Wave 'Okinawan Struggle'**

#### *Birth of a Progressive Coalition*

##### *Political Parties*

Until the mid-1960s, both the US administration and the Okinawan activists assumed that reversion of Okinawa would mean the removal of the American bases. At the time, the control over civil administration of Okinawa was an assurance for the US forces of their complete right to freely use the island as a security depot (Gabe 2000: 50).<sup>2</sup> The US authorities regarded the Okinawans' campaign to demand reversion as an attempt to upset the security of the region, and were thus identified with cooperation with 'Communism'.

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<sup>2</sup> In May 1954 Deputy Governor General David Ogden commented that if the Okinawans wished to return to Japanese administration, US forces would completely withdraw from the Far East, leaving Japan vulnerable to the communist threat. Therefore, Okinawans, as loyal Japanese citizens, could not want reversion (cited in Oguma 1998: 513).

Similarly, for local anti-US activists, Okinawa's reversion to Japan meant withdrawal of the US military forces from Okinawa. A student activist during the 1960s, Irei Takashi mentioned that he and his colleagues conceptualised Okinawa's reversion to Japan as a 'revolution', they saw that the heart of Okinawa's suffering was oppression based on class and ethnicity (cited in Arakawa & Arasaki 1985: 51). Political ideas to justify the reversion were derived from the mainland Japanese left-wing activists, especially those of the Japan Communist Party (JCP) (Arakawa & Arasaki 1985: 52).<sup>3</sup>

The US authorities were aware of the connection between the JCP and the OPP.<sup>4</sup> The *Okinawa Times* editorial noted that the impromptu speeches of the OPP members held all over the island in various local communities had been extremely popular: the audience responded with clapping and cheering the OPP speakers for attacking the US military's authoritarian rule, 'saying what the people dare not express in words' (*Okinawa Times* date unspecified 1954 cited in American Consular Unit 1955: 1). However, public support for the OPP grew weaker as the US authorities made 'abundantly clear that support of the OPP would entail the displeasure of the American authorities and consequent economic losses for the people or communities involved' (American Consular Unit 1955: 1).<sup>5</sup>

The US authorities had created substantial local pro-US political forces, through supporting the establishment of the conservative Ryūkyū Liberal Party, and made every effort to marginalise the opposition anti-US parties such as the OPP and

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<sup>3</sup> The JCP, which had celebrated Okinawa's independence from Japan immediately after Japan's war defeat (see chapter 4), drastically changed its position and defined Okinawa's return to Japan as 'the inseparable and highly important part of the liberation of the Japanese people from American imperialism', it was the only mainland Japanese political party to demand that the US bases be withdrawn from the island (Watanabe 1970: 117).

<sup>4</sup> Upon the US State Department's request, the American Consular Unit obtained the translation of *Heiwa to Dokuritsu no tame ni* (For peace and independence) No. 349, April 1, 1954, which was 'published by the Japanese Communist Party as a directive for Communist anti-American activities on Okinawa' (American Consular Unit 1955: 3).

<sup>5</sup> An editorial of the *Okinawa Times* wrote, 'It is not wrong for the People's Party to take active part in the activities directed for benefiting the property-less masses. But if that party should, with revolution by violence as its ultimate goal, agitate the proletariat masses with the view to bring them under its control in order to mobilise them for radical political or economic struggles, that party can only be called a communistic party that intends to make the proletariat masses into Communists, however tactfully that party may camouflage its colour.' 'It is only too evident that such communistic activities can not be permitted in the US, which is adamantly opposed to Communism, nor in Okinawa which is under her administration' (*Okinawa Times* 7 November 1954 cited in American Consular Unit 1955: 2).



OSMP. With USCAR sponsorship and major OSMP members' defection, the Liberal Party replaced the OSMP as the main party at the Legislature. Since 1952, the G.R.I. Chief Executives were appointed from Liberal Party members. The US military applied draconian policies to a wide range of public activities, especially against those who requested public election of Chief Executives of the G.R.I. and reversion. In March 1953, after a by-election for a Legislature seat in central Okinawa, upon the Liberal Party's request, USCAR interfered and cancelled the election of an OSMP candidate, Tengan Chokō, to replace him with a Liberal Party candidate. After this so-called 'Tengan incident', OPP members and some ex-OSMP members formed the 'Committee for the Struggle against Colonialism' in protest against US manipulation of party politics, which USCAR ordered to dissolve, 'without any room for discussion or questions', on the grounds that its name suggested hostile propaganda against the US military (Gabe 1969: 55). In accordance with this hardline US stance, the Liberal Party deleted the reversion from its policy platform (Gabe 1969: 56).

In another episode known as the 'OPP incident' (*Jinmintō jiken*), the OPP leader Senaga Kamejirō and Tomigusuku village mayor Matayoshi Ichirō were arrested and jailed in October 1954, for harbouring blacklisted communist activists from Amami Island.<sup>6</sup> After his term in jail, Senaga won the Naha mayoral election in 1956 and became the first 'red mayor'. USCAR threatened the Senaga administration by freezing Naha City's finance from the Ryūkyū Bank and subsidies from the US, which jeopardised public works and other local industries. In 1957, USCAR implemented a change of law so that a simple majority vote at a city assembly could dismiss a mayor from office. As a result, Senaga lost his office. Based on the ordinance that banned candidates with criminal records from public office, Senaga could not stand for re-election either.

The highhanded US interference in politics aroused public criticism, and temporary support for the opposition parties. A group of Senaga supporters from the

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<sup>6</sup> At the time, the US authorities watched and tried to move back people who came from Amami in Okinawa Main Island. For details, see (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 70-2).

OPP, the Naha Division of the OSMP, and independent Naha City Assembly members formed *Minren* (the Protection of Democracy Communication Council). *Minren* was a coalition mainly made of the OPP and some radical OSMP members especially based in Naha, which aimed for reversion, a solution of the land dispute and other military-related issues on behalf of the residents, and opposed the US and the Liberal Party's political manoeuvring. In the following Naha City Assembly election, and the mayoral election, *Minren* candidates won the majority of votes over those of the leading Liberal Party.<sup>7</sup> The public supported *Minren* with enthusiasm for its potential to speak for the residents against the arbitrary US rule, particularly against expanding US military facilities and additional land acquisition.

*Minren* was nevertheless too internally split to form a coalition of progressive parties. A Naha mayoral candidate, Kaneshi Saichi, and his followers resigned after criticising the dominance of the OPP 'sectarianism' within *Minren*, and formed a new party, the Okinawa Socialist Party (OSP), which was affiliated with the Japan Socialist Party.<sup>8</sup> A positive reading of the rise and fall of *Minren* was that it was a process for the subsequent coalition building among progressive political organisations for the reversion campaign, but on the other hand, it indicated the characteristic and persistent susceptibility of the progressive forces to internal divisions. Tonaki maintains that the progressive political parties did not reward the public's support. Their energies were diverted towards internal conflicts, and they concentrated too much on winning elections (Tonaki 1969: 124). Meanwhile, the US forces announced the deployment of Nike Hawks in Okinawan bases in 1957, raising fears among the public of additional forced land acquisition by the military.

### Workers' Unions

Fledgling labour unionism and political activism against the US military administration developed into a major political force that played a significant role in

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<sup>7</sup> In the 1958 Legislature election, five *Minren* members were elected as opposed to seven from the Liberal Party, nine from the OSMP and 21 independents (Miyazato 1966: 119).

<sup>8</sup> For the Naha mayoral election in 1958, *Minren* conflicted severely with the non-*Minren* OSMP members over choosing candidates. The OPP and *Minren* chair Senaga demanded the OSMP agree with a *Minren* candidate, Kaneshi Saichi. In the end, Kaneshi was elected over the OSMP candidate, Taira Tatsuo, who was supported by the Liberal Party, which schemed to marginalise *Minren* (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 98-9).

the reversion movement. Nevertheless, the primary agenda of the workers' unions was to overcome poverty and to improve workers' conditions, and they were also susceptible to internal divisions, which prohibited the formation of a united front.

Uehara Kōsuke, one of the oldest base worker activists, first started working on the base in 1951. He recalls that racism and human rights abuses against Okinawans ruled the workplaces in the military: for example, racially segregated toilets, Okinawan workers banned from coffee shops, and no protection from unjustified dismissals for Okinawans (Uehara 1982: 41). From around 1960, Uehara and his workmates held discussion groups called 'the military labour issues study group' after working hours, in preparation for the establishment of a union (for details see Uehara 1982). In 1960, US High Commissioner Ken Booth indicated in a letter to Howard Robinson, head of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Okinawa office, that USCAR intended to legalise Okinawans' trade unions, as long as they concentrated on economic matters and stayed away from political activities (Nagumo 1996: 49–50). In 1960, Robinson approached Uehara and advised that union activities of the Okinawan base workers were possible, despite the existence of Ordinance No. 116 (Uehara 1982: 49–53)<sup>9</sup>

The engineering division in Zukeran, which Uehara was part of, announced the establishment of a union with 1,600 members in September 1960. The USCAR and ICFTU representatives gave their blessings to the new union. However, the US

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<sup>9</sup> Robinson gave speeches and lectures at various meetings and promised the ICFTU would lobby against possible US retaliation against union workers. The conservative ICFTU (*Kokusai Jiyū Rōren*, based in Brussels), played an advisory role for USCAR, in order to help smooth state-labour relations that facilitate US military rule on the island. In 1956, in order to investigate local labour conditions and laws, and conditions related to Okinawan workers' basic human rights, the ICFTU sent six delegates to Okinawa. In particular, the ICFTU report submitted to Brussels headquarters criticised Ordinance No. 116, which banned military workers' collective action. The report also revealed problematic facts about the Okinawan local labour conditions, such as the racist wage scale, according to which significantly lower wages for the same job were paid to the Okinawans (Table 5.1), and urged USCAR to improve the wages and working conditions of Okinawan labour in general (Nagumo 1996: 38–41, Uehara 1982: 16–24).

Table 5.1 Racist wage scale in June 1956 (Senaga, Kamejirō, *Okinawa kara no Hōkoku* (A Report from Okinawa), Iwanami 1956, 156)

	Minimal Hourly Pay	Highest Hourly Pay
US Workers	\$1.20	\$6.52
Philippine Workers	\$0.52	\$3.77
Japanese Workers	\$0.83	\$1.03
Okinawan Workers	\$0.10	\$0.36

authority had rejected the authorisation of another smaller union made up of the workers of the Zukeran Motor Pool Repair Section (Maehara 2000: 48–9). Thus, Okinawan base workers were also prone to internal divisions.<sup>10</sup> However, leader Uehara initiated the merging of six different smaller unions within the base employees into one military base workers' Union League (*zengunrōren*) in June 1961, involving 2,638 members, about ten per cent of the entire base worker population (Uehara 1982: 77).<sup>11</sup> This organisation developed into a bigger union, *Zengunrō* (All-Okinawan Military Workers' Union) in July 1963 (Uehara 1982: 66).

In June 1961, 30 Okinawan labour unions and their 6,700 members established *Zen Oki Rōren* (All-Okinawan Labour Unions' Association). Subsequently, *Zen Oki Rōren* effectively organised strikes in support of pay rises. It also boycotted the submission of the list of union executives to USCAR, in order to sabotage Ordinance 145, which obligated the submission of union membership and executive lists, with support from the ICFTU. USCAR and the business sector expected *Zen Oki Rōren* to be a moderate, non-political organisation (Nagumo 1996: 51–3). However, together with *Zengunrō*, it participated in political campaigns for the reversion and the public election of the G.R.I. Chief Executive, anti-nuclear base rallies and anti-Vietnam protest.

Furthermore, *Zen Oki Rōren* was under the influence of the OPP. The members who were close to the ICFTU were wary of *Zen Oki Rōren's* affiliation with the OPP, and resigned in order to establish a new league of unions, *Okinawa Ken Rōdo Kumiai Kyōgikai* (*Ken Rōkyō*) (Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee), in 1964. The division among Okinawan unionised labour echoed the

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<sup>10</sup> In mainland Japan, the ICFTU had a strong influence on labour unions since the US Occupation, especially on excluding the Communist Party's (in Okinawa, the OPP's) influence in the labour movement. The relationship with the ICFTU constantly created a source of controversy among union members. Those who promoted ICFTU membership valued the organisation's lobbying power with the US authorities, and the opponents — often those affiliated to the Communist Party — criticised ICFTU policy of drawing its members away from staging 'class struggles' autonomous of the state (Maehara 2000: 35-37). *Zengunro* also joined the conservative ICFTU, after some internal controversy.

<sup>11</sup> The small Union office in Urasoe village only had one full-time female worker, helped by union executives who had finished their main work. Uehara notes that as well as the poor public transport and few affordable automobiles, the mental and physical work involved was enormous, which strained the members' family life (Uehara 1982: 77).

mainland Japanese division between the socialists and communist party members (Tōma 1987: 412). Even though workers' unions were internally divided, and also tended to place priority on their specific economic agendas, together with the political parties they became leading actors in local political activism against the US.

Apart from demanding paid leave, bonus payments and superannuation, *Zengunrō* consistently used the slogan, 'promote the reversion', despite some controversies among the workers about antagonising the US forces (Uehara 1982: 94–5). In fact, engagement in anti-US or anti-base collective action was tantamount to endangering employment for the *Zengunrō* workers. However, base workers were highly motivated to join in political activities, partly because they constantly witnessed actual US military operations at work. The Vietnam War especially raised the base workers' ambivalence about their position to contribute to the US war and killing through their jobs on base. At the 1965 annual meeting, *Zengunrō* decided to protest against Ordinance 116, and, at the same time, formally joined the Okinawa Prefecture Council for Reversion to the Home Country.

In May 1965, 22 tugboat sailors at the Naha Military Port were ordered to sail to Vietnam. *Zengunrō* requested the newspapers, the G.R.I. and the local legislature and other citizens' organisations to support its opposition to this order. The main and opposition party representatives and the G.R.I. Chief Executive jointly requested the US authorities not send any Okinawans to Vietnam. The US military reacted promptly to the concerted, firm collective action of the union, political parties and local citizens' political institution, and cancelled the order (Uehara 1982: 143–4). The Okinawan base workers, who constituted 30 per cent of the working population, were among the keenest to organise popular resistance against the US military administration, war and militarism, and behind the campaign for reversion.

#### *The Council for Reversion*

On 28 April 1960, the Okinawa Prefecture Council for Reversion to the Home Country (the Council, *Okinawa-ken Sokoku Fukki Kyougikai, Fukki-kyo*) was established, initiated by the OTA, Okinawa Prefecture Youth Group Council (*Okinawa-ken Seinen Kyōgikai, Oki Sei-Kyō*), and the Council for the Okinawa

Public Office Workers' Unions Council (*Okinawa Kankōchō Rōdō Kumiai Kyōgikai, kankorō*). The three left-wing local political parties (OPP, OSMP and OSP) also joined the coalition, as core organisations. The Council was established as an umbrella organisation that encompassed political parties, workers' unions and several other citizens' organisations.<sup>12</sup>

Despite a series of offers of negotiation, the Liberal Party refused membership of the coalition. The Liberal Party employed a 'gradual method' for reversion, placing priority on 'practical' unification with Japan, for example, in business areas. The Liberal Party members rejected association with any political 'struggle' or 'resistance' against the US. Hence, an all-island coalition of both conservative and progressive political organisations in the land struggle did not materialise, and the Council came to represent only the politically progressive coalition in Okinawa (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 116–7). The Council struggled financially initially: the Secretary General of the Council worked for two years without getting paid. Only in 1966, the Council was able to employ a person as full-time staff (Tōma 1987: 406). However, the number of member organisations increased each year. In 1965, there were 52 member organisations (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inkaï* 1982: 1348–9).

*'Reversion Nationalism'*

*The 'Day of Humiliation': 4.28 and the Boat Rallies with the Japanese Activists*

The opening ceremony of the Council was held on 28 April, the anniversary of the date in 1952 when the peace treaty legalised the separation of Okinawa from Japan. The Council regarded '4.28' as the day of humiliation, and the most important date of the year for the reversion activists. The day marked the implementation of Article 3 of the peace treaty, which the Council rendered invalid on the grounds that Okinawans were never consulted on its acceptance (Asato et al 1971: 53).

On 28 April each year, the reversionists held annual 'offshore boat rallies'

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<sup>12</sup> Other member organisations included the League of Okinawan Women's Groups, (*Okinawa Fujin Rengōkai, Okifuren*), *Jichirō* Okinawa Branch, Okinawa Children's Protection Society (*Okinawa Kodomo o Mamorukai*), Okinawa Liberty Society (*Okinawa Jiyū Kyōkai*), Okinawa Waterside Workers' Union (*Okinawa Kōwan Rōdō Kumiai*), Okinawa Textile Workers' Union (*Okinawa Sen-i Rōdō Kumiai*), and the Okinawan Traffic Workers' Union (*Zen Okinawa Kōtsū Rōdō Kumiai*).

from 1961 until Okinawa's reversion. Every year, Okinawan members got on a boat, sailed off north towards *yamato*, and met with their counterparts from mainland Japan, who departed from Yoron Island, and shook hands overboard, on the 27 degree line (longitude), which was the border that separated mainland Japanese and Okinawan territories.<sup>13</sup> One of the participants (a schoolteacher) recalls, 'My passport has been cancelled twelve times, and I thought I could never go to the mainland. When I crossed the 27-degree line, without a passport, I could not help my tears' (Tōma 1987: 411). The 'offshore boat rallies' provided the opportunity to build solidarity, in a tactile sense, with mainland Japanese left-wing activists, who incorporated the reversion of Okinawa into their protest movements against the US–Japan security treaty.

Okinawan activists were developing solidarity with Japanese anti-war political parties and union members who interpreted 'retrieving' Okinawa as part of the battle against US military imperialism. It was the Japanese anti- *Ampo* activists who originally used the term 'Okinawa Struggle' (*Okinawa tōsō*).

The Council imported important styles of protest from mainland Japanese activists. At the end of rallies and big gatherings, since April 1961, the Council members had chanted '*ganbarō!*' (Never give up!) three times, raising their fists (Tōma 1987: 405). This ritual was taken from the mainland Japanese labour unions' custom, originated from the Miike struggle in Kyushu, against the closing of a coal mine in 1959–60 (Maehara 2000: 42). The tradition of chanting '*ganbarō*' (*ganbarō sanshō*) three times at the end of rallies is still practised today in the community of protest, not only by parties and unions, but also by community-based organisations.

As the Okinawan activists deepened their affiliation with the mainland Japanese leftist organisation members, divisions amongst the mainland Japanese organisations affected the Okinawan coalition too, especially in the form of divisions between the OPP and socialist members. In 1964, for example, the OPP followed the JCP-affiliated decision in mainland Japan to conduct a march towards Okinawa,

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<sup>13</sup> In the first rally, 45 Okinawan participants and 41 from the mainland met on the ocean (Tōma 1987: 411).

starting on 28 April and finishing at the offshore boat rally planned for 15 August, the Japanese anniversary of the end of WWII. On 28 April, separately from the OPP, the OSMP and OSP members held a boat rally as usual, co-operating with the mainland Japanese organisation affiliated to the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP)(Tōma 1987: 412–3). This split collective action reflected the internal difference over how to conceptualise the Okinawans' struggle for reversion: whether to regard it as part of the 'Japanese' anti-US struggle or to see it as primarily an 'Okinawan' struggle, placing emphasis on 28 April, rather than 15 August, which was a date that had little to do with the end of the war in Okinawa (see chapter 3). The difference indicates that the OPP, compared to the OSP and OSMP, more readily complied with the synchronised activities of the mainland Japanese organisations.

#### 'Reversion Nationalism'

Amongst the most eager to promote Okinawa's identification with 'Japan' were the schoolteachers, who significantly contributed to proselytising 'reversion nationalism'. The OTA played a particularly central role in the Council.<sup>14</sup> The OTA lobbied for the 'right to educate students as Japanese nationals', which offended USCAR cultural policy which regarded the islanders as 'Ryūkyūan' and not 'Japanese'. The OTA's strategy was to emphasise kinship, as well as historical and emotional connections with Japan, thereby attracting the support of the Ministry of Education and conservative politicians in Tokyo.<sup>15</sup> Schoolteachers encouraged using the *hinomaru* flags and the *kimigayo* song, which was controversial in light of the Okinawan teachers' regret about promoting imperial education before the Battle of Okinawa (see chapter 3). In the early 1960s, schools introduced enhanced training of speech in standard Japanese: teachers promoted the 'correct use of the Japanese language', often using corporal punishment against the use of the Okinawan dialect

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<sup>14</sup> The Preparatory Council for Reversion dissolved after USCAR cancelled the OTA leaders' (Yara and Kyan Shinei's) passports on their way to receive school reconstruction funding in Tokyo. The Chair of the Preparatory Council, Yara, resigned his position after being pressured to stop his reversion activities by the civil Administrator of USCAR, General Charles Bromley (Tōma 1987: 403).

<sup>15</sup> The diary of Prime Minister Satō Eisaku contains descriptions of the patron-client relationships developed between Satō and Yara. See (Satō 1997: Vols 3 & 4)



(Takara 1995: 157–8).<sup>16</sup> The Okinawan teachers’ reversion campaign that relied on the emotional attachment to mainland Japan appealed widely to the Okinawan public. Oguma argues this was partly because of the persistence of cultural assimilation in the pre-war period. Considering the efforts and hardships Okinawans went through in order to assimilate with Japan since the late nineteenth century (Oguma 1998: 498),<sup>17</sup> the ‘natural’ attachment to Japan could not easily be removed by US military rule.

For other communism-inspired Okinawan activists, the reversion movement was part of a class (*kaikyū tōsō*), anti-colonialist and anti-capitalist struggle, as well as an ethnic and nationalist movement. The members of left-wing political parties and trade unions and students’ groups embraced the ‘progressive’ nationalism developed in post-occupation Japan and in the process of the anti-*Ampo* struggle (See Packard 1966). In mainland Japan, the JCP party line in the early 1960s stressed the importance of the struggle of ‘the Japanese people’ against US economic and military domination. The JCP, above all, attacked *Ampo* as the embodiment of US colonisation of Japan, of which the direct rule of Okinawa was a blatant aspect. Nationalism was thus conceptualised as the basis of self-determination and de-colonisation, similar to that which had developed in former colonised countries in Asia and Africa. The JCP regarded both Japan and Okinawa as colonised by the US, and contended that the reversion of Okinawa meant overcoming the national division in Japan that was enforced after WWII. In other words, nationalism underpinned the JCP’s request for Okinawa’s reversion, as much as it did for the conservatives (Oguma 1998: 524–5, Packard 1966). The ‘Okinawa Struggle’ for reversion, from the mainland Japanese perspective, was the ‘retrieval’ (*dakkan*) of Okinawa.

On the other hand, the OPP members and other communism-inspired Okinawans, as well as the OTA schoolteachers, were particularly keen to call mainland Japan *sokoku* (home country). They saw the most important agenda as ethnic integration with mainland Japan, which was a measure to overcome US

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<sup>16</sup> In the reversion campaign, the physical dimensions involved in diminishing ‘Okinawan-ness’ to become Japanese, which Tomiyama (1997[1990]) stressed, were resurrected.

<sup>17</sup> On pre-war assimilation, see chapter 2.

colonialism and capitalist invasion.<sup>18</sup> Okinawa's reversion to Japan was understood as an important part of the re-unification of a divided nation, and Japan's decolonisation and complete independence from US occupation. A vague idea that it was 'natural' for the Okinawans to return to the home country (described in terms such as *sokoku* or *bokoku*) prevailed among the political left and right and the non-affiliated. This idea, importantly, was consistent with the nationalism supported by conservative politicians in mainland Japan, who also considered maintaining the US military presence in Okinawa crucial for the US–Japan security alliance.

These two versions of nationalism, despite their difference, merged into 'reversion nationalism', which appealed to both progressive activists and the wider general public who did not identify with any particular political ideology. Under the direct rule of the US military officers, who were 'foreigners' to them who spoke a different language, the Okinawans' emotional closeness to *yamato* was amplified.

'Reversion nationalism' was a very important framing of collective action that defined the collective identity of the reversion movement, that is, who 'we' were. Opposition to Article 3 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty was the crux of 'reversion nationalism'. The 'reversion nationalist' perspective integrates opposition to the US military bases with opposition to the validity of Article 3. According to the 'reversion nationalists', the problem was Okinawa's status without a home country, the solution was to become 'Japanese' citizens with entitlement to the Constitution.

*Choppy Waves: Collective Actions for Reversion*

*The Unbearable Lightness of Okinawan Human Rights: Crimes and Accidents*

In September 1955, a US soldier kidnapped, raped and murdered a six-year-old girl, whose mutilated body was found discarded in a bush in Kadena village, near the major US Air Force Base (usually called 'the *Yumiko-chan* incident' after the name of the victim). The US court martial delivered a death sentence, but the prisoner returned to the US, which made it difficult for the Okinawan public to follow up the

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<sup>18</sup>In this process, the capitalist invasion from mainland Japan to Okinawa, as was happening in the sugar industry, was ignored (Mori 1963).

consequent procedure of the sentence.<sup>19</sup> In less than a week, another US soldier raped a child. Violence directed towards the local populace by US military staff, especially rape, revealed the crudest aspect of the power relations between the occupiers and the occupied.<sup>20</sup>

These two incidents, particularly the *Yumiko-chan* incident, have a special significance in the history of violence perpetrated by the US military staff in Okinawa (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 82, *Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 226). Molasky (1999) observes that in both the Japanese and Okinawan literature during the US occupation period the humiliation and helplessness of the occupied towards the occupiers was expressed most directly by the invasion of 'the female body'. In this sense, 'no single act, not even murder, surpasses rape in its ability to dramatise the fear and humiliation of life under foreign occupation' (Molasky 1999: 51).<sup>21</sup> Angst (2001) explains that 'the violation of the girl's virginal body' of young victims in Okinawan history 'is equated with the violation of the Okinawan body politic' (Angst 2001: 252). In the case of the collective death of the *Himeyuri* victims in the Battle of Okinawa (see chapter 3), it was the Japanese soldiers who violated the Okinawan body politic, whereas the *Yumiko-chan* incident represented the entire 'Okinawan' body politic that was victimised by the power of the US forces and their direct administration.

Traffic accidents were another reminder of the lightness that the US military attached to the locals' lives and right to safety. A high school history teacher, Arashiro Toshiaki, at the age of 5 lost his father in March 1956. His father was run over by a car driven by an American soldier, who was subsequently arrested by the US military police. The local police and G.R.I. courts did not have the right to arrest or judge criminals who belonged to the military, except for limited cases of red-handed crimes (even then, the local police had to immediately hand the cases over to

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<sup>19</sup> Eventually, the sentence of the US sergeant was reduced to 45 years of imprisonment (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1996: 23).

<sup>20</sup> A novel, *Cocktail Party*, by Oshiro Tatsuhiro depicts the process in which a rape incident broke the charade of a 'good relationship' between the US military and local residents, and brought the powerlessness of the local residents to the surface (See Molasky 1999, Rabson 1989).

<sup>21</sup> The *Yumiko-chan* incident was recalled again in September 1995, when the rape of a twelve-year-old girl created momentum for the 'third wave' Okinawa Struggle (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1996: 23).

the US military police). The US military courts handled the cases, and the ultimate say on all sentences of American citizens rested with the High Commissioner (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 137). The verdict of Arashiro's father's case was, like many similar cases, 'not guilty' (Okinawa Mondai Henshū Inkai 1995: 71–2).<sup>22</sup> Victims (if they survived) and their families had to keep their anger to themselves. In case of common crimes against local residents, such as destruction of objects (cars, houses etc.), non-payments in restaurants, bars and taxis, and beating and muggings, the local police and residents had no ability to follow up the cases (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 138). The lack of rigorous prosecution processes made the local residents' rights vulnerable to violation. The extraterritoriality of the crimes and incidents caused by the US military members involving local residents was the most humiliating aspect of the foreign military's domination. Arashiro considers that the US military looked down on the Okinawan residents, and it was natural that the residents wished reversion to Japan, the Japanese 'peace Constitution', and a peaceful life without military bases (*Okinawa Mondai Henshū Inkai* 1995: 72)<sup>23</sup>

Along with the traffic accident caused by the US marine in 1963 that killed a local male child (discussed further below), the brutality of the 1955 *Yumiko-chan* incident provided powerful symbols of the humiliation of all 'Okinawans' in post-war Okinawan history. Irei, who was a student activist who campaigned for reversion, recalls the time of the *Yumiko-chan* incident:

In tears, my university friends and I discussed that these incidents were evidence of racial insult. I was convinced that these crimes would never disappear unless we (the Okinawans) recover our human rights as Japanese guaranteed by the constitution (Irei 1983: 82).

The mass protest held against US crimes after the *Yumiko-chan* incident marked the

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<sup>22</sup> Arashiro became a teacher, following in the footsteps of his schoolteachers who were engaged in the reversion movement. In 1981, the Japanese government paid his grandmother compensation of ¥891,880 (approximately \$7,432). Arashiro used this money to write a textbook on the history of Okinawa for high school students, which was published in 1997 (see Arashiro 1997, *Okinawa Mondai Henshū Inkai* 1995: 72).

<sup>23</sup> Crimes committed by US citizens reported to the Legislature were 981 cases in 1961, 1,078 in 1962, 1,131 in 1963, 973 in 1964, 1,003 in 1965, 1,407 in 1966 (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 138).

earliest Okinawan Citizens' Rally (*kenmin taikai*) (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 83), which became part of the repertoire of collective action in the Okinawan community of protest. Together with the Ryūkyū Legislature's protest statement, the Okinawan Citizens' Rally demonstrated the collective interpretation of the incident as a symbolic humiliation of all 'Okinawans'.

In mainland Japan very little was known about the realities of the US military's administration in Okinawa: the Japanese government disconnected itself from the matter, just as the government and the people in the US knew little (Miyazato 1966: 91).<sup>24</sup> Again, it was the international organisation members from overseas that inspired the locals into organising against human rights abuses by the US military. In 1961, an activist US citizen and Executive Secretary of the International League for Human Rights, Roger Baldwin, and missionary Harold Rickard made trips to Okinawa and met with Ahagon Shōkō and other Iejima farmers (Ahagon 1989: 136), and the victims of the 1959 Ishikawa City US Air Force jet plane crash incident, in which a jet fighter during a training flight crashed on the Miyanomori Primary School, killing 17 and injuring 121 people (the pilot escaped via a parachute). Okinawan residents retained this incident as a very sad memory. It impressed upon them how little weight was attached to the lives of civilians who resided around the military bases (Fukuchi 1999: 77).<sup>25</sup> Baldwin made speeches to the locals, stressing the idea that protection of human rights was something that needed to be earned through a fight, and the need for a humanitarian

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<sup>24</sup> In January 1955 *Asahi Shinbun* reported the League's investigation of Okinawans' sufferings, including how Okinawan farmers lost their land by force, a minimal wage based on a racist scale for Okinawan workers (See Table 5.1), and the suppression of communists and political activities of reversion. The articles informed the mainland Japanese about deprivation of Okinawans' basic human rights under the US military administration in a series of articles (*Asahi Shinbun* 13, 14, 15 & 16 January 1955).<sup>24</sup> The *Asahi* report opened up discussion among the mainland Japanese: a famous writer, Ishikawa Tatsuzō, argued for 'standing up for our brethren Okinawans' (*Asahi Shinbun* 14 January 1955), which encouraged the isolated Okinawans and their land struggle and reversion campaign (see chapter 4). In this climate, mainland Japanese residents originally from Okinawa formed an LDP-sponsored organisation, *Nampō Dōhō Engokai* (the Southern Brethren Support Society), established in November 1956 to facilitate economic aid to Okinawa.

<sup>25</sup> Space does not allow fully describing the tragedy of this incident. The plane crashed at 10:20am when the schoolchildren were about to have a milk break. The school burned down quickly. A survivor teacher saw some children's limbs burned off, and the skin of others peeled off by the fuel from the plane. Survivors suffered from various post-traumatic syndromes such as amnesia, miscarriage and shock. Families of the victims are still having difficulty coming to terms with the incident (*Okinawa Gunyōchi Iken Soshō Shien Kenmin Kyoto Kaigi* 1998).

organisation among the locals (Fukuchi 1999: 77–8).

An OTA member and former schoolteacher, Fukuchi Hiroaki, was among those who were influenced by Baldwin's speech and became convinced that a voluntary citizens' organisation was necessary, in order to put pressure on the state authorities. In April 1961, together with more than 300 citizens, Fukuchi instigated the establishment of an organisation, the Okinawa Human Rights Association (*Okinawa Jinken Kyōkai*), in order to campaign for raising awareness on Okinawan residents' rights to safety, freedom and private property. Prominent Okinawan civil society leaders, such as Yara Chōbyō, chair of the OTA, Oyadomari Hidetaka, head of an Okinawan attorneys' association, and chief editors of two major local newspapers, *Ryūkyū Shimpo* and *Okinawa Times* became the executive members of the Association. The Association intentionally excluded any affiliations with political parties to limit ideological influence and obtain support from diverse sectors in society (Nakano 1969: 356), in line with Baldwin's advice to detach human rights issues from political, especially communist, orientation (Watanabe 1970: 140).

The inauguration statement of the Okinawa Human Rights Association in February 1961 clearly recognised the existence and lineage of the struggle of the 'Okinawans' as one people: 'In Okinawa, pioneers' efforts to protect human rights existed in Meiji as exemplified by the freedom and rights movement of Jahana Noboru' (Nakano 1969: 356) <sup>26</sup>Furthermore, it stated the Okinawans' strong wish to be under the Japanese Constitution:

After WWII the Japanese Constitution clearly stipulated the eternally inviolable nature of basic human rights. Unfortunately, because the political administration of Okinawa was taken over by the US Occupation forces, the Okinawan people have been unable to benefit from the Constitution (Nakano, 1969: 356).

In February 1963, a speeding US marine drove a military truck into a pedestrian crossing, ran over and killed a thirteen-year-old schoolboy. This is called the *Kokuba-kun* incident, after the boy's name. The marine and witnesses saw the boy crossing on a green light. However, the US court martial accepted the marine's

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<sup>26</sup> On Jahana see chapter 2.

claim that it was impossible to see the traffic light because of the strong sunlight, and acquitted the marine. The verdict of this case deeply upset the schoolteachers and families in the communities around Naha. The Human Rights Association issued a protest statement to the Marines, and with the OTA and parents' associations, held an Okinawan Citizens' Rally (*kenmin taikai*), in which 3,000 participated against the verdict (Nakano 1969: 487).

### *The Struggle for the Public Election of Chief Executives*

During the 1960s, the Council for Reversion and its member organisations engaged in a number of collective actions in radical, energetic, and at times violent ways, in particular, on partisan agendas against the conservative Liberal Party backed by the US military. The Council focused on petitions and demonstrations over a range of issues to do with promoting Okinawa's reversion: abolishing USCAR ordinances and special orders, implementation of Japanese laws, freedom of raising the *hinomaru* flag and of travelling to the mainland, public election of the G.R.I. Chief Executives, and sending Okinawan representatives to the Japanese Diet (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 117). The Council also opposed USCAR's intrusion into judicial processes, which vetoed verdicts made by a local judge with regards to a case on setting fish prices, and another case on the result of a Legislature election result for a Miyako seat in 1965 (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Iinkai* 1982: 1077–86).<sup>27</sup> Some of these collective actions resulted in desired reforms, in particular, the US authorities' approval of the appeal for the first public election of the Chief Executive, eventually held in 1968. The progressive organisations and their members who acted in concert under the vestige of the Council for Reversion maintained reversion as the ultimate goal. 'Reversion nationalism' continued to be the dominant framing of protest under which collective action was conducted. Importantly, the struggle for reversion entailed extensive records of mobilisations, which enabled the progressive coalition to establish its position in Okinawan civil society as a major political force.

The nomination system of Chief Executives by the US authority highlighted

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<sup>27</sup> This incident is called 'the trial transportation issue' (*saiban isō mondai*). USCAR explained the reason for the intrusion by arguing the two verdicts made by the local judge were severely disadvantageous to the US national interest.

the lack of democratic political processes in Okinawa. In 1962, the new Okinawa policy of US President John F. Kennedy made the High Commissioner's appointment of the G.R.I. Chief Executives formal (*Kyoko Nihō Tōsōshi Henshū Inikai* 1998: 158–9)<sup>28</sup>. The small electoral system set up by the US administration favoured the pro-US Liberal Party in the Legislature as opposed to the divided opposition parties, and only the Liberal Party leaders could be appointed as Chief Executive (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inikai* 1982: 130).<sup>29</sup> Protesting the Chief Executive nomination system and demanding public elections were among the Council for Reversion's main agendas.

On 29 October 1964, when the Liberal Party's Matsuoka Seiho was about to be nominated Chief Executive at the Ryūkyū Legislature Special Meeting, some 2,000 intruders destroyed the front door and entered the Legislature building. The intruders were a 'petition troop' organised by the Council, and were eventually removed by riot police. Frightened Liberal Party members escaped the building and the nomination was postponed (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inikai*, 1982: 1010). Furthermore, the Council organised three mass rallies on 26 June, 1 and 27 October, calling for autonomy and the Chief Executives' public election. The rally in June was held in three places: Naha (in front of the Legislature building), Miyako (Taira) and Yaeyama (Ishigaki). About 50,000 participated in Naha, 2,000 in Miyako and 1,000 in Yaeyama.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the Council launched a massive door-to-door signature collection campaign (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inikai* 1982: 199–201). Especially effective was the petition of a volunteer group of five influential local figures,<sup>31</sup> which USCAR officials had to take seriously (Tōma 1987: 451–3).

In 1968, US President Johnson approved the public election of the Chief

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<sup>28</sup> Leaders of the main party were nominated. Until then, according to the US presidential order in June 1957, the Legislature Chair had nominated the Chief Executives.

<sup>29</sup> In principle, however, both conservative and progressive parties agreed on the need to demand the public election of Chief Executives in future (Tōma 1987: 416).

<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the Council organised subsidiary rallies in five places (Itoman, Nago, Ishigaki, Taira and Koza) before the October rally in Naha (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inka*, 1982: 199–200).

<sup>31</sup> The members included presidents of the *Okinawa Times* and *Ryūkyū Shimpō*, the chair of OTA, Dean of Science of the Ryūkyū University and Chair of the mayors' association. OTA member and Okinawa Human Rights Association's Fukuchi Hiroaki planned and requested these figures to organise the group (Tōma 1987: 451).



Executive position. The Council claimed the Chief Executive election struggle as a victory for ‘democratic forces’ for autonomy, and one of the major achievements of the Council (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Iinkai* 1982: 459–60). The election of the first Chief Executive in the same year was fought between the conservative Liberal candidate, Nishime Junji,<sup>32</sup> arguing for the economic-oriented coexistence policy with the US military, and Yara Chōbyō, leader of the OTA and Council for Reversion, supported by the left-wing member parties, unions and organisations who campaigned for the immediate and unconditional reversion of Okinawa to Japan. In 1968, Yara was elected new Chief Executive, winning over 230,000 votes. Yara attributes the victory to the strength of the coalition’s unity and also support from the mainland Japanese mayors and governors from Yokohama, Kyoto and Tokyo (Yara 1986: 20–1).

#### Satō’s Okinawa Visit

In 1965, the US ambassador to Japan, Edwin Reischauer, advised the US State Department of the need to return Okinawa’s administration to Japan, in order to stabilise the US–Japan relationship. Despite opposition from the military and the Defense Department, the State Department took Reischauer’s advice seriously and discussed the possibility and conditions for Okinawa’s reversion (Gabe 2000: 57–62).<sup>33</sup> By the mid-1960s, the US and Japanese governments engaged in diplomatic negotiations in order to terminate the US military’s civil administration over Okinawa, while strengthening US military rights to freely deploy and use their forces on the island.<sup>34</sup> Deployment of the US forces on Japanese territory became part of Japan’s responsibility essential for the maintenance of the alliance, which was positively undertaken by the LDP government. This sufficiently allowed the

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<sup>32</sup> The Liberal Party changed its name to the Okinawa Liberal Democratic Party in December 1967 (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 179).

<sup>33</sup> In return, Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara clarified that the assurance of US rights to freely use the existing US bases in Okinawa was necessary for the US to give up exclusive political administration of the island (Gabe 2000: 62).

<sup>34</sup> When the previous Japan–US Security Treaty was ratified in 1951, Japan was regarded as a former enemy, and the assumption of an equal and trusting relationship between the two powers was absent. Therefore, the US military deemed it absolutely necessary to control civil administration of Okinawa to warrant liberal US military operations on the island (Gabe 2000: 50). Articles V and VI of the 1960 Mutual Security Treaty clearly stated Japan’s responsibility to provide US security depots, and the US commitment to assist should Japan face external attack or threat (Smith 1999: 69).

US forces to use Okinawa, without the responsibility of civil administration of the island (Kōno 1994, Tanaka 1997: chapter 7).

On 19 August 1965, Prime Minister Satō Eisaku visited Okinawa,<sup>35</sup> raising hope for Okinawa's reversion. Satō had been a protagonist for reversion from a strong nationalist perspective. . The Okinawan reversionists' request and the head of state's statement seemed to have coincided. The schoolteachers 'mobilised' Okinawan children to welcome the Prime Minister on the streets, holding *hinomaru* flags, expressing 'reversion nationalism'. Most of the locals welcomed Satō for promoting reversion and increased governmental economic subsidies to the islands.

However, reflecting the locals' animosity against the use of Okinawa as a launching pad for Vietnam, much of the protest was directed against Satō's support for the Vietnam War. The OTA and other Council members also held a protest rally against the Prime Minister at Naha High School, which attracted 150,000 participants, demanding an immediate reversion and expressing protest against the use of Okinawa for raiding Vietnam (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 22). The Council organised a large-scale sit-in along Route 1, between *kokusai dōri* (a main street in Naha City) and the Tōkyū hotel, where the Prime Minister was staying,<sup>36</sup> to hand Satō a petition.<sup>37</sup> However, the Council's plan for a controlled demonstration resulted in an uncontrolled and chaotic zig-zag demonstration of 20,000 people, which stopped traffic completely. The local police force clashed with the demonstrators, which resulted in unprecedented violence, and five demonstrators were arrested. The demonstrators failed to communicate with Satō, who avoided the demonstrators and escaped to another hotel arranged by the US military. Nevertheless, the executive committee of the Council considered the mass

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<sup>35</sup> Satō was only the third Japanese Prime Minister to visit Okinawa, after Itō Hirobumi and Tōjō Hideki. It was at this visit that he uttered the famous line, 'Japan's post-war never ends, unless Okinawa's reversion is achieved' at Naha Airport (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 18).

<sup>36</sup> In the pre-reversion era, Route 1 was designed as a purely military road and was functioning as the most important pathway across the island with US military vehicles transporting goods and people en route to military operations and trainings for Vietnam. The traffic hazard created by the demonstration caused serious inconvenience and the authorities' retaliation was severe. Today this road is called Route 58.

<sup>37</sup> The petition demanded the abolishment of Article 3 of the peace treaty, the removal of nuclear weapons from Okinawa, locals' autonomy including a public election of the Chief Executive, and protection of human rights (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inkai* 1982: 236–7)

demonstration as a ‘success’ for being able to convey to the Prime Minister the Okinawans’ ‘greatest wish’ for reversion (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inukai* 1982: 265).

### *The Struggle Against the Education Bill*

Another major violent clash between the riot police and Council members occurred on 24 February 1967 at the Legislature. The Okinawa Liberal Party and the G.R.I. Education Department attempted to introduce two education-related laws. This legislation aimed to improve working conditions and rewards for public servants in education accordance with mainland legal standards and, importantly, to restrict the rights of schoolteachers to engage in collective strikes, political actions and performance evaluation.<sup>38</sup> On the day the Legislature was to pass this bill, about 15,000 protesters, including various workers’ union members and taxi drivers, came to the Legislature, and a hunger strike of 24 schoolteachers followed. All the OTA schoolteachers took voluntary annual leave from schools. As a result, the two education bills were formally discarded in April 1967, which upset the Okinawan Liberal Party members so much that the Liberal Legislature Chair and members were ‘trembling with anger’ (Tōma 1987: 449).

This ‘Two Laws on Education (*kyōkō nihō*) Struggle’, led by the usually pro-reversion schoolteachers, was exceptional in that it opposed a bill that aimed at assimilating with the mainland Japanese education system. The struggle was the progressive coalition’s battle against the conservative political sectors in Okinawa and the US administration. In Okinawa, the Two Laws on Education Struggle, together with the violent ‘Legislature incident’ against the Chief Executive nomination and the demonstration against Satō, represented a vibrant protest culture in Okinawa that is unimaginable today. This struggle is recalled with pride among Okinawan activists, which was published in a book, *Kyōkō Nihō Tōsōshi* (History of the Two Laws on Education Struggle), by the Okinawa Teachers’ Union (1998). Through this series of struggles, the Council member organisations, particularly the

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<sup>38</sup> It was Yara Chobyō, leader of the OTA, who advocated the legalisation of Okinawan public educators’ status, but without the restriction of these political rights (Tōma 1987: 432–3).

OTA, established themselves as the progressive Okinawan political sector, equivalent to the mainland Japanese teachers' union, *Nikkyōso*.<sup>39</sup> However, in the process of this struggle, the progressive party and unions' energy was distracted from the protest against the military bases (Gabe 1969: 298).

### **Reversion is not Enough: the Critics**

#### *Discordance with the Mainland Japanese Anti-Ampo Struggle*

The US–Japan Security Treaty, originally ratified in combination with the 1952 peace treaty, was renewed in 1960. The new name, the 'Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America', still in effect today, suggested a greater 'mutuality', that is, equal sharing of duties, between the two powers in comparison with the former treaty.<sup>40</sup> As the new US foreign policy required Japan to increase Japanese military contributions, the anti-*Ampo* mainland JSP activists expressed qualms against including Okinawa and Ogasawara in Japan's defence 'responsibility', to prevent Japan from being dragged into warfare involving US forces in these regions. Nakano and Arasaki explain that the controversy reminded the Okinawans of the peculiar mainland Japanese attitudes towards Okinawa, which cut the marginal islands off when their own security was endangered. The debate enhanced the Okinawans' disappointment with expectation towards Japan as 'home country', and negatively affected the sense of solidarity with the Japanese protesters. The distance between the Okinawan and mainland Japanese anti-military protests diminished the credibility of 'reversion nationalism' predicated on the ethnic re-integration slogan (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 115–7).<sup>41</sup>

By the time Satō visited Okinawa, it had become increasingly obvious that reversion of Okinawa would not remove the military presence. 'Reversion

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<sup>39</sup> The struggle followed a preceding struggle on educational laws in mainland Japan by the Japan Teachers' Union (*Nikkyōso*), against the introduction of an evaluation system of school teachers (*Kyoko Nihō Tōsōshi Henshū Iinkai* 1998: 98).

<sup>40</sup> This presumed 'equality' is controversial. Article VI of the treaty specifies Japan's duty to provide for the US bases within its territory, although US responsibility to protect Japan's security is not specified as a duty of the US in the treaty (Gabe 2000: 14–8).

<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, mainland Japanese anti-*Ampo* organisations, such as the Stop *Ampo* National Committee (*Ampo Soshi Kokumin Kaigi*), did not suggest any joint collective action with the Okinawan anti-base activists when the US Congress passed the construction of a Mace B missile base in Okinawa in 1960. The Ryūkyū Legislature made a protest statement (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 118).

nationalism’ increasingly appeared to have been co-opted by the Japanese government’s security policy: to secure the existence of the bases on the island through placating the Okinawans through fulfilling their long-cherished wish for reversion. By the mid-1960s, ‘reversion nationalism’ came to lose attraction to many critical Okinawans.

Nevertheless, the ‘progressive’ coalition in Okinawa furthered co-ordination — or assimilation — with mainland Japanese strategies and organisational structure. As the B-52 flights and US troops from Okinawa stirred anti-Vietnam protests in mainland Japan (Havens 1987: 77), Japanese activists’ opposition to the US attacks on Vietnam from Okinawa integrated with Okinawan activists’ campaign. For example, the Council’s large-scale, organised and unorganised demonstrations echoed the mainland Japanese styles of anti-Vietnam mass demonstrations against Satō, led by leftist organisations, such as JSP, JCP and labour unions under Sōhyō (*Nihon Rōdō Kumiai Sōhyōgikai*, General Council of Trade Unions of Japan) and Dōmei (*Zen Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei*, Japan Confederation of Labour), as well as students’ organisations and Beheiren (*Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengō*, Citizens’ Federation for Peace in Vietnam). The process in which Okinawan activists’ organisationally and strategically assimilated with the major Japanese political organisations, however, belied the crucial distance between the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ — interpreted from the mainland Japanese perspective — and the Okinawan struggle from the locals’ point of view.

In the 1960s, the three issues that were of particular concern for Okinawan residents were the US extraterritoriality provision for crimes and accidents committed against locals, suspected but unconfirmed existence of nuclear weapons in the bases on the island, including stopovers by nuclear submarines at Naha Military Port<sup>42</sup>, and perhaps most symbolically, the deployment of B-52s in Okinawa, flying over to attack Vietnam (Rabson 1989: 20). The crux of the residents’ humiliation, inconveniences and threats to their safety, remained the presence of the US military bases that occupied one-fifth of the island. Furthermore, what made

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<sup>42</sup> A substantial amount of cobalt was found in locally produced seafood.

Okinawan sentiment towards the US military distinctive was, again, the experience of the Battle of Okinawa. The Council's strategy to promote integration with mainland Japanese organisations parted further from the ambivalence among Okinawans towards 'reversion nationalism'.

#### *Influence of the Vietnam War*

Meanwhile, the Vietnam War had turned Okinawa Island into a much more intensely militarised environment. The sight and explosive noise of B-52s flying from Okinawa to attack North Vietnam every day reminded the residents of the Battle of Okinawa. Anti-militarism among the Okinawan public derived from the direct reaction to the war they experienced, still fresh from two decades before (Kishimoto 1969: 203). Kishimoto warned that the Okinawans' enthusiastic aversion to war — or 'absolute pacifism' — derived from victim mentality, which if passive in character, was susceptible to transforming itself into an uncritical, emotional attachment to the 'home country', Japan (1969: 204). Kishimoto pointed out that in the early 1960s, the campaign for reversion was confused with opposition to war and the US military presence. However, the Vietnam War forced many Okinawans to reconsider their 'absolute pacifism'. A new type of consciousness surfaced, which stressed Okinawa's position as an aggressor because they contributed to America's war, which was also supported by Japan. A 45-year-old male farmer in Koza City wrote to the *Okinawa Times* in August 1965:

It is understandable that we (Okinawans) have a big victim mentality considering the pressure from the US and Japan ...[However,] Okinawa provides the United States the bases, and co-operates with the US forces. Does it not make Okinawa the oppressor of the Vietnamese people? ... It is important that we should realise that we are not victims now, but are contributing to the sufferings of other Asians. Otherwise, I do not feel it is possible to find a true path to reversion and peace (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 34).

The self-perception of Okinawans as victims was tempered by a realisation that in the context of war, anyone including Okinawans, could turn into aggressors. This strengthened their aversion to imposing the same pain and killing, as they experienced in the Battle of Okinawa, on other 'Asians'. The burgeoning criticism

against self-victimisation was shared with the mainland Japanese anti-war activists and intellectuals, represented by the individual-based Beheiren movement, whose influence had been growing throughout Japan.<sup>43</sup>

Kishimoto Tateo, current Nago mayor who approved the construction of an alternative heliport to the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, in his 1969 essay warned against the 'victim mentality' that the tragic experience of the Battle of Okinawa tended to represent. In his view, stories of aggression and cruelty of the mainland Japanese soldiers toward the Okinawan residents that projected 'Okinawa' as victim and *yamato* as aggressor obscured the nature of war that could turn anyone, including themselves, into committing the same brutality and inhumanity. Kishimoto then argued that protest against the military presence, that is, the anti-US base movement in Okinawa, was insufficient if this perspective was excluded (Kishimoto 1969: 204). However, three decades after Kishimoto wrote this article, his current political position perhaps indicates his failure to find a way to protest without drawing on the victim mentality. In 1999, when Kishimoto formally approved the heliport in Nago, a local editor of a community entertainment magazine in Naha, in her 30s and who grew up in southeastern Okinawa Main Island, commented:

When I was growing up, I heard about the horror of the Battle of Okinawa all the time, from adults around me, not only my parents and grandmother, but also schoolteachers, and women and men in our neighbourhood. Their vivid and raw descriptions of war were frightening, they made you think, war, at all costs, must be avoided. The general message of the Okinawans — and some thinking mainland Japanese people, too — would be that there is no just war and no war can be justified. But, here, we cannot avoid asking, '*Okinawa, too, with Japan, went to war, to that terrifying, frightening war of invasion, didn't it?*' (Personal communication August 1999)

The last point she made represents self-criticism that has repeatedly come out in the

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<sup>43</sup> Oda Makoto, a leading figure of Beheiren, wrote:

Realistically speaking, we are all guilty of complicity in the Vietnam War. We must recognise that each of us is among the perpetrators. In my opinion, this is why we must conduct our opposition movement all the more forcefully. But to put it less practically and more in terms of basic principles, if we don't take a clear position against the war and seek peace here and now, perhaps the hand [holding the gun] will be ours one day. To the extent that we don't firmly nail down our basic principles as individuals, perhaps we will have to fire the bullet on orders from the state (Oda, 1967: postscript, cited in Havens, 1987: 120).

internal debates in Okinawan civil society in the last thirty years or more, particularly during the Vietnam War.

By the mid-1960s, Okinawan anti-militarism was increasingly inclined to stress opposition to generic war and military bases against the Japanese government's support of America's war. This re-defined anti-militarism forced many Okinawans to reconsider reversion to Japan, which supported the war, as a comprehensive solution to their problems. Thus, 'reversion nationalism' — and the Council's strategy and collective action predicated on it — was brought under critical scrutiny. For example, members of the Ryūkyū University Study Group of Marxism (*Ryūkyū Daigaku Marukusu Kenkyu-kai*) focused on the problem of Okinawan re-integration into the Japanese capitalist order. The Group pointed out that the Japanese capitalist economy was the main beneficiary from the new *Ampo* and the US military forces placed in Okinawa in their economic expansion in Southeast Asia. The Group discontinued their affiliation with the OPP in 1960, and publicly criticised the nationalism-oriented reversion movement. In May 1965, reacting to the intensification of the Vietnam War, these students formed the Anti-War Students' Congress (*Hansen Gakusei Kaigi*). The 2 July 1965 statement of the Congress at a general meeting declared:

Our struggle against the US imperialist invasion of Vietnam requires international solidarity with workers all over the world, including American workers, who protest against militarism ... Nationalist-inspired anti-Americanism in Okinawa, with the slogan 'Go Home Yanks', is not adequate to sustain our international anti-militarist struggle (cited in Arasaki 1969: 210).<sup>44</sup>

The critical version of 'absolute pacifism' raised scepticism towards emotional attachment to the nationalist symbols and slogans, interpreted as pathways to

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<sup>44</sup>In this meeting, the students expressed their support for a US Army soldier, Lieutenant Richard Stink, who was suspended by the military for his refusal to go to South Vietnam because the 'Vietnam War is not worth losing one soldier's life'. A few days later, some students handed leaflets titled 'Oppose Vietnam War: To Create a Movement for Peace', written in English, to the US soldiers in Koza City (Arasaki 1969: 211). Most US soldiers tore up and threw away the leaflets. However, an anecdote tells that one or two African-American soldiers gave back a dollar note, which encouraged the students (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 36–7). This anti-militarist Okinawan repertoire of protest, 'not to alienate the foreigners with slogans like 'Yankee go home' but instead to reach out to those who had doubts about the war' (Havens 1987: 123) transferred to the mainland anti-war activists in Japan such as Beheiren members. Some Beheiren members 'began distributing leaflets to American sailors outside the navy base at Yokosuka on Dec 1 1966' (Havens 1987: 123).



inevitable future co-operation with the state and its war. It was becoming clear that opposition to the existence of US military bases, predicated on critical ‘absolute pacifism’ and anti-militarism, was growing apart from the ‘reversion nationalism’ that was employed by the Council.

*‘Anti-Reversionism’ (Han Fukki)*

As the Okinawans’ struggle went through different phases, the collective identity of the anti-base movement also was in transformation. Collective identity influenced the goals, strategies, and organisations of the anti-base movement by generalising within the protest community ‘an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place’ (Melucci 1989: 34).

Existential assumptions about Okinawa’s position *vis-à-vis* Japan were particularly important for the collective identity of protest during the cycle of protest understood as the ‘reversion movement’. Up to the mid-1960s, the dominant definition of ‘Okinawa-jin’ (an Okinawan) emphasised the Okinawans’ sameness with the ‘Japanese’. Expressions of Okinawan distinctiveness from, and criticism of, the mainland Japanese (for example, Japan’s war responsibility) were suppressed, together with the enthusiastic attachment to the *hinomaru* flag and promotion of standardised Japanese language, by the Council demonstrators and schoolteachers (Takara 1995: 157–8). However, since the intensification of the Vietnam War, criticism of ‘reversion nationalism’ started to come from intellectuals, writers, students and other non-affiliated individuals. At the same time, it was pointed out that there had not been enough self-critical reflection on the part of the reversionists during the reversion campaign regarding relations between the ‘Okinawan’ identity — what it meant to be ‘Okinawan’, not just ‘Japanese’ — and their political struggle (Oguma 1998: 597). These actors were part of the broader community of protest, despite their organisationally detached status.

In the mid-1960s, the attraction to reversion to Japan as the solution to the US military presence in Okinawa was deteriorating. As the possibility of Okinawa’s

reversion became real, critics and writers challenged the idea of Okinawans as ‘Japanese’. For example, Shimao Toshio, in his ‘Yaponesia’ writings, captured the transformation of ‘the historical trend toward assimilation ... giving way to a movement toward dissimilation’ (Gabriel 1999: 183). Shimao’s ‘Yaponesia’ writings suggested that islands such as Okinawa, Amami, Yaeyama and Miyako did not primarily belong to *yamato*, but formed a separate cultural sphere that *yamato* was a part of.<sup>45</sup>

Arakawa Akira was an ‘iconoclast’ (Molasky 2003), for those who promoted the idea of ‘anti-reversionism’ (*han-fukki shisō*). His idea of anti-reversionism focused on the denial of the Okinawan tradition to promote assimilation with Japan. The assimilationist tradition, which dates back to the Japan–Ryūkyū Common Ancestry Theory (*Nichiryū Dōso Ron*) of a seventeenth-century aristocrat, Haneji Choushu (Shoujouken), and extended to the Okinawan Studies pioneered by Iha Fuyu, had an important influence on orthodox Okinawan political thought (see chapter 2). The pro-reversion intellectuals, who approved of Okinawa’s re-integration with Japan, tended to idealise Jahana’s movement as a predecessor of the reversion movement.<sup>46</sup> In particular, Arakawa criticised the tactic of relying on protection from Japan and political integration with the state, as illusory, in the same lineage of struggles originating from *Nichiryū DousoRon*, succeeded by Jahana Noboru’s Liberty and Freedom struggle (see chapter 2).

The idea of anti-reversion not only rejects the Okinawans’ tendency towards wanting assimilation with *yamato*, but also denies the acceptance of the ‘logic of a nation-state’ that had dominated all political forces of both left and right in Okinawa. Arakawa criticises the mental character that tends to be drawn towards integration with a nation-state, and the emotional attraction to a ‘good, complete Japanese’ (Arakawa 1996: 96). He advocates the positive acceptance of the inevitable character of ‘Okinawan’ as ‘alien’ in relation to a nation-state. The crux of his anti-

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<sup>45</sup> Another term ‘*Ryūkyū-Ko*’ (the Ryūkyū Arc) was also used, to describe the significance of the Ryūkyū archipelago as an entity independent from mainland Japan.

<sup>46</sup> For example, the quote made by the Okinawan Human Rights Association at its opening ceremony (see chapter 3).

reversionism is that the Okinawans' struggle against the state could only be sustained by recognising the 'alien' status within it (Arakawa 1999: 97).

Arakawa's thought puzzled the reversion protagonists. First, it was identified with the politically conservative theory for the independence of the Ryūkyūs, which preceded the formation of the reversion movement in the early 1950s (chapter 3). The independence advocates in the 1950s then argued for the separation of Okinawa from Japan, to be affiliated with the US, to obtain economic benefits through aid and other funding. This independence path was discarded as a 'mistake' as the oppressive methods of the US administration became the main target of opposition. Yet the main aim of 'anti-reversionism' in the 1960s did not endorse any political option for seeking patronage from another nation-state, and was qualitatively different from the earlier vision of Okinawa's independence (Ota 1971: 118–9).

Second, Arakawa's anti-reversionism appeared to negate almost any political action by denying concrete political diagnosis. Arakawa himself did not form any major anti-base organisations, nor was his thought specifically connected to opposition to the bases, which makes his idea susceptible to being criticised as nihilistic. Even though he opposes the idea of seeking integration with the state, his anti-reversionism does not instigate independence or a secessionist movement (Arakawa 2000: 60–77). For this reason, anti-reversionism drew emotional reactions from some pro-OPP intellectuals, who interpreted it as approval of the perpetuation of the US military administration. Politically, Arakawa simply recommends building the sense of self, as an Okinawan, by maintaining the critical distance from the state system, at a spiritual level. With his colleagues such as Kawamitsu Shinichi and student groups associated with the New Left ideas, Arakawa attempted a campaign to boycott the first national election of Okinawan Diet members in 1970, which was a very small movement, attracting about 50 members at the initial meeting (Kawamitsu Shinichi, Interview, February 2002).

Kawamitsu, a Miyako-born poet, who joined the Isahama farmers' struggle against the US forced land acquisition as a student at the University of the Ryūkyūs, is a retired journalist of the *Okinawa Times*, and has been equally influential as an

iconoclastic critic of Okinawa's reversion. Kawamitsu has constantly distanced himself from political organisations. At 70 years old, he says that he has never voted in elections, his 'Okinawa Struggle' is to engage in debates against other Okinawan activists who believe in the 'Okinawa Struggle' (Interview, February 2002). He expresses cynicism towards, and detachment from, the 'progressive' parties and unions, prevalent among the Okinawan community of protest.<sup>47</sup> Today, Kawamitsu concentrates on his artistic activities, apart from supporting the famous Okinawan musician Kina Shōkichi's international peace movement,<sup>48</sup> which is also unaffiliated to political parties or unions.

The anti-reversionist critique was a warning against what was seen as the coalition's detachment from what was really at stake for the Okinawans, in favour of the tendency to give in to the pressure to assimilate with the state and its policies. Arakawa was never entirely clear on what exactly was at stake for the political struggles of the Okinawans. Yet anti-reversionism appealed to those whose main concern was the historical narrative of Okinawa's marginalisation that perpetuated further struggles, especially pertaining to Okinawans' rights to safety and property.

#### *Discrimination within the Community of Protest*

Against the US military's operations and further private property acquisitions in places such as Iejima, Konbu and Chibana, residents in local communities fought their own struggles.<sup>49</sup> More than one-fifth of the farmland — much more in the

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<sup>47</sup> Among his colleagues who are similarly distanced from organisational opposition is Takara Ben, a high school chemistry teacher and a poet, who publishes widely in local newspapers and books (Takara 1996). He promotes the idea of Okinawa's independence more vocally in a journal *Urumanesia*. He has also organised solidarity-building events with a group of Ainu activists.

<sup>48</sup> Kina Shōkichi is a prominent Okinawan folk-pop musician. His 1997 album, 'Change all the weapons into music instruments' (*subete no buki o gakkī ni*), is also a slogan of his wide range of collective actions, including overseas activities, such as the 'White Ship of Peace' trip to the Native American community in 1998, and local activities such as the Nirai Kanai Festivals (see <http://www.champloose.co.jp>). In February 2002, Kawamitsu travelled to India with Kina and Takaesu Asao, who was also an activist who participated in the Shiraho struggle (see chapter 6), representing a non-government organisation, the Peacemakers' Network, and met with the Indian Defence Minister, George Fernandes, who supported his project of collecting all the weapons in the world and replacing them with musical instruments, by sending a weapon to Okinawa, in order to build a Peace Monument (Kina Shōkichi, Interview, February 2002, see <http://subeteno.ohah.net>).

<sup>49</sup> After the 1956 island-wide land struggle — the first-wave 'Okinawa Struggle' — subsided, residents in local communities fought their own struggles against the US military's operations and further private property acquisitions in places such as Iejima (Ahagon 1998), Konbu (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 233–6) and Chibana (*Jinmin* 11 January 1969). For example, the land struggle in Konbu is recorded in *Gushikawa Shishi* (Gushikawa Shiyakusho 1970: 908–10).

densely populated central region — had been acquired by the military since the early 1950s, making Okinawan food supplies reliant on imported American foodstuffs (Selden 1974: 121). The main alternative to starvation for the displaced farmers was employment in the US bases and the sex industry catering for the US military personnel. Selden writes:

As of 1970, one-sixth of the Okinawan workforce was directly employed by the US military (40,000 workers) and the colonial government (34,000). And this was but a fraction of those forced to live off the American presence, including an estimated 15,000 to 25,000 prostitutes and bar girls, and more than 10,000 maids employed by servicemen (all officers and many enlisted men have servants, a luxury made possible by the depressed Okinawan wage scale). Tens of thousands of others work in the wide range of subsidiary industries and services which cater to American pleasures (Selden 1974: 288).

The military provided the biggest market for locally manufactured products such as cement, steel, vegetable and fruit, clothes and boxes for packing and sending (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 120).

For the farmers who had their land reduced or completely taken away by the military, the bases not only provided the labour market, but also were the source of money to be made in the catering or sex industries. Revenues from prostitution, bars and other service industries for the US soldiers indeed supported the Okinawan economy until reversion. The income generated by sexual labour was at least \$50,400,000 in 1970.<sup>50</sup> This figure exceeded the \$43,500,000 made annually from the sugar-cane industry, which was the largest industry in Okinawa at the time (Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1993: 251–2). As opposed to the base workers who had the power to jeopardise US military operations by strikes and boycotts, bar workers and prostitutes remained politically unorganised and vulnerable. The people who made their living in ‘base towns’, including bartenders, waiters, bar hostesses and sex workers, were subject to, and dependent on, the hierarchical economic relations with US customers, and were constantly susceptible to the danger of violence and abuse.

Following the Korean War, when sexual assault of women and girls by US

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<sup>50</sup> This figure was calculated from the supposition that each of the 7,362 full-time prostitutes made \$20 per night. The number of the prostitutes was estimated by the G.R.I. (Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1992: 251–2), which is significantly lower than the figure estimated by Selden in the above quote.

soldiers and officers in the community were common, ‘special restaurant districts’ (*tokushu inshoku gai*) designed for US military clientele were constructed voluntarily by community members to create a ‘sexual breakwater’, that is, an artificial disposal of potential sexual violence directed at ‘normal citizens’ (Tomiyama 1996: 27).<sup>51</sup> Towns and cities surrounding major US bases such as Koza, Kin and Ginowan developed due to the incomes generated from the rest and recreation industries catering for US military personnel. The US authorities imposed rigorous health and hygiene regulations on these industries, and obligated the bars, restaurants and clubs that were approved by US standards to display an ‘A’ (‘Approved’) sign.

The ‘A’ sign businesses were particularly reluctant to support the campaign for reversion, or any political movements that offended the US authorities. The ‘A’ sign districts were most vulnerable to the US military’s ‘off limits’ sanctions, which banned military personnel from local businesses, as a means to dampen local political opposition (see chapter 4). Because of the ‘A’ sign industries’ vulnerability to the arbitrary ‘off limits’ sanctions of the US, uncertainty was rife about what would happen to the local economy if the reversion were achieved and the military bases disappeared. An ‘A’ sign restaurant owner in Koza confessed: with so many people relying for their livelihood on the bases, ‘I cannot agree with the view that reversion should be achieved immediately, at any cost.’ (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 127) However, the Koza restaurant owner also admitted that the people engaged in base-related industries shared with other islanders a basic wish to ‘return to the home country’.

The US soldiers behaved much more violently off base during the Vietnam War: their crime rate increased dramatically in the local community (Takazato 1998).<sup>52</sup> In some cases, soldiers beat up Okinawan residents to invite arrest, just to avoid being sent to the war zone (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 141). Murder and rape

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<sup>51</sup> This information was obtained from the survey conducted in Koza, by Professor Ishihara Masaie’s research team at the Okinawa International University (Tomiyama 1996: 30, n14)

<sup>52</sup> A member of the Naha City Assembly, Takazato Suzuyo, recalls that the aggressive behaviour displayed by US soldiers in the local community was exceptional during the Vietnam War. Particularly in 1967, there were a series of robberies and murders of bar hostesses committed by returnee soldiers from Vietnam (The Okinawan Women Act Against Military Violence 1998: 56).

of the locals who worked in the ‘special districts’ and in US military bases were frequent, heinous and insufficiently prosecuted by the authorities (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 140). In 1966, for example, no investigation result was reported by the US military police on the killing of a local bar maid in the Kin Village. Similarly, in 1968 the search result of a housemaid who was found dead, naked and stabbed repetitively in a bathtub at a US soldier’s residency within a base in Urasoe village was never reported (*Ryūkyū Shimpō Sha* 1968: 140).

However, the reversion activists and organisations tended not to address these cases as they represented the ‘innocent victims’ of the 1955 *Yumiko-chan* and 1962 *Kokuba-kun* incidents. Tomiyama explains that the US military’s violence inflicted on the women in ‘base towns’ was ignored, in effect, to protect the symbolical effect of the victimisation of normal, non-occupational ‘victims’ (Tomiyama 1996: 28). The making of innocent victims as a resource for mobilising collective action to demand reversion was predicated on the silence over violence and human rights abuses that occurred in ‘special districts’ like Koza. This point is indicative of the divisions and discriminations internal to the community of protest, and the difficulty of constructing the struggle of one ‘Okinawa’.

### **Reversion and Anti-Militarism Unbound: the ‘Second Wave’ Peaks**

#### *The Anti-B52 General Strike Fizzles*

On 15 November 1967, Satō and US President Johnson officially announced in the US–Japan Joint Communiqué that Okinawa would be returned to Japan in a couple of years’ time, without affecting the US military forces crucial for maintaining regional security (Nakano 1969: 651–2). Namely, it became clear that the administration of Okinawa would revert to Japan, leaving the US military bases as they were. That is, the LDP leaders found a way to achieve Okinawa’s reversion, and keep the US forces in Okinawa intact (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 70–80, Nakano 1969: 597–602).

On 29 July 1968, 30 B-52s departed from Okinawa and attacked ‘Viet Cong concentrations 58 kilometres southeast of Saigon’ (Havens 1987: 76). The Marine Corps stationed in central Okinawa departed for the combat zone, and aircraft loaded

with Hawk missiles were sent to bases in South Vietnam from the Kadena Air Base (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 7). Cases of plane crashes and accidents in Okinawa caused by the US military training increased, often hitting, hurting and killing the locals. Accidents caused by military training involved local casualties, for instance, in an accident in Yomitan village, in which a trailer fell from the sky and crushed a girl during a 'drop' exercise from an aircraft in June 1965.

In the early morning of 19 November 1968, a B-52 crashed at the Kadena Air Base. The *Zengunrō* leader, Uehara, was living within two kilometres of the Kadena base. Though there were no casualties, the incident 'sent the residents into an endless abyss of fear towards the B-52s' (Uehara 1982: 269). The fear was amplified by the existence of a nuclear arsenal 150 metres from the accident (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Iinkai* 1982: 483). After the accident, on 7 December the Council for Reversion, *Zengunrō*, *Kenrōkyō* and other unions and organisations, including the OTA, formed another coalition consisting of almost the identical member organisations as the Council for Reversion, *Inochi o Mamoru Kenmin Kyōtō* (Okinawan Citizens' Life Protection Coalition). The Life Protection Coalition focused on protesting against B-52s, stopovers of US nuclear submarines, and all the nuclear weapons in Okinawan bases. In January 1969, trade union members, students, and non-affiliated citizens agreed on a general strike, to request the removal of the B-52s. The Council agreed to this proposal, and planned a '100,000 sit-in' on the military roads within Kadena Air Base on 4 February. The general strike was planned to take place in February 1969 (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 183, *Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Iinkai* 1982: 483).

The participation of *Zengunrō* in the general strike was significant, in terms of the potential damage to the US forces. On 24 April 1968, the base workers had been on a 24-hour strike called *10 Wari Nenkyū Tōsō* (The Complete Annual Leave Struggle).<sup>53</sup> This strike was motivated by the emerging hope for reversion, as well as rage against all sorts of discrimination against the Okinawan base workers during the

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<sup>53</sup> Some 23,000 employees took annual leave, whereas there were 18,000 union members among military workers (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 177).



previous 23 years. Officially, the strike was not directed at the removal of the bases. In fact, the organiser announced that the strike was totally unrelated to the anti-base movement (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 177). The strike achieved monthly average payment raise from \$15.60 to \$18.72 (Arasaki 1976: 178), and temporarily paralysed the binding effect of USCAR Ordinance No. 116 that prohibited workers' industrial actions on base (Uehara 1982: 248).<sup>54</sup> *Zengunrō* was among the most capable organisations at making effective demands on the US administration, successfully pressuring USCAR into suspending Ordinance No. 116 (*Jinmin* 18 January 1969). Other unions such as *Zen Oki Rōren*, *Kankōrō*, and *Kenrōkyō* also led a number of rallies and demonstrations in protest against B-52s and nuclear weapons (*Jinmin* 11 January 1969, 25 January 1969).

The Life Protection Coalition focused on protesting against anti-militarism, and the use of the US armed forces on Okinawa, in attacking Vietnam. In Naha City, an association of central shopping centre businesses decided to participate in the general strike, by closing members' businesses for 24 hours. Some fishing people planned a demonstration on the ocean, and Chatan and Yomitan villages in central Okinawa prepared for the entire closure of the villages. The workers' unions engaged in last minute preparation for the prefectural rally, such as setting up medical facilities, transport to bring participants to Kadena, and mobile toilets. On 14 December, the progressive coalition organised a major anti-B-52 rally and demonstration surrounding the Kadena Air Base (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 183–5).

The general strike exerted major pressure on the US and Japanese governments, more than the election of the progressive candidate Yara as Chief Executive in November 1968. The Japanese government, which earlier had expressed its support for the US policy in Vietnam, therefore, persuaded the Okinawans to stop the general strike. By this time, the Japanese government had built up political and economic influence on Okinawa, which grew bigger and bigger

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<sup>54</sup> The US military threatened the base workers with severe counter-action against those who participated. The High Commissioner issued a 'general labour ordinance' as a substitute for Ordinance No. 116, which improved the wages and other working conditions, however, added severe punitive clauses for strikes and picketing within military facilities (Uehara 1982: 272-273).

in comparison to that of USCAR. The Japanese government communicated directly to Chief Executive Yara, using two political weapons: one, economic aid and, two, the promise of early reversion. Chief Executive Yara had been building close relationships with Tokyo, to ask for a speedy completion of Okinawa's reversion during the US and Japan negotiations summit, an increased amount of economic aid to Okinawa, and the removal of B-52s. Prime Minister Satō and Yara met informally a number of times, during which Satō advised Yara to cancel the general strike, in order not to slow the process of reversion (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 186).<sup>55</sup>

The mainland Japanese umbrella organisations of trade unions, *Sohyō* and *Dōmei*, were ambivalent towards the planned general strike in Okinawa. They had the Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee (*kenrōkyō*) registered as their subsidiary organisation, however, and were hesitant to involve Japanese trade unions in the anti-*Ampo* struggle, and opted for a moderate anti-militarist position. Almost no mainland trade unions participated in any activities in support of the Okinawan general strike (Nakano & Arasaki 1970: 186). On 31 January, Yara requested the Life Protection Coalition to give up the general strike. The Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee agreed to accept Yara's request, in order to protect the new Yara administration, elected from the progressive coalition. Thus, the general strike was aborted. On 24 January, the Life Protection Coalition mobilised 40,000 participants to an Okinawan Citizens' Rally (*Kenmin Soukekki Taikai*) prior to the general strike. On 4 February, the day the general strike was planned for, another 40,000 gathered in the rain for an anti-B-52 rally.

Following the abortion of the general strike, the Council members lost their direction with respect to how to define the 'home country'. Critical views expanded against 'reversion nationalism' based on the Okinawans' victim mentality, and many more started to disconnect themselves from the 'Okinawan' collective identity based on 'Japaneseness' (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 195). This self-doubt contradicted the Council's strategy to link with the mainland Japanese leftist organisations. Also,

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<sup>55</sup> The Japanese government hinted at the possible removal of B-52s from Okinawa, after the June or July completion of the new military airport in Thailand, which had been under construction (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 187).

anti-reversionist thought gained popularity, combined with the newly emerging ambition for Okinawan independence.

Nevertheless, Chief Executive Yara and other Council leaders attempted to maintain solidarity with mainland Japanese progressives, as well as reversion as their priority agenda. However, to Yara's bewilderment, the Council for Reversion announced its opposition to the second meeting between Satō and US President Nixon, scheduled to confirm Okinawa's reversion in 1972. Nakano and Arasaki note, 'the prevailing consensus was the denial of the Japanese government's 1972 reversion policy. The Council demanded the complete removal of US bases that the people had wished', which was, instead of reversion, defined as 'Okinawa's liberation' (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 195–6). At this point, it was clear that reversion to Japan was no longer the goal of the 'Okinawan struggle'.

However, this change of perspective was damaging for the Council members in terms of integrity and confidence, and confusions prevailed as to its future direction. The construction of a new nuclear arsenal near Camp Schwab in Henoko was added to the anti-military protest agenda, furthermore, it became obvious, in July 1969, that the bases in Okinawa stored poison gas — from the media report of its leakage — which led to a violent entry of students into USCAR headquarters, and another Okinawan Citizens' Rally (*kenmin taikai*) (*Okinawa Daihyakka Jiten Kanko Jimukyoku* 1983: 184).

After the Satō-Nixon Joint Communiqué in November 1969, which confirmed Okinawa's reversion to Japan, the Council's Secretary General and other Council of Reversion members attempted to combine the slogan of 'reversion', with 'opposition to war'. It was at around this time that the Council leaders started to use the term 'Okinawa Struggle' (*Okinawa tōsō*) in order to describe Okinawans' own struggles against generic marginalisation of Okinawa (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 199), distinguished from the mainland Japanese usage of the term. The combination of reversion and anti-militarism was unconvincing to Nakasone Isamu, a local magistrate, who was in his 20s at the time: 'It was like adding a bamboo to a tree. Demanding anti-militarism could not be compatible with reversion to Japan'

(Takara, 1995: 191): Japan was supporting America's war at the time.

*Zengunrō Strikes and the Koza Riot*

After the Satō and Nixon communiqué, the US military announced the dismissal of 2,400 local base workers. From 8 January 1970, *Zengunrō* engaged in strikes against the military's redundancy policy.<sup>56</sup> Importantly, as Nakano and Arasaki note, *Zengunrō's* struggle against the redundancy policy was not a demand for the US bases to remain a stable employment provider, but was a protest against the US military presence in Okinawa after reversion, under new, streamlined management (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 202). With a slogan of 'no jobs, no base' (*kubi o kirunara kichi mo kaese*), the desperate struggle of the base workers was extremely solid, well-organised and full of energy, despite the workers' lack of economic resources. Some schoolteachers, public servants, anti-war university students and mainland Japanese supporters joined the picket lines at the military gates (Ishida 1993: 70–84).<sup>57</sup> However, the Yara Administration, though sympathetic, did not express support for fear of delaying the intended 1972 reversion.

Moreover, the US military responded to the *Zengunrō* strikes by declaring that the local business district was 'off limits' to US military personnel and their families.. On 20 January 1970, the 'A' sign business owners who feared bankruptcy surrounded the *Zengunrō* headquarters' office, protesting against the base workers' strikes against the US military (*Okinawa Daihyakka Jiten Kanko Jimukyoku* 1983: 186). A mainland Japanese supporter, Ishida, witnessed a debt-stricken female bar owner verbally abusing the picketers in Koza, and in return being sexually harassed by the workers 'for interrupting the picket line' (Ishida 1993: 85–7). Local gangsters, hired by the entertainment industry, also attacked the picket line (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 201). Young business owners, bartenders and waiters, in the 'base town' districts, were critical of the progressive political organisations' inability to

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<sup>56</sup> *Zengunrō* workers was on strike for 48 hours, 8–9 January, and for 120 hours from 19 January (Nakano & Arasaki 1976: 200).

<sup>57</sup> Various mainland Japanese individuals travelled to Okinawa to support the 'Okinawa Struggle', which had been isolated from mainland progressive political organisations. These sympathisers included radical New Left sectarian activists, intellectuals and famous writers such as Ōe Kenzaburō, who questioned, 'Is it possible to change myself into a Japanese that is not the Japanese we are?' during his sojourn in Okinawa (Ōe 1970 [1994]).

fully address or stage collective action against the lightness with which the Okinawans' human rights and lives were treated. To these workers, Arakawa's anti-reversionist thought was particularly attractive. In 1969, these workers established the Koza Livelihood Protection Society (*Koza no seikatsu o mamoru kai*) (Tomiyama 1996: 28–9), which found supporters among young 'base town' male workers (Ishida 1993: 86).<sup>58</sup> The Livelihood Protection Society was in severe conflict with the *zengunrō*, and other 'progressive' Okinawan activists, at the scene of picketing.

On 20 December, just past midnight, a car driven by a US Army soldier hit a local man employed by the US military. The crowd surrounding the site of the accident started to scream and shout, demanding the Military Police hand over the driver to the local police. When the Military Police let the driver go, the witnesses were infuriated, for just seven days before, the military court acquitted a soldier, despite killing a woman in Itoman in a car accident. The crowd set fire to vehicles with yellow license plates, which indicated ownership by the US military. According to a 'Department of Defense Intelligence Information Report' of 28 December 1970, the riot involved more than 2,000 locals, about 100–200 of whom were involved in burning 82 cars, a military employment office and American children's schools within the Kanda Air Base (*Okinawa Shiyakusho Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinko-ka* 1999: 96–101).<sup>59</sup> The Koza riot is the only spontaneous, unorganised incident of violence of this scale in Okinawa's post-war history.

The participants included union members, schoolteachers, base workers and other ordinary citizens who were drinking in Koza.<sup>60</sup> However, a public servants' union member who joined the riot, stresses that there was no instruction or

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<sup>58</sup> The aforementioned female bar owner was clearly not associated with this Society (Ishida 1993: 85).

<sup>59</sup> In total, 476 police officers from all over Okinawa Main Island were mobilised, and 21 people were arrested (*Okinawa Shiyakusho Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinko-ka* 1999: 68).

<sup>60</sup> According to the 'Summary Police Report on the Koza Riot of 20 December', the occupations of arrested suspects included a Koza City Hall staff member, four military employees, a car company employee, a glass manufacturer employee, a construction worker, a university student, a high school student, a bartender, a taxi driver, a waterside worker, an electric retail owner, two unemployed, an upholsterer, a hotel worker, a milling company employee, a mechanic, and a company worker (*Okinawa Shiyakusho Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinko-ka* 1999).

mobilisation from any union: the main instigators were youngsters who worked for the bars and restaurants in Koza catering to the US soldiers (*Mainichi Shimbun (Seibu Honsha)*, 17 December, 2000). Tomiyama explains the explosion of these bartenders and ‘base town’ workers’ anger was directed at the discrimination and human rights abuses in their daily contact with the US military and its people. In the Koza riot, the ‘bar town’ workers who had been excluded from the definition of ‘citizens’ in the reversion movement became the subject of a struggle, as ‘Okinawans’ (Tomiyama 1996: 29, Aldous 2003). The Koza riot gave voice to the ‘bar town’ workers, at least to young male workers who were capable of violence, who had been irrelevant to the organisation or mobilisation of the progressive coalition. The power of the Koza riot was ‘different from any rallies or protest ‘movements’” according to a New Left mainland Japanese student (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 20 December 2000). The emergence of this riot, completely outside of the organisational and ideological spectrum of the Council for Reversion, was an indication of internal divisions among the community of protest and, importantly, the separation of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, led by the progressive parties and unions, from the day-to-day issues which the Okinawan public was dealing with in relation to the US military presence.

### **Conclusion**

Reversion to Japanese administration was a goal that dictated the strategic and ideological direction of the reversion movement. Emotional attachment to the idea of returning to Japan as the ‘home country’ was at the heart of the ‘framing’ of the reversion movement, which coincided with the mainland conservative politicians’, and especially Prime Minister Satō’s, political agenda. ‘Reversion nationalism’ and the progressive coalition consolidated the idea of ‘the Okinawa Struggle’ as a comprehensive people’s movement against Okinawa’s marginalisation. During the reversion movement, leading political organisations were established, built a coalition, and also established a repertoire of protest, strategies and rituals. The organisational structure and repertoire of protest under the Council formed the basis of a still influential anti-base protest sector, which Barrel and Tanaka call the ‘usual

suspects' (see Introduction).

However, the progressive coalition's focus on reversion and the framing of 'reversion nationalism' by no means spoke for the whole Okinawan community of protest, nor fully accommodated the locals' strong rejection of involvement in another war, which stemmed directly from the residents' experience in the Battle of Okinawa. The Council also spoke for the 'innocent victims' of US military accidents and crimes, and mobilised collective action to demand reversion, however, the 'innocence' of these victims was constructed on the silence over violence and human rights abuses which occurred daily, for example, in 'special districts' like Koza. Internal divisions and discriminations within Okinawa resisted the progressive coalition's call for a unified demonstration of the 'Okinawa Struggle', that is, the struggle for one 'Okinawa'. The failure of the general strike and the Koza riot graphically highlighted this. These fissures and divisions show that the idea of a unitary 'Okinawan' struggle was, and has been, a myth.

However, reversion was achieved, and the idea of the 'Okinawa Struggle' survived. Okinawa became part of Japan in 1972 again, largely due to the favourable political opportunity, namely, the formation of new security alliance arrangements between the US and Japan. The progressive coalition and its collective actions were rewarded by Okinawa's repatriation to Japan, though without the withdrawal of US bases. Although it was hardly the ideal result, reversion was quite an achievement, the reversion movement during the 27 years of US direct military rule finally resulted in a major political change. Therefore, the imprint of the reversion movement has remained strong, as a cornerstone of the myth of the struggle of 'Okinawans' as a unitary group of people. The reversion movement provided organisationally and strategically lasting influences for the trajectory of an 'Okinawan' struggle, and its outcome added another traumatic legacy to the historical narrative of marginalisation.

## **Part III**

### **Many 'Okinawas', Many Protests: Groping for Peace in a Civil Society**



## **The Anti-War Landowners and the Progressive Coalition: The ‘Constitutional’ Framing of Protest**

### **Introduction**

Reversion to Japan in 1972 represented a major turning point in the history of post-war Okinawa, and for the community of protest. During the first and second ‘waves’ of protest, the campaign for reversion enabled the building of a progressive coalition, which engaged in successive mass rallies and campaigns, and gave substance to the idea of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’. As the ‘second wave’ Okinawans’ mass protest ran its cycle, the momentum for protest on a mass scale decreased and went into a sustained ‘low’ phase, which lasted for about a quarter of a century. This preceded the third high point of the Okinawans’ protest against the US military bases, triggered by the rape of a 12-year-old girl in 1995. This long ‘trough’ period (1972–95) is an important phase prior to the next cycle of protest, a period when protest actors started to create different agendas and approaches to protest that became explicit in the post-1995 period. This process involved re-defining why we protest, what is at stake, and who ‘we’ are, across various struggles in different regions and communities.

The most striking characteristic of the Okinawan community of protest in this post-reversion period is fragmentation: in terms of organisation, strategy, collective identity and the framing of protest. What stands out during this long ‘trough’ period is the burgeoning of diverse and differently defined struggles in Okinawa, leading to a splintering of protest groups and individual struggles. As the credibility and appeal of ‘reversion nationalism’ deteriorated, the internal unity of the coalition weakened. Internal divisions and differences within the community of protest were not new. However, they were increasingly articulated in the protest organisations and strategies. On the other hand, an island-wide — or even progressive — coalition towards one ‘Okinawan struggle’ was severely weakened.

However, the idea of an ‘Okinawan’ struggle as a ‘movement’ survived. Part III examines how the myth was sustained, despite the increased splintering of the organisations, priorities and reform agendas. To understand these differences in the community of protest, and what makes all of them still ‘Okinawan’ and somehow unified, I will, for convenience, distinguish three major ‘framings’ of protest: constitutional, environmentalist and gender. Chapter 6 focuses on the first, represented by the struggle of the anti-war landowners’ and supporting political parties and workers’ unions after reversion. Okinawa’s reversion — consolidated in the late 1960s and formalised in 1972 — propelled the community of protest into confusion: reversion was achieved but the US bases remained and, in addition, Japanese military forces were to be deployed. It was clear that the struggle was to continue. However, reversion was no longer the gathering point for protest. Reform agendas, the goals of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, and the basis for a coalition needed redefining.

The anti-war landowners, together with the one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners and the supporting progressive parties and workers’ unions, had been given, and have played, the role of anchor to the progressive coalition, and the idea and tradition of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’. Since the Council for Reversion no longer was able to lead the coalition, the anti-war landowners provided the ‘glue’ for building an anti-base coalition among much more divided progressive, left-wing political parties, workers’ unions, teachers’ unions and other citizens’ organisations. Through supporting the anti-war landowners, these progressive forces were able to continue the ‘Okinawa Struggle’.

However, the role of the progressive coalition was limited to being the anchor. The constitutional framing of protest of the anti-war landowners’ struggle and their supporting organisations provided avenues for protest for those inside the specific circle of the community of protest. However, it could not expand as an ‘Okinawan anti-base movement’ to involve new members and agendas for protest. Ironically, though, indirectly it contributed to the emergence of entirely new frameworks and perspectives from which to protest, created by those who went

separate ways from the traditional parties, unions, and anti-war landowners, as will be discussed in chapters 7 and 8. In effect, the limitations of the established protest groups sowed the seeds of new approaches and expressions that were to develop elsewhere.

This chapter first examines the re-organisation of the anti-base progressive coalition, as the anti-war landowners' and their supporters. An important implication of the anti-war landowners' long-term struggles has been, despite the Japanese government's various schemes and economic subsidies, keeping the locals' anti-military popular expression — and importantly, the myth of an 'Okinawan struggle' — alive. The second section examines the repertoire of collective action of the anti-war landowners and the progressive coalition. In the 1980s, apart from the rejuvenating effect of the emergence of *one-tsubo* anti-war landowners, the nature of collective action became increasingly routine and technical, and the momentum for mass anti-base protest reduced significantly. As far as the anti-base movement in Okinawa is concerned, institutional and legal methods to directly confront government policy have almost always been conducive to defeat. The third section examines the 'constitutionalist' framing of protest.

This chapter will look at some aspects of change and diversification in collective identity, strategy and organisational structure of protest of the progressive coalition, however, overall, 'continuation' has been the predominant characteristic of its protest. While the landowners have existed as a symbolic foundation of the myth of an 'Okinawan' struggle', in the 'low' phase in the post-reversion cycle of protest, the activities of the anti-base coalition of progressive organisations have become increasingly out of touch with and unable to represent other emerging groups and individuals engaged in protest. The 'trough' period was thus important in that this is when 'new social movements' had their genesis in the community of protest. This was as much a process through which existing and prospective protesters came to understand the limitations of existing organisations and techniques of protest as it was of the generation of new actors who would become the basis of new social movements. It is the former that is the focus of this chapter.

## **The Anti-War Landowners and the Re-organised Coalition for the ‘Okinawa Struggle’**

*Who are the Anti-War Landowners?*

The ‘anti-war landowners’ are the owners of private properties occupied by the US and Japanese military in Okinawa, who ‘refuse to sign the lease contract, from the perspective of opposing war and aspiring for peace’ (Arasaki 1992a: 108). They represent only about 100 of about 30,000 landowners, a majority of whom legally engaged in lease contracts with the state. Some of the anti-war landowners do little more than refuse to sign the land lease contract, while others publicly participate in anti-base protest activities.

Either immediately after the Battle of Okinawa, or in the early 1950s, the US forces occupied the land required for building military bases in the landowners’ absence (as examined in chapter 4). As a result, in Okinawa about 33 per cent of the land occupied by the US military is privately owned.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to the 1956 island-wide protest (*Shimagurumi tōsō*, see chapter 4) against the US military’s lump-sum payment policy, the landowners obtained the right to receive rent each year. Most of the landowners entered into lease contracts with the US forces (whom I call ‘contract landowners’). *Tochiren*, the biggest and oldest interest group of landowners of military properties and a central actor in the land struggle in the 1950s, has represented the ‘contract landowners’.<sup>2</sup>

However, several hundred landowners, mostly farmers in villages such as Maja in Ie-jima, Oroku, Chatan and Yomitan, refused to sign their leases, to express their opposition to militarism and war. This marked the birth of the anti-war landowners (‘non-contract landowners’ or ‘objectors’). Since then, the contract landowners have received ‘rent’, and the non-contract landowners have received ‘compensation’ from the US and, after 1972, the Japanese government. Immediately

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<sup>1</sup> In other parts of Japan, the US forces and the Self Defense Forces reside in properties mostly owned by the state. The state owns 23.5% of the land used by the US military bases on Okinawa, as opposed to 76.5% elsewhere (*Okinawa Ken Sōmubu Chiji Koōshitsu Kichi Taisakushitsu* 2000: 6).

<sup>2</sup> As a representative body of contract landowners, *Tochiren* has concentrated on negotiation with the state for better contract terms and higher rent on behalf of the landowners. In 1995, *Tochiren* officially declared its opposition against the termination of military land leases, that is, against withdrawal of the US military from Okinawa (Kurima 1998: 279).

after Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, the Japanese government became the subcontractor of the Okinawan landowners' lease to the US military, under Article V of the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty, which states it is Japan's duty to provide facilities to the deployment of US forces within Japan (Arasaki 1995: 75).

The rise of anti-militarism in the late 1960s in Okinawa expanded the number of non-contract landowners to 3,000. In 1971, the Anti-War Landowners' Organisation (*Kenri to Zaisan o Mamoru Gunyō Jinushi-kai*, usually called *Hansen Jinushi-kai*) was formed, financially supported by the Council for Reversion to the Home Country (Council for Reversion). As a countermeasure, the Japanese government increased the rent 6.1 times, on average, higher than before reversion (Kurima 1998: 288). Thus, the rent from the military came to form a sizable part of the Okinawan economy. Together with a boost of Japanese subsidies into the Okinawa Prefecture, the Okinawan economy was transferred from a 'base economy' to a 'subsidy economy', dependent on the income granted by the government (Kurima 1998: 32–4), including the military property rent.<sup>3</sup>

The Japanese government used many methods — mostly underhand — to discourage objectors.<sup>4</sup> Over time, a majority of landowners succumbed and signed their lease contract. Arasaki (cited in *Zen'ei* Staff 1996: 86) recalls an anti-war landowner, Uehara Taro's, comment from Oroku village: 'at least, the US military respected the landowners' right to express their refusal and did not manipulate our psyche by inventing sources of conflicts between contract landowners and the objectors, as Japan did'.

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<sup>3</sup> The transfer of money from the US and Japan to the G.R.I. was 41.7 billion yen in 1969, in 1978, the Okinawa Prefecture received 637.6 billion yen from Japan's state budget (Kurima 1998: 5). An aggregate direct income from the US bases, which included US military personnel and their families' spending, wages and salaries of the local base employers, and the rent paid for the land privately owned by the local landowners, declined drastically from 36.8% in 1970 to 14.6% in 1974 (Kurima 1998: 32).

<sup>4</sup> The non-contract landowners' properties were often returned to the objectors in small plots amidst the massive US bases — dreaded by the owners, for they could not be used for residence, farmland or any economic activities. The government also returned contract landowners' properties simply because they were located adjacent to non-contract properties. Because the return of undesired military properties reduced regular income, bitter conflicts arose between some non-contract and contract landowners. Some objectors were ostracised in their communities and workplaces, some were estranged by family members and relatives (Arasaki 1995: 78–82).

### *Re-Organisation of the Anti-Base Coalition*

Around 1970, it looked as if the Okinawans' reversion movement was a failure, in terms of the goal to de-militarise the island through the end of US military rule. With the 1960 US–Japan Security Treaty renewed in 1970, the Japanese government's imperative was to ensure that US military functions in Okinawa would remain intact. The Council for Reversion protested in a public statement: since the Satō-Nixon joint Communiqué in 1969, Prime Minister Satō's repeated slogan of 'no nuke, mainland-standard' (*kaku-nuki, hondo-nami*) had proved deceptive. Apart from partial removal of nuclear warheads from the island, the existence of the base facilities of the US forces remained pretty much unchanged. Okinawa's reversion betrayed the expectation that the US military presence on Okinawa would be decreased to the level comparable to that of the mainland.<sup>5</sup> Not only was the US military presence maintained as heavily as in the pre-reversion period, but the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF) was also deployed in Okinawa (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inikai* 1982: 688). In 1972, the Council for Reversion issued a number of resolutions and statements against the 'Return of Okinawa Pact' (*Okinawa Henkan Kyōtei*) signed in June 1971 between Sato and Nixon, in particular, loopholes for possible deployment of US nuclear weapons, continuing existence of the US military bases on Okinawa, and the new entry of the Japanese Self Defense Forces (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inikai* 1982: 635). The Council explained that the reversion achieved in 1972 was not what Okinawans expected:

We, the citizens of Okinawa Prefecture (*Okinawa kenmin*), are firmly opposed to any military bases. The majority of us wished for immediate, unconditional and total reversion under the pacifist Japanese Constitution, which is embodied by the 1968 election of the Chief Executive. The 'Return of Okinawa Pact', however, made the reversion totally different from what the citizens of the Okinawa Prefecture really aspired for (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inikai* 1982: 728–9).

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<sup>5</sup> The size of the land surface exclusively used by the US military bases on Okinawa, after reversion, was 24,000ha, 15 per cent less than before reversion, and 23,519 hectares in 2000 (*Okinawa Ken Sōmubu Chiji Kōshitsu Kichi Taisakushitsu* 2000: 1).

The ‘Okinawan’ identity, which had constantly oscillated between sameness with *yamato* and distinctiveness of *uchina* (Okinawa), was swinging decisively towards distinctiveness at this point, in the community of protest.<sup>6</sup>

In its 1975 annual report, the Council for Reversion redefined the next stage of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ (*Okinawa tōsō*). It first pointed out the shortcomings of ‘reversion nationalism’, the dominant framing of protest in the 1960s: ‘under the extremely desperate situation (under US military rule), when Okinawa was all but completely forgotten as part of a Japanese-speaking people, it was ‘necessary’ to appeal to Okinawans’ ethnic ties with Japan, in order to turn Okinawa’s reversion into a national issue. [Moreover,] ... [w]e engaged in the reversion movement without any particular ideology, logic, or philosophy. The focus was on dealing with the emergency situations at the time, [yet,] with time, the reversion movement evolved, from its initial stage of a simple ethnic movement, to the present state: a ‘class-oriented’, ‘anti-establishment’ struggle’ (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Iinkai* 1982: 888–9).

These statements are a re-definition of ‘reversion nationalism’ as a ‘simple sense of ethnic solidarity’ that, in retrospect, could not be an adequate basis to resist the US military presence on Okinawa. The ‘evolved’ form of the reversion movement is defined as a ‘class struggle’ (*kaikyū tōsō*), which is a peculiar definition of ‘Okinawa’ as an oppressed class, subjected to the domination of Japan, the US, or capitalist invasion in general. In concrete terms, the next phase of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ was broken down to (1) opposition against the SDF deployment in Okinawa, (2) support activities for the landowners’ refusal of land lease contract renewal with the Japanese government, (3) opposition to the construction of the CTS (Central Terminal Station), which was an inducement for pollution-creating industry in Okinawa. The most important point to note is that the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ was

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<sup>6</sup> As seen most prominently in the emergence of ‘anti-reversionism’ (*han-fukki*) in the late 1960s, explorations were made towards a uniquely ‘Okinawan’ identity, defined by an historical, cultural and ethnic background separate from *yamato*. Arakawa Akira, Takara Ben, Kawamitsu Shinichi and others contributed to the exploration of an independent Okinawa at the ‘mental’ level. The critical and politically active Okinawans’ desire to express Okinawa’s distinctiveness arose in reaction to the decline of ‘reversion nationalism’ and disappointment with the 1972 reversion of Okinawa as a means to turn Okinawa into a fortress of the US–Japan Security Alliance.

redefined as a class struggle, that is, an extension or a part of the workers' movement, derived from the member organisations' close affiliations with socialism.

However, the Council for Reversion lacked clear guidelines on what distinguished the 'Okinawan' political struggle from 'Japanese'. Many local political parties and trade unions, which were previously independent 'Okinawan', 'Yaeyama' or 'Miyako' entities, all became incorporated into bigger mainland Japanese organisations. The OPP (*Jinminto*), a locally bred communist party that fought against the US military regime, became the Okinawan branch of the Japan Communist Party (JCP). The OSP became a branch of the Japan Socialist Party (JSP). The Okinawa Teachers' Association became integrated with the Japan Teachers' Union (*Nikkyō-so*). Amongst others, the integration of *Zengunrō* with *Zenchūrō* (All Foreign Military Workers' Union, *Zenchūryūgun Rōdōkumiai*), a Japan-based union of workers employed by the US military bases, in September 1978, was regretted by many working Okinawans: it meant the 'disappearance of the flag representing the Okinawan union of base workers from the Okinawan mass workers' movement' (Uehara 1982: 450).<sup>7</sup> Only the OSMP retained local headquarters and remained a purely 'Okinawan' political party. This created difficulties in building consensus among various organisations because of divergent political positions determined by the organisational headquarters in mainland Japan, for example, forming policy against the LDP government and the US military forces (*Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Inukai* 1982: 891).

Nevertheless, there was one agenda they all agreed on: support for the anti-war landowners' struggle. Amongst different organisations, parties, sects and unions with different interests and priorities, the anti-war landowners were seen to represent the essence of 'Okinawa' and its protest. The integrity and principles of the uniquely 'Okinawan' anti-war landowners' disobedience were consistent with the historical narrative of marginalisation of Okinawa, strongly related to the Battle of Okinawa experience. For the progressive activists, these landowners provided a sense of who

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<sup>7</sup> As a result of the massive employment reductions the US military conducted before reversion, base workers had reduced from 21,000 in 1970 to 7,980 in 1978. The *zengunrō* members were reduced to 5,000 from more than 18,000 (Uehara 1982: 454).



‘we’ were, and perhaps the only basis for political coalition left for progressive Okinawan activists.

In February 1976, 18 organisations — most of them former Council members — including three local political parties (the OSMP, Okinawa branches of the JCP and JSP), local trade unions (*Kenrōkyō*, *Zen Oki Rōren*, *Jichirō* Okinawa Branch, *Zenchurō* Okinawa Branch) as well as teachers’ unions (Okinawa Teachers’ Union (OTU), the High School Teachers’ Union, the Okinawa Retired Teachers’ Organisation and Okinawa Retired High School Teachers’ Organisation), Okinawan Youth Groups’ Association and League of Okinawan Women’s Groups formed a new anti-base coalition, the *Iken Kyōtō* (*Okinawa Gunyōchi Iken Soshō Shien Kenmin Kyōtō Kaigi*, Okinawa Supporting Council for the Legal Actions against Unconstitutionality) (Arasaki 1995: 82). The anti-war landowners and *Iken Kyōtō* offered an organisational framework for an anti-base coalition, holding together the municipal and national legislatures, influential anti-base political institutions and citizens’ organisations. The Council for Reversion dissolved in 1977. According to Arasaki, the Council for Reversion ‘gave birth to a legitimate successor from its own womb’ (Arasaki 1995: 76).

Thus the anti-war landowners were given a symbolic role as the embodiment of solidarity and coalition among the ‘progressive’, left-wing political parties, workers’ unions, teachers’ unions and other citizens’ organisations against the continuing US military presence. Nevertheless, this is an abstract image, and not necessarily reflective of a genuine broad front of a wider Okinawan population. In fact, thoughts and actions of individual anti-war landowners did not necessarily synchronise with the progressive parties and unions’ official line, which I will elaborate below.

Apart from providing an organisational gathering point that embodied the ‘Okinawan’ anti-base coalition, *Iken Kyōtō*’s main function was limited to supporting the anti-war landowners’ struggle against the US military’s compulsory use of their land. *Iken Kyōtō* was established as an unusually extensive organisation that

encompassed various parties and unions including those affiliated with the JCP and JSP.

#### *One-tsubo Anti-War Landowners*

The *one-tsubo* group which supported owners of private properties occupied by the US military, started as an opportunity for those Okinawans (and some in mainland Japan) who did not own substantial properties to join the protest against militarism. A group of initiators, including Arasaki Moriteru,<sup>8</sup> started a campaign for collective land ownership of a property located inside the Kadena Air Station, called the *one-tsubo* (a *tsubo* is 3.3 square metres) movement. A new organisation, the *One-Tsubo Anti-Landowners' Organisation (Hitotsubo Hansen Jinushi-Kai)* was established in December 1982. Each participant bought 10,000 yen worth (sometimes less than one *tsubo*) of property, which jointly consisted of a property of 418 *tsubo* (786 square metres), originally owned by a non-contract landowner. According to the first issue of the organisation's newsletter, *Hitotsubo Hansen*, at the time of the organisation's establishment, 833 *one-tsubo* landowners had registered as property owners, and refused to sign the lease contract with the state and co-operate with the US military (*Hitotsubo Hansen* May 1983: 3). 'Return our land from the military to life and production!' was chosen as the *One-Tsubo Landowners' Organisation's* slogan.

The original participants in this *one-tsubo* movement were those who had already been engaged in various political and community activities, as well as trade unionists and intellectuals from all over the prefecture, including remote areas, such as the Miyako and Yaeyama island groups. The *one-tsubo* membership provided avenues for anti-military and anti-base protest, and status for direct participants. The members were often affiliated with other organisations or community groups. For example, one veteran *one-tsubo* member was also involved with another anti-war movement, the Okinawa Historical Film Society (see chapter 3), as well as the Ainu Moshiri and Uruma Society (*Ainu Moshiri to uruma o musubu kai*), which is a communication-promoting movement with another of Japan's minorities, the Ainu people (Personal Communication, May 1999).

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<sup>8</sup> See note 7 (Chapter 1).

Initially, members with diverse profiles were thought likely to contribute to a ‘proliferation of an unprecedented approach to anti-base protest, different from the traditional-style progressive political organisations’ (*Shin Okinawa Bungaku* 30 September 1982: 141). Some novel attempts for breaking from the past style of protest were made. For example, the organisation avoided a top-down organisational structure with a central headquarters. The One-*Tsubo* Anti-War Landowners’ Organisation was a network of independent regional ‘blocs’ all across Okinawa, including Naha, Itoman, Urasoe, Northern Okinawa, Yaeyama and, later, Tokyo and Osaka. This organisational structure promoted the idea that individual blocs engaged in their own activities as independent entities (*Hitotsubo Hansen* May 1983: 4). Nevertheless, a one-*tsubo* member explained that a majority of the members belonged to organised labour unions. As a non-union worker, ‘it would be difficult to actively participate in a regional bloc, without many friends or [anti-base] movement experience’ (*Hitotsubo Hansen* May 1983: 10). In fact, initially, an electronic industry workers’ union owned 180 *tsubo* (595 square metres) of the total size of the 418 *tsubo* (786 square metres), collectively owned by the one-*tsubo* landowners (*Hitotsubo Hansen* May 1983: 8). Indeed, original one-*tsubo* members were, predominantly, those who already owned land within the US military bases,<sup>9</sup> or locals who felt comfortable enough to go through the paperwork and the complicated registration process.

An important contribution of the one-*tsubo* landowners’ movement has been to promote a network of progressive political parties and organisations in Okinawa, among the local legislatures and in the Japanese Diet. There is a strong bond and organisational overlaps between the One-*Tsubo* Anti-war Landowners’ Organisation and other progressive political parties, unions and organisations in Okinawa. The media have often depicted the anti-landowners and supporters as ‘radicals’, which has distanced the wider politically inexperienced Okinawan public from them

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<sup>9</sup> Some one-*tsubo* members are contract landowners who receive substantial incomes from their other properties within the bases, but in principle share with the anti-war landowners the will to oppose the US bases (Arasaki 1995: 152).

(Arasaki 1992b: 88–9). One-*tsubo* landowners increased the number of total anti-war landowners from just over 100 to more than 3,000.

Most *one-tsubo* landowners do little more than deal with paperwork related to land registration and tax, subscribed to newsletters and attend annual rallies (Personal communication with a *one-tsubo* anti-war landowner, April 1999). According to Arasaki, the most important and meaningful character of both anti-war landowners and *one-tsubo* anti-war landowners is, essentially, ‘their existence and not their action’ (Arasaki 1995: 129).

Nevertheless, a small number of active *one-tsubo* members contributed to anti-base protests in other communities as ‘supporters’. In Naha, *one-tsubo* landowners conducted direct appeals and demonstrations at the Prefecture Municipal Office and the Naha Defense Facilities Bureau, against the construction of the P-3C base in Toyohara, on behalf of the Toyohara residents. The Northern Bloc of the *One-Tsubo* Anti-War Landowners contributed to converting the lavatory of the ‘surveillance hut’ of the Toyohara residents into a flush toilet (*Hitotsubo Hansen* April 1995: 16). They also conducted ‘study trips’ to communicate with the residents who protested against the military in places such as Iejima, Aha (in Kunigami) and Onna (*Hitotsubo Hansen* 1990: 12). Not only did the *one-tsubo* movement increase the number of anti-war landowners, it also provided opportunities to incorporate individual creativity. This indicated a minor transformation of the post-reversion anti-base collective action of the progressives away from the old, traditional styles and techniques.

### **Strategy and Main Activities of the Anti-War Landowners, the *One-Tsubo* Anti-War Landowners and *Iken Kyōtō***

The main activity of the anti-war landowners has been the struggle against a series of laws designed to legalise the de facto occupation of the military-occupied properties. The anti-war landowners claimed the forceful occupation of their land was unconstitutional, according to Article 29 (right of private ownership of assets) of the Constitution. The regular players in this struggle have been a small group of non-contract landowners, including *one-tsubo* landowners, core members of *Iken Kyōtō*,

and expert attorneys, versus the officers at the Naha Defense Facility Bureau. The long-term disobedience of the non-contract landowners has been a constant pressure on Japanese government officials.

Japan is obligated to supply the US forces with facilities and land by the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty. In order to keep the US occupation of properties owned by these non-contract landowners legal, the Japanese government has ‘reformed’ relevant legislation, time and time again. First, the Diet passed the Public Property Law, (*Koyōchi hō*) on 31 December 1971, which legalised the use of all privately owned properties hitherto occupied by the US military in Okinawa for five years from 1972.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, this law was only good for the five years, as a temporary measure necessary in the transition period. In 1976, the landowners and *Iken Kyōtō* filed their first legal case against the Public Property Law.

In order to maintain the US military’s use of the non-contract landowners’ properties, the government came up with manipulative and convoluted legislation in 1977. The Japanese Cabinet enacted the Land Registration Identification Law (*chiseki meikakuka hō*), which obligated the government to identify land registration within the military bases in Okinawa.<sup>11</sup> In a subject clause, the government extended the period of the Public Property Law for another five years (Arasaki 1995: 97). Before the passing of this bill, Uehara Kōsuke, former *Zengumō* leader and then a JSP member representing the Okinawan electorate in the Lower House, pressured the JSP executives to resist a little longer in their negotiations with the LDP. This stalled the bill for four days, making the military’s occupation of the anti-war landowners’ properties technically illegal for those days. This endangered the lawfulness of the Japan–US Mutual Security Treaty. As symbolic acts of protest, the members of *Iken Kyōtō* and anti-war landowners broke the gates into some of the bases, to return to

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<sup>10</sup> The G.R.I. led by Governor Yara, protested that this law was unconstitutional because it breached the right to private ownership (Article 29) and unjustly discriminated against Okinawa thereby breaching the principle of equality under the law (Article 14). The law, furthermore, ignored the process required by Article 95, that a majority of residents’ votes in a referendum are necessary for setting a special law applied in one municipality (Arasaki 1995: 77–8).

<sup>11</sup> The new law responded to Governor Yara and the landowners’ demands to re-identify the land registrations lost in the processes of war evacuation and subsequent military occupation.

their previous homes for the first time since WWII.<sup>12</sup> During these four days, an anti-war landowner Shimabukuro Zenyū and his family, accompanied by a lawyer, took their tractor into his former property in Camp Shields. In front of the US military personnel, he released his ducks, ploughed the farmland and planted garlic (Shimabukuro & Miyazato 1997: 156–60).

Consequently, the government re-activated the US Military Special Measures Law (*beigun tokubetsu sochi hō*) and the Land Expropriation Law (*tochi shūyo hō*), which restricted the right of private property ownership when deemed necessary for protecting the ‘public interest’, with adequate compensation. This law considerably simplified the procedures for land expropriation. The Naha Defence Facilities Bureau, a subsidiary of the Japanese Defense Agency, made an application regarding the expropriation of non-contract landowners’ properties to be used by the US forces. The application was processed by the Prefecture Land Expropriation Committee, which was a semi-judicial body attached to the prefectural government. This Committee had the authority to decide whether or not the land expropriation was justified. The US Military Special Measures Law made no provision for regulating this Land Expropriation Committee, and its selection processes were unclear (Arasaki 1995: 158–9). Regarding the Bureau’s applications for compulsory land expropriation made in 1981 and 1986, the Land Expropriation Committee approved the state’s right to sublet the non-contract landowners’ properties for another five years.

Since the enactment of this legislation, the public legal hearings in front of the Land Expropriation Committee have been the site of battles between the anti-war landowners and their supporting groups on the one hand and the Naha Defence Facility Bureau on the other. They have provided rare opportunities for the anti-war landowners to express their arguments about the government’s unconstitutional use of private property, together with their moral stance against leasing their land for military use, recorded in the proceedings of the public legal hearings by *Iken Kyōtō*

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<sup>12</sup> Forceful entries into the military facilities happened in Ie-jima, Japanese Self Defense Air Force Base, and other bases such as Kadena Air Base.

(for example, *Okinawa Gunyōchi Iken Soshō Shien Kenmin Kyōtō Kaigi* 1998, *Okinawa Kōyōchi Hō Iken Kyōtō Soshō Shien Kenmin Kyōtō Kaigi* 1982). This battle has taken place every five years, since the first hearing in 1981.<sup>13</sup> The Land Expropriation Committee approved the first application for land expropriation of non-contract landowners under the US Military Special Measures Law, made in August 1981, in February 1982.

This decision sapped the morale of the anti-base movement within Okinawan society because a decade after Okinawa's reversion to Japan, the 'Okinawan' judges on the Committee panel approved of the US military's use of the anti-war landowners' land. A local citizens' critical journal, *Shin Okinawa Bungaku*, lamented that the Okinawans themselves 'sold off' the anti-war landowners' land to the government, which expressed the sense of helplessness and despair of the anti-base Okinawans (*Shin Okinawa Bungaku* 1982: 141). The decision perhaps marked the start of the 'low' phase of morale of the anti-base protest community. Between 1977 and 1982, the number of non-contract landowners (not one-*tsubo* landowners) shrank from about 500 to 120–130.

For the next period of compulsory lease from 1987, the Bureau applied for occupation for another twenty years. Arasaki argues that this was a counter measure against the increased non-contract landowners because of the one-*tsubo* movement, which had expanded its members to more than 2,000. Article 14 of the US Military Special Measures Law obligates the Bureau to attach documented landowners' comments to the application for the compulsory land appropriation.<sup>14</sup> About 800 one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners submitted 'landowners' comments' to be attached to the land documents, using a unique range of expression, taking advantage of

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<sup>13</sup> Each application requires about 11 public hearings until the Land Expropriation Committee's final decision, the expropriation of non-contract landowners' properties is a long process, which takes normally from six to twelve months.

<sup>14</sup> When the Prime Minister regards the application for land expropriation for the US military to be adequate, which is usually the case, the Bureau must prepare a document describing the topographical and geological details of the concerned land, with the landowners' attendance on site (Land Expropriation Law, Section 2, Article 36, cited in Arasaki 1995: 165). The submission of the signed documents to the Prefectural Land Exploration Committee is required to complete the application. Importantly, this document needs to be signed by the landowners (Arasaki 1995: 157–8).

individual attributes and occupations, breaking free from the traditional, standardised expression. For example, a musician performed an original song, an architect demonstrated in drawing the ratio of military properties in Okinawa and mainland Japan, a builder built a concrete brick with a message, 'Life is Treasure' (*Nuchi du Takara*). Some used red ink to imitate blood, to describe opposition against the military and its killings (Arasaki 1995: 160–1). These 'comments' were a new form of the 'Okinawan' collective identity, expressed in artistic talents and individual creativity, distinct from the traditional, choreographed stereotype of anti-base protest.

At the 1986 public legal hearings, the presence of several hundred *one-tsubo* anti-war landowners gave tremendous support to the anti-war landowners in court (Arasaki 1995: 172). The aforementioned anti-war landowner, Shimabukuro Zenyū, recalls that at the 1981 hearings there were only 20–30 anti-war landowners, looking miserable and weak in court, while the opponent, the officials from the Naha Defence Facility Bureau, came in suits and ties, in a much larger number, on a chartered bus. Most importantly, Shimabukuro says, the *one-tsubo* landowners immensely encouraged the anti-war landowners who had long been engaged in their solitary and painful struggle against the Japanese government and unsympathetic family members, relatives and other community members (Interview April 1999). In February 1987, the Land Expropriation Committee approved the Bureau's application for land expropriation for a period of ten years instead of twenty years.

In 1990, of those who originally leased land to the military from 1972 with consent, 70 landowners refused to renew their contracts.<sup>15</sup> The number of non-contract landowners expanded, with 500 new *one-tsubo* anti-war landowners (who bought a property in the Futenma Air Station, and three landowners who owned properties in the Naha Military Port.<sup>16</sup> For their properties, the Bureau applied for

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<sup>15</sup> The duration of the original land leases was twenty years, based on the longest lease regulated by Article 604 of the Civil Code.

<sup>16</sup> Of the military properties used by the US military, municipalities (cities, villages and towns) own 29.2% (*Okinawa Ken Sōmubu Chiji Kōshitsu Kichi Taisakushitsu* 2000: 11). Until a conservative mayor was elected in November 2001, Naha City had been the only anti-war landowner which owned 2.6 % (1.5 ha) of the Naha Military Port (*Okinawa Times* 14 November 2000).



another ten years' compulsory use on 27 November.<sup>17</sup> After only two public hearings, the Committee approved the compulsory use of the objectors' properties, for a period of five years from May 1992 (Arasaki 1995: 197–9, 212). The anti-war landowners and one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners took the Committee's decision to court. Anti-war landowners had initiated several similar court cases against the US military's use of properties without the landowners' consent in 1985, 1990, 1992 and 1994. Furthermore, in October 1998, seven anti-war landowners filed a case against the US Military Special Measures Law, claiming it was unconstitutional (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 27 October 1998). Most of these court cases took more than a decade each to settle, exhausting the energy and resources for anti-base protest (*Hitotsubo Hansen* 1995: 7–10).

The Anti-War Landowners' Organisation, the One-*Tsubo* Anti-War Landowners' Organisation, *Iken Kyōtō*, and two attorney groups have been the main initiators of the anti-war landowners' struggle. Over the years, the number of anti-war landowners expanded dramatically, and the one-*tsubo* landowners provided support by observing the public legal hearings, organising rallies after the court cases, with funding, or simply by and contributing to the numbers of anti-war landowners.

Attorneys also have been significant players. There is a group of local attorneys who regularly undertake soliciting anti-war landowners. One of them, Maeshiro Yukio, has represented numerous residents' and citizens' movements in Okinawa after the reversion.<sup>18</sup> He explains that lawsuits are an important part of

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<sup>17</sup> On 17 November 1990, Ōta Masahide had been elected the new Governor, after the conservative OLDP Governor, Nishime Junji (1978–90). One of the procedures required for the compulsory expropriation of non-contract landowners' properties by the US Military Special Measures Law was the notification (*kōkoku*) of, and making the case for, public inspection (*jūran*) by the mayors of the municipalities where the properties in question were located. As an expression of opposition to the US military occupation, the mayors of Naha city, Okinawa city, Ginowan city, Chatan town, and Yomitan village had rejected this procedure. Then, the Governor had the responsibility to sign on behalf of the mayors, which was conducted by Governor Nishime of the OLDP regularly. As a progressive governor, Ōta was committed to the removal of the US military bases, and was publicly opposed to the compulsory use of non-contract landowners' land. Ōta had an option to reject this responsibility. However, after much consideration, Ōta agreed with the procedure, on condition that the central government increase its commitment to the necessary legalisation and financial assistance for future returns of the private properties currently occupied by the US bases (Arasaki 1995: 197–9).

<sup>18</sup> Residents' movements normally refer to the collective action taken up by people who reside in particular communities regarding the issues that affect the living conditions in those communities.

collective action, under the democratic system, taking advantage of the legal rights entitled to the Japanese citizens. At the same time, Maeshiro severely criticises Japan for being ‘anything but a democracy, or a law-abiding state’ (Interview May 1999). From his perspective, the Japanese government would engage in whatever legal manipulation it took to protect the US–Japan security alliance. Moreover, the judicial system, especially the Supreme Court, has proven reluctant to judge against the state when residents take legal action against municipal and central government authorities as a form of protest.<sup>19</sup> In Maeshiro’s view, the Japanese public is not aware of its role enough to ensure democratic rule under the law — thereby allowing the LDP government its constant dictatorship — or to ensure the independence of the judiciary from the executive. Nevertheless, Maeshiro has worked for Okinawan residents’ movements as a specialised, activist attorney, in the hope that the lawsuits may spread information about the issues through the media, and appeal to as great a part of the sympathetic population as possible (Interview May 1999).

Maeshiro’s comments reflect the transformation in the characteristics of Okinawans’ protest, from desperate, sometimes violent, explosions of anger under an authoritarian dictatorship, to long-term, demanding battles of attrition that require the regular commitment of the participants under a formally democratic system. Long-term legal battles require participants with specialised skills, experience and money. They require activist attorneys and supporting organisations with financial and staff resources, usually linked with political parties, workers’ unions and other organised entities. Using legal rights guaranteed by the Constitution has a special meaning in Okinawa, namely, using the constitutional rights earned by the reversion movement. However, during the low ‘period’ that followed the reversion, the struggle of unified

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Participants of citizens’ movements usually engage in collective action as citizens, without the emphasis on where they live. According to Maeshiro, in Okinawa the relationship between residents’ movements and citizens’ movements is often complementary. The former is usually the direct subject of collective action peculiar to their residential location, in which the latter plays a ‘supporting role’ (Maeshiro Interview, May 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Other cases Maeshiro has been involved include the Kadena Air Base Noise Case (*kadena bakuon soshō*), initiated by about 906 residents who lived around the base, and who suffered from the explosive noise, demanding to stop the night flight training from 7pm to 7am. The case was first taken to court in February 1982, and closed in May 1998 with indemnity payment, but no flights stopped. One of the plaintiffs, Matsuda Kame, notes that she lost interest in the case because the noise was getting worse and worse (Hiramatsu 2001: 154–5).

‘Okinawa’ — symbolised by the anti-war landowners — was mainly conducted by a specialised group of activists increasingly isolated from the rest of the society. This meant the only progressive coalition that represented Okinawa no longer provided access to a majority of the population who felt the need to engage in protest in one way or another. However, as witnessed by the groundswell of popular opposition against the US bases in 1995, it did not mean that the Okinawan people had totally lost motivation or the means to protest. As chapter 7 and 8 demonstrate, the decline of the old styles and organisation of protest contributed to the development of alternative avenues of protest through the emergence of ‘new social movements’ in Okinawa.

Related to this point, anti-base movements and protests are routinely conducted by a specialist peace sector, formed by ideological like-minded and organisationally closely affiliated unions and organisations. The Okinawa Peace Movement Centre (*Heiwa Undō* Centre) is one such organisation. It is the biggest coalition of any kind in Okinawa, specialising in peace movement activities specific to Okinawa, including opposition to the US military bases. It is a coalition of 35 Okinawan unions and parties, including the OSMP, the JSP (since January 1996, the Japan Social Democratic Party, JSDP) Okinawa Branch, the *Zenchurō* Okinawa Branch and the Okinawa Teachers Union, which are mostly associated with the mainland Japanese coalition of workers’ union, *Rengō* (Japanese Trade Union Confederation)<sup>20</sup>. The Okinawa Peace Movement Centre is an Okinawan version of the Peace Movement Centres that exist in other prefectures all over Japan, for example, the Tokyo Peace Movement Centre and Ishikawa Peace Movement Centre, which support the basic platform of the JSDP, namely the ideological commitment to the pacifist clause of the Constitution. The Okinawa Peace Movement Centre members are linked with other Japanese Peace Movement Centre members, for example, through ‘Okinawa tours’, which involve visits to the Battle of Okinawa

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<sup>20</sup> *Rengō* is the largest organisation in the Japanese labour movement. It was formally inaugurated in November 1989 with 8 million members after *Sōhyō* (General Council of Japanese Trade Unions) dissolved (<http://www.jtuc-rengo.org/htmls1/034Path.html>). In 2002, *Rengō* has 6,945,000 members. At 20.2 per cent, the union membership rate in Japan is decreasing (<http://www.jtuc-rengo.or.jp/new/iken/danwa/danwa20021219.html>).

remains, major military bases and the ongoing anti-base residents' movement, such as the anti- 'heliport' struggle in Henoko (hence, the need for 'struggle huts').

Other smaller coalitions of peace organisations affiliated with the JCP are the Okinawa Peace Committee (*Okinawa Heiwa Inkai*) and the Okinawa Prefecture United Action Communication Conference (*Okinawa Ken Toitsu Kōdō Renraku Kaigi, tōitsuren*). These JSP (JSDP) and JCP-affiliated organisations occasionally join together in Prefectural Citizens' Rallies (*Kenmin Taikai*),<sup>21</sup> however, usually they engage in peace movement activities separately, such as supporting residents' anti-base demonstrations, election campaigns for anti-base candidates, and organising and mobilizing for the annual 15 May Peace Marches.<sup>22</sup> The internal division is indicative of decreasing influence of a progressive coalition representing one 'Okinawa'.

Furthermore, the principle actors of protest against the danger and inconveniences of military bases on Okinawa have predominantly been the residents of the respective cities, towns and villages or smaller community units such as hamlets and districts, where particular base or facilities have been located or were planned to be constructed.<sup>23</sup> Since the late 1980s, the Okinawa-based US forces and SDF kept growing in size and capacity, until the mid-1990s. In 1989, 45 US bases and 35 SDF bases were located all over Okinawa (95.7 per cent of the US forces are located on Okinawa Main Island), scattered through more than 25 cities, towns and villages (Kurima 1998: 279, *Okinawa Ken Sōmubu Chiji Kōshitsu Kichi Taisakushitsu* 2000: 8, 24). The construction of a planned US training facility designed for urban guerilla fighting was stopped by the protests of the residents of

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<sup>21</sup> For example, in April 2002, the Okinawa Peace Movement Centre and *toitsuren* held a joint rally called '*Mamorō Kenpo, Kōchōkai Hōkoku Shūkai*' (Protect the Constitution, a public hearing report), against the legislation related to attacks by other countries against Japan, which legalises the war preparation activities of the state, the US military and the SDF (*Okinawa Times* 23 April, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Other major activities included making 'human chains' around the Futenma Marine Corps Air Station in 1995 and 1998 in protest against the US military presence and war. There were similar protests against the Kadena Air Base in 1987, 1990 and 2000.

<sup>23</sup> One of the earliest examples was the residents' opposition against a plan to construct a pad for the US Marine Corps' 'Harrier' helicopters in Aha District in Kunigami village in 1987 (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 257–9).

Onna village.<sup>24</sup> The protest succeeded because of the involvement of the whole village population, young and old, conservative and progressive, in a range of direct actions, from petitions to various US military and Japanese government authorities, the direct blockage of construction work and confrontations with riot police, to around-the-clock surveillance by the villagers from a ‘surveillance hut’ (*Tokushu Butai Kensetsu oyobi Jitsudan Shageki Enshū Hantai Onna Son Jikkō Inikai* 1990).

In the early 1990s, residents of the Toyohara District of Motobu village also stopped the construction of an SDF communication facility and the deployment of P-3C anti-submarine aircraft.<sup>25</sup> In Toyohara, too, the residents collected funds and built a ‘surveillance hut’ in front of the construction site, where the residents took turns being responsible not just for surveillance but also hosting visitors and supporters from outside, and preparing meals. Supporters were mainly Okinawan activists outside Toyohara, such as members of workers’ unions and peace groups, among others, the Workers Unions’ Council, Northern Region Branch (*Hokubu chikurō*), the Okinawa Historical Film Society<sup>26</sup>, and the one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners. Similar residents’ movements against the US military bases and SDF have been repeated all over Okinawa, with similar strategies and experience.<sup>27</sup> These geographically scattered protest actors could not avoid being isolated from each other, and this has become an important trait of the community of protest.

### **The ‘Constitutional’ Framing**

The anti-war landowners’ struggle and the progressive coalition have developed into a solid, permanent, but routine, protest sector. The anti-war landowners’ struggle is basically silent disobedience, that is, by definition, passive rather than active: by the

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<sup>24</sup> Onna village is located in the northern region of Okinawa Main Island. Its 1989 population was 8,840, who mainly engaged in farming. In the late 1980s, tourism was the rising industry in this village. Camp Hansen (US Marine Corps) occupied 29.6 per cent of the village. The destruction of, and threat to, the natural and human environment caused by the US live fire training had been generating grievances, especially the destruction of Mount Onna (*onna dake*) (*Tokushu Butai Kensetsu oyobi Jitsudan Shageki Enshū Hantai Onna Son Jikkō Inikai* 1990: 33)

<sup>25</sup> Only 159 people lived in Toyohara District in 1993. It is located within Motobu village in the northern region.

<sup>26</sup> Leader Nakamura Fumiko was from Motobu village (chapter 3).

<sup>27</sup> Other examples include opposition to the live firing training across Prefecture Road 104 (which would be closed during the training), in Kin town (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1997: 134–6). The SACO agreement in 1996 decided to stop the live firing training except for those using 155mm bullets. These trainings were moved to Hijūdai Training Area in Ōita Prefecture.

steady continuation of long-term legal battles in the courts and through public hearings, the anti-war landowners have extended the tradition of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ from the end of the reversion movement. However, what explains the weakening momentum for a uniquely ‘Okinawan’ struggle that potentially involves a wider public, that is, not just the ‘usual suspects’ or professional activists? With this question in mind, this section examines what has framed the anti-war landowners’ expressions of collective identity and strategy: how they define who they are and why they protest, and how this is reflected in their strategy to connect their struggle with the Japanese Constitution.

Arime Masao, Chair of the *Iken Kyōtō*, had been a schoolteacher for nineteen years before he retired in 1994. Arime is a landowner of a property inside the Kadena Air Base, where his family house used to be located. Arime first became involved in the Okinawa Struggle in reversion campaigns during the US occupation, as a member of the Okinawa Youth Group Commission (*Okinawa Seinendan Kyōgikai*), which was a member organisation of the Council for Reversion. After the reversion, he has protested against the military bases in Okinawa as a member of the Anti-War Landowners’ Organisation and the Okinawa Teachers’ Union. He participated in ‘almost all anti-base protest occasions against the US bases that are concentrated in the central region’, where he has resided and worked (Interview March 1999).

Arime explains that 28 April in 1952 is still the most important anniversary for the Okinawans’ struggle (*Okinawa no tatakai*, the term ‘Okinawa Struggle’ was not used). From 1952 until the reversion, the ‘4.28’ (28 April) anniversary was the most important date to hold big annual protests, at which Okinawan reversionists and mainland Japanese left-wing activists demonstrated solidarity. Then, after reversion, Arime explained that the most important anniversary shifted to 15 May in 1972, the day of formal repatriation, which became another day of Okinawa’s humiliation. In 1971, the last rally-on-the-ocean was held on 28 April. Since then, on 15 May (5.15) each year, the Okinawan activists join the peace march across the island, which continues today as one of the biggest annual Okinawan events.

This shift of anniversaries signifies a major transition in the nature of the reversion movement, and the struggle of the Okinawans. The struggle associated with 28 April was a nationalist struggle, whereas the 15 May represents repudiation of the militarism that comes hand in hand with nationalism. The Okinawans' struggle used to be primarily defined as resistance against foreign military rule and pursuit of nationhood by way of re-integration with *yamato*. In contrast, the 15 May anniversary has been a reminder of the disillusionment with 'reversion nationalism': termination of the pursuit of nationhood, as a means of liberation from Okinawa's predicament.

Similarly, during the second-wave Okinawa Struggle, the *hinomaru* flag was a symbol of resistance against US military rule, and the home country to which the reversionists wished to return. After reversion, the political meaning of the flag has significantly changed for the Okinawan community of protest.<sup>28</sup> In the post-reversion community of protest, the flag is associated with Japanese imperialism and the sufferings inflicted on locals during the Battle of Okinawa (see Chibana 1992, Field 1993).

Nevertheless, *Iken Kyōtō* members — Arime and his colleagues — continue to define 28 April as the most important day for the Okinawan struggle: they hold meetings, memorial lectures and speeches every year, though the events attract much fewer people than those on 15 May. Arime says it has provided an opportunity to reflect on the humiliation of 4.28, when Okinawa was discarded, and it is a reminder that Okinawa was, and still is, a metaphorical first stone to be thrown in the water to save the imperial Japanese ship (Interview, March 1999). (Interview March 1999). Today, the separation of Okinawa from Japan is still an important part of Okinawa's historical narrative of marginalisation.

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<sup>28</sup> In 1987, Chibana Shoichi, a 'peace guide' resident of Yomitan village, and later an anti-war landowner, at a National Sport Meet event, burned the *hinomaru* flag in front of the crowd. The flag had created a political controversy before the Sport Meet, about whether or not raising the flag at the venue in Okinawa was appropriate, yet the flag burning was sensational enough to make Chibana a celebrity, attracting both sympathisers and violent threats from right-wing thugs. Chibana's act represented the negative emotions of the Okinawans towards the flag (see Chibana 1992, Field 1993).

The older generation of Okinawan activists who know the reversion struggle often talk about the unfinished business of the ‘reflection and overhaul of the reversion movement’ (*fukki undō no sōkatsu*). This frequent self-criticism indicates a deep sense of regret that the strategy of the reversion movement was unable to represent what the Okinawans’ struggle was really about. This reflection and overhaul of the reversion movement is a difficult task, which requires identifying what was inadequate about the past struggle, and what remains essential. The 28 April anniversary is also meant for the re-examination of the implication of the reversion movement (Arime, Interview, March 1999). The continuing importance attached to this day is indicative of the strength of the myth of an ‘Okinawan’ struggle and the recognition of a historical narrative of marginalisation that remains today: it indicates continuity.

Another important element inherited from the reversion movement was the Okinawa-specific, passionate commitment to the Japanese Constitution. For the anti-war landowners, the Constitution provides the ground to justify the right to private ownership (Article 29: ‘Property rights shall not be violated’). However, Article 9 has been the most important section for anti-war activism in post-reversion Okinawa<sup>29</sup>, which provides justification for refusing the land lease contract offered by the US military forces. The anti-war landowners have customarily emphasised the importance of the non-belligerency clause in the Constitution at the Land Expropriation Committee public hearings.

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<sup>29</sup> Article 9 constitutes of two separate clauses:

- 1) Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.
- 2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized (translated in Parisi, 2002)



In Japan, despite the *fait accompli* development of arms and troops and dispatches of SDF troops overseas, until today, Article 9 has not been amended. This reflects the constant support for the optimistic vision of a non-belligerent Japanese society promised by the post-war Constitution among the Japanese progressive members and intellectuals, as well as the public (Parisi 2002).<sup>30</sup> In Okinawa, many anti-base activists interpret the US military presence as contradicting Article 9, because it involves Japan and Okinawa in belligerent activities. The Constitution justifies and gives significance to the anti-base protest. I call this dynamic a ‘Constitutionalist’ framing of protest. After the reversion, the anti-war landowners discarded the *hinomaru* flag, but held on to the Constitution, which still continues to provide them with an ideological base for collective action.

Importantly, another anti-war landowners’ reason for anti-base protest — even more basic than the Constitution — is the experience of war in the Battle of Okinawa. Recollections of the Battle often appear in the autobiographical accounts of anti-war landowners. The graphic descriptions of killing and starvation and, particularly, the aggression and cruelty of mainland Japanese soldiers toward the Okinawan residents, never fail to inculcate strong compassion in the audience. Today, the existence of the anti-war landowners proves the continuation of Okinawa’s ‘war state’ as opposed to the ‘peace state’ elsewhere in Japan (Hook & McCormack 2001: 24). For the protesters, this passion for peace is an expression of what it means to be ‘Okinawan’: it defines who ‘we’ are. The war experience is also important for the landowners as a standpoint from which to critique the state’s structural marginalisation of the minority, which was difficult to express because it clashed with ‘reversion nationalism’. Revealing the atrocities of the Japanese soldiers toward the local islanders during the battle is a political statement that has only become possible after the reversion (Takara 1995: 158).

Zukeran Chōhō is former Chair of the OSMP and was a member of the Okinawan Prefectural Council for 12 years before he retired to become a farmer. He

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<sup>30</sup> This constitutional support stemmed from the Japanese people’s will to turn the devastation of war and defeat into something positive, that is, illegalising the act of war, ahead of other countries in the world (Dower, 1998: 398).

is also a one-*tsubo* landowner of the Kadena Air Base, and one of the first members of the One-*Tsubo* Anti-War Landowners' Organisation. In an interview with the official JSP journal, *Zen'ei*, Zukeran explains the reason for becoming a one-*tsubo* landowner was his commitment to peace and anti-militarism as well as human rights, expressed in the Japanese Constitution. Zukeran argues that the history and memories of the war are something commonly shared by all Okinawans.<sup>31</sup> This statement summarises the OSMP emphasis on being a 'party of the Okinawan citizens' (*kenmin-tō*), instead of being a regional branch of mainland Japanese parties, albeit its strong connection with the JSP. The party's strategy is also on appealing to the masses, without placing too much emphasis on political ideologies.<sup>32</sup>

Zukeran followed this statement with his personal memoirs of the Battle of Okinawa. He was 13 years-old in 1945. The highlight of his story was a description of the incident on Mabuni Hill, when he and his family, as well as other locals, were caught in a *cul-de-sac* trying to avoid the US bullets. The American soldiers urged the locals to surrender. When several Okinawan residents attempted to surrender, three Japanese soldiers beheaded them. He also mentions that the same kind of cruelty to the Okinawans by the Japanese continued after WWII, for example, Article 3 of the peace treaty which separated Okinawa from Japan and subjected Okinawans to US military rule. He explains that the Okinawans, including himself, requested reversion to Japan, because they wanted peace and wished to be entitled to the peace constitution. However, the military bases are still there and the Okinawans can never be free from the chance of getting involved in the battlefield again. The Japanese government has ignored the Constitution as far as the Okinawans' rights and security are concerned, for example, by admitting the unequal Status of Forces Agreement with the US that protects US soldiers from severe penalties when they commit crimes

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<sup>31</sup> According to Zukeran, the conservatives, such as Liberal Democratic Party members, often criticise the one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners as 'a group influenced by an extreme ideological belief' (1997: 194). He rejects this criticism by explaining 'the respect [for the Constitution] is the *collective feeling of all Okinawans*, not an extreme ideological position' (emphasis added 1997: 194).

<sup>32</sup> Political scientist Professor Egami Yoshinori, who teaches at Ryūkyū University, argues that the OSMP has been a local party supported by the population, who prefer not to identify themselves with either conservative or radical political ideas. Politically, it is 'progressive' and anti-base, however, its populist appeal mainly drives from being the only local party without any affiliation with the mainland Japanese parties, unlike other parties (Interview April 1999).

against the locals. The Japanese government's machinations to legalise forceful military occupations of private properties despite the landowners' disagreement embody the continuing marginalisation of Okinawa. Zukeran argues that these land laws are against the principles of the Constitution (Zukeran 1997: 194–201).

However, the strategy of the Okinawan anti-war landowners and their supporters to refer to the Constitution fits comfortably with the post-war mainland Japanese left's commitment to the principles of pacifism and democracy. The distinctiveness in most stories of the Battle of Okinawa is that the Japanese soldiers are represented as the oppressor of the Okinawan islanders. The division between the 'Japanese' aggressor and the 'Okinawan' victims overlaps with that between evil, fanatic militarists and the innocent general mainland Japanese public who were deceived into a horrific war. According to the dominant post-war Japanese discourse on WWII, the mainland Japanese general public was also deceived into a horrific war by fanatic Japanese imperial militarists. Dower explains that in the late 1940s, pacifism replaced militarism as a new form of nationalism in the immediate post-war Japanese society. In Japan, too, the memory of the sufferings of WWII fuelled the enthusiasm for transformation of the entire society into a new, democratic, pacifist and wealthy one. The peace Constitution has been a milestone for this collective determination of the war-weary mainland Japanese public. The occupation period in mainland Japan converted the pressure for hard work and sacrifice of the pre-war era, this time to build a 'peaceful' nation focused on economic growth. Pacifism from above is an important component of post-war Japanese nationalism. Moreover, the emphasis was on the hardships endured by the Japanese themselves. Air raids, atomic massacres in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the material scarcity after the war, as well as the post-war humiliation of Japanese soldiers in the winners' verdict of the Tokyo war-crimes trial, became the collective memory of the nation (Dower 1999, Orr 2001, Yoneyama 1999). The discourse of post-war nationalism stressed the Japanese war experience as victims, and underrepresented the hardships caused to other nations, including Okinawa, as a result of Japanese aggression. Silence about

the different kind of war that the Okinawans experienced, including forced mass suicides, is part and parcel of this nationalist version of pacifism.

The mainland Japanese left-wing political activists, among others, have been most loyal to this nationalist version of post-war pacifism. Popular protest in post-war Japan saw its highlight in the anti-*Ampo* protest in 1960. Packard observes that the left-wing leaders of the mass movement, 'in spite of a strong attachment to Marxist principles and proletarian internationalism, showed unmistakable signs of the new nationalism' in Japan at the start of the 1960s (Packard 1966: 335). The principal source of energy for the 1960 mass protest, led by the socialists, the *Sōhyō* unionists, the communists and the *Zengakuren* (students' organisation) activists was the growing national pride based on economic progress following the WWII defeat. The progressive intellectuals, who contributed greatly to the mobilisation of the mass protest, 'explored new foundations upon which to legitimise nationalism, such as the shared experience of the atomic bombing and postwar economic privations' (Packard 1966: 337).

The Okinawan anti-war landowners have shared with the communists and socialists and other mainland Japanese left-wing peace activists the use of the Constitution as a vehicle of anti-militarism. The former student activists who opposed the US–Japan Security Treaty, as well as the official party lines of the Japanese Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and a substantial part of the Japanese public have constantly supported Article 9 of the Constitution. As Lummis argues, the 'non-realistic', non-belligerent principle of the Constitution has had an important 'realistic' pacifist effect. He argues that because of Article 9 of the Constitution, not a single Japanese person has been killed in actual warfare in the post-war era (Lummis 2000: 13). However, it is also evident that Article 9 has had to live with the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty and the US military presence in Japan, heavily stationed on Okinawa Main Island. The Constitution has failed to defend the Okinawan anti-war landowners' rights from the conservative Japanese national interest, which relies on the stability of the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty. The dispute on compulsory use of private property by the US military in Okinawa after

the reversion has demonstrated that the ‘public interest’ and the right to private landownership protected by the Constitution are in conflict. The requirement of the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty, that US troops be stationed in Japan, has constantly overruled the Constitutional right of Okinawan citizens (Nakachi & Mizushima 1998: 77). Ironically, in effect, the anti-war landowners’ struggle can be interpreted as an ‘Okinawan’ version of post-war Japanese pacifism, which has been dependent on the stable security alliance with the US, and on discrimination against Okinawa.

The belief in the post-war constitutional ideals, which supported the reversion struggle, has continued to be an important part of many progressive Okinawan anti-base protesters’ definitions of who they are, and why they protest. As examined in chapter 5, the Okinawan ‘absolute pacifism’ derived from the residents’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa criticised the ‘reversion nationalism’ strategy of seeking assimilation with Japan, which was dominant during the reversion movement. The strategy relies on the democratic and pacifist post-war Constitution, consistent with the former reversionist Okinawans’ desire for a ‘true reversion to democratic Japan’. However, the demand that the Japanese government should ‘understand Okinawa’ and work towards achieving a ‘true reversion’, without the unequal burden of the US military presence exerted on Okinawa, reveals the basic trust attached to the state, to protect the minority’s interest. This is not consistent with the basic distrust against the state, which is an important aspect of the ‘absolute pacifism’ derived from the residents’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa.

Nevertheless, the resistance to being reduced to simply an Okinawan version of Japanese aversion to war is revealed in the stories of an anti-war landowner, Shimabukuro Zenyū. Born in 1936 in the central region in Okinawa Main Island, he and his family survived the Battle of Okinawa and after his father’s death he inherited several plots of land occupied by the US military in central Okinawa. Shimabukuro never signed the land lease agreements. He speaks as an Okinawan farmer. Though he is a member of the Anti-War Landowners’ Organisation, he refuses to be affiliated to any political parties. His style of speech is direct, free of

ambiguity and most loyal to his own feelings and experiences, rather than to any official lines of political parties or established ideological dogmas. His anecdotes of the Battle of Okinawa centred on his father's behaviour:

My father was always critical towards the orders of the Japanese soldiers, and often used his 'wit' to escape them. He did not, for example, follow the Japanese soldiers' order to move south, when the Americans' attacks grew intense. Those locals who went with the Japanese soldiers, thinking they would be protected, all died: they were forced into suicide for the Emperor, or out of the bomb shelters to make room for the soldiers. I believe my father's 'wit' saved the whole family. I wish more Okinawans had been like him.

However, not everyone in my family was like my father. My mother once insisted on committing collective suicide, following what the soldiers, village leaders and schoolteachers taught us was the right thing to do. My brother, who was more educated than my father, was a public servant, working for the US military government after the war, and was ready to adjust to giving up his land, because, after all, 'we lost the war'.

After my father died in the 1950s, I saw my father's spirit in the speeches of Senaga Kamejiro, founder of the Okinawa People's Party. I was especially inspired by Senaga's speech, before the all-island land dispute in 1956, that said Okinawans had the right to charge rent on the US military, for using the ports, land, and even for breathing air in Okinawa. Everyone loved his speech and cheered loudly.<sup>33</sup> Senaga taught us that refusing to give up our land was a promising way to get rid of the US military presence.

As a landowner who experienced the hell of the Battle of Okinawa, I never feel guilty for refusing the contract. The origin of the landowners' anti-militarism is quite simple: land is meant to plough and produce food. If you agree with the lease of the US military, you are agreeing with war and helping other people suffer from military attacks, instead of growing food.

Shimabukuro's act of dissent is individual-based, and void of a speaking style that represents specific political parties or organisations. Furthermore, he is publicly critical of the reversion movement. His hero, Senaga, was a leader of the reversion movement, however, interestingly, for Shimabukuro, anti-militarism and the reversion struggle seem to be clearly separate. He does not hesitate to criticise the 'progressive' party members, and emphatically stresses that at pre-1972 reversion

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<sup>33</sup> At the time, the US was trying to justify permanent use of Okinawan land with the Price Report, which recommended the purchase of the US land right for 99 years, which met the Okinawans' 1956 all-island resistance.

rallies, the reversion activists — presumably the Council members — held back from requesting the removal of all the military bases from Okinawa, for fear of delaying Okinawa's reversion (Interview April 1999). Furthermore, Shimabukuro makes strong but straightforward remarks such as, '*Uchinanchū* (Okinawans) never say this, but we all hate *yamatonchū* (the mainland Japanese) for starting that war and dumping the US military bases for 50 years on Okinawa, to keep the Americans at bay' (Aihara 1996: 79) and 'The Japanese people are the most hated group of people in the world' (Interview April 1999).

For Shimabukuro, 'Okinawa' is a separate political community from Japan. He is respected in the Okinawan community of protest because of his straightforward comments. His personality expresses, on behalf of many others, what makes their struggle distinctively 'Okinawan'. At this level, his statements resonate nicely with the discourses of organisationally unaffiliated anti-reversionist thinkers such as Arakawa Akira and other 'independent advocates', rather than with those of the former reversion movement activists and today's anti-base party and union leaders affiliated with the mainland Japanese organisations. However, the public statements of the Anti-War Landowners' Organisation and *Iken Kyōtō* that stress the formal democratic principles of the Japanese Constitution are somewhat distanced from the radical collective identity expressed by Shimabukuro.

The anti-war landowners and their supporting organisations have publicly, and strategically, identified 'Okinawanness' with a strong attachment to the Constitution, which casts no major challenge to the post-war state pacifism that has co-existed with the US–Japan security alliance and discrimination of minorities, especially Okinawa. However, if there is any radical potential to the anti-war landowners' — and the progressive Okinawans' — attachment to the constitutional principles, it is to reveal the hollowness of the Constitution and democracy currently in operation in Japan. In the long-term, the only hope for this strategy of attrition is to generate mass mobilisation, not just in Okinawa but throughout Japan, against the emptiness of the Constitutional pacifism.

## Conclusion

The progressive coalition resuscitated itself for the project of supporting the anti-war landowners and continuing to protest against the US military presence in Okinawa. This chapter stressed the continuous elements of the past two ‘Okinawa Struggles’ that the anti-war landowners and *Iken Kyōtō* have kept. The anniversary of 28 April, the passion to protect the constitutional principles, and representing Okinawan-specific anti-militarism through the experience of the Battle of Okinawa are important constituents of the historical context of marginalisation that constructs who ‘we’ are as Okinawan protesters, thereby keeping the myth of an ‘Okinawan’ struggle alive. However, the existence of a unified protest actor against the US military bases that the anti-war landowners are supposed to represent has been strictly a myth. Whereas traditional solidarity among left-wing political parties and labour unions has been upheld in a formal sense through the shared sympathy and support for the anti-war landowners as a symbol of the ‘Okinawan’ anti-militarist spirit, the *Iken Kyōtō*’s existence barely represents a token of the past legacy of an all-island struggle. Since the reversion, the Okinawan protest community has increasingly grown fragmented geographically and organisationally. The period sandwiched between the late 1960s ‘second wave’ and the mid-1990s ‘third wave’ mass protest was a long ‘trough’ cycle of protest. During this period, there were many anti-base struggles at the community level, but the voice of one ‘Okinawa’ became weaker, albeit not entirely extinguished.

The strategy and organisation of the anti-war landowners were strengthened by the birth of one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners, a movement led by the mostly middle-class, individual — and politically well-connected or experienced activist — citizens. The one-*tsubo* landowners’ movement expanded the scope of the anti-war landowners’ struggle towards a citizens’ pacifist and anti-militarist movement. Although continuing expression of opposition itself has been the main goal of the struggle, this chapter also argues that the strategy to directly influence, and negotiate with, the formal political organisations through legal and judicial battles has constantly produced disappointing results. This strategy has made the entire struggle



highly technical, limiting windows of wider popular participation. The attachment to the constitutional principles of democracy and pacifism failed to empower the Okinawans in their battle, furthermore, it made the Okinawan progressives indistinguishable from the mainland Japanese left. In July 2002, *Iken Kyoto* closed its office, because of the lack of funding and absence of major activities (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 3 July 2002). However, the decline of the old progressive movement has not projected an entirely bleak picture for the survival of the myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’. New types of protest organisations and strategies developed at the same time, and these ‘new social movements’ were no less ‘Okinawan’, and no less inclined to appeal to the myth of Okinawan marginalisation.

## **Kin Bay and Shiraho: Emergence of New Social Movements in the 'Okinawa Struggle'?**

### **Introduction**

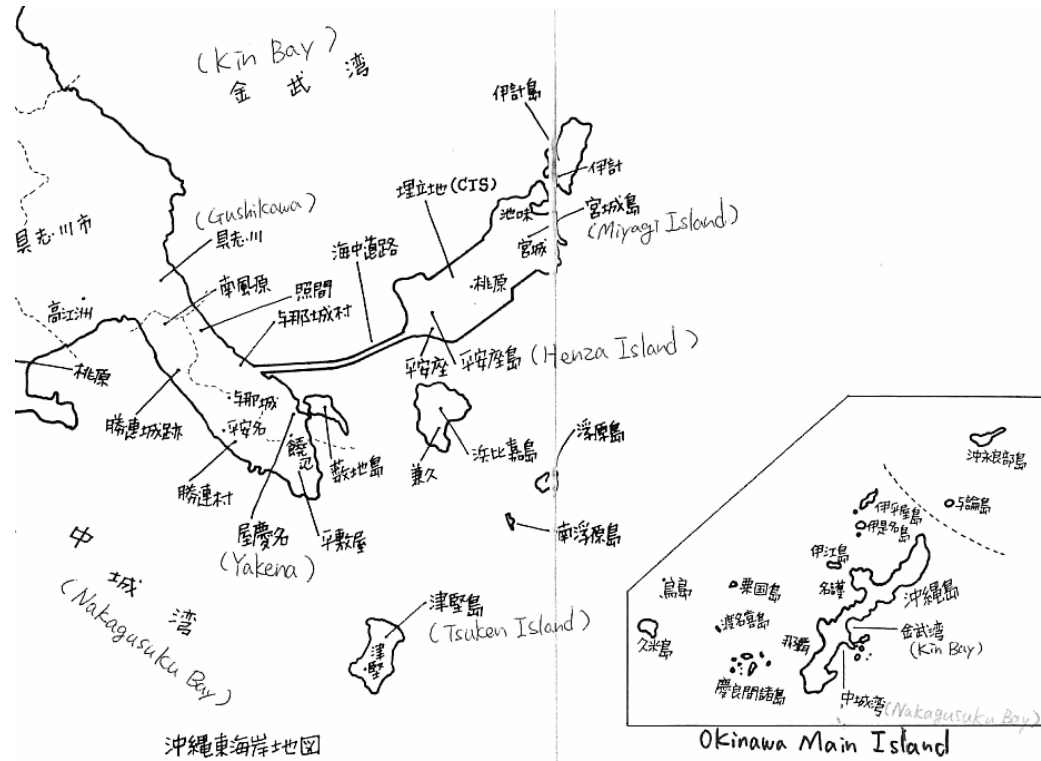
During the 'low' phase of the mass protest cycle in post-reversion Okinawa, the idea of a continuous, unified 'Okinawan' struggle was redefined as an anti-base coalition, symbolised by a small number of landowners' disobedience to the US military. While the pre-reversion coalition was maintained in a much more routine and limited anti-base movement, different types of protest were starting to take shape in the community of protest. These new breeds of collective action were community-based and autonomous from party and union-based organisations.

This chapter examines two cases of residents' movements as important new variants of such protest in Okinawa after reversion in 1972. The first case focuses on the residents' opposition against the construction of the Central Terminal Station (CTS) in the Kin Bay area in central Okinawa (Map 7.1). The second case examines the residents' opposition campaign against the construction of the New Ishigaki Airport on Ishigaki Island (Map 7.2). Arasaki maintains that the Kin Bay struggle (*Kinwan tōsō*) highlighted the emergence of a new type of residents' movement, the first of its kind in Okinawa (Arasaki 1996: 50–2). This chapter examines in what sense this particular movement — and perhaps even to a greater extent, the Shiraho anti-airport movement — was a 'new' variant of protest, and what implications it, and the parallel movement, had for the community of protest and the myth of an 'Okinawan' struggle.

The first two sections of this chapter provide brief outlines of the two residents' movements. The third section elaborates on the emerging characteristics of the Kin Bay and Shiraho struggles in terms of collective identity, organisation and strategy. The fourth section examines the influences, lessons and assets gained from

the experiences in these two struggles as part of the lineage and myth of an ‘Okinawan Struggle’ in the post-reversion period.

Map 7.1 Kin Bay area, central Okinawa (Asato Seishin *Umi wa Hito no Haha de Aru <The Ocean, Our Mother>* Shōbunsha 1981: 10-11)



Map 7.2 Ishigaki Island, (Ikehara Sadao and Kato Yuzo *Okinawa no Shizen o Shiru <Getting to know nature in Okinawa>*, Tsukiji Shokan 1997: 250)



## The CTS Construction Dispute: A Brief Outline

The economy in Okinawa after reversion continued its dependence on the bases and the central government's security-oriented Okinawa policy.<sup>1</sup> With massively increased inflows of Japanese subsidies, and inflation of the value of private properties occupied by the military bases, the Okinawan economy went through a fundamental change. The achievement of income levels and a standard of living equivalent to mainland Japan (*'hondo-nami'*) became the slogan of the Okinawan and central government officials and business sectors. The Okinawa Development Agency (*Okinawa kaihatsu chō*) was set up within the Cabinet, and a Special Law for Okinawa's Regeneration and Development (*Okinawa shinkō kaihatsu tokubetsuhō*) was enacted in 1971. According to this Special Law, the Okinawa Development Agency designed the first Okinawa Regeneration and Development Plan (*Okinawa shinkō kaihatsu keikaku*),<sup>2</sup> starting from the year of reversion, 1972, to be implemented by the prefecture government, under the guidance of the Okinawa Development Agency.<sup>3</sup>

Former G.R.I. Chief Executive Yara Choōbyō was re-elected in 1972 as Governor (1972–6) of Okinawa Prefecture. The Japanese government's development policy, which specifically claimed to be designed to incorporate Okinawa into Japan's rapid economic growth during the 1960s, had a significant appeal to the local population. The new Okinawa prefecture government was under pressure to promote a *'hondo-nami'* industrialisation, the strongest emphasis of Yara's post-reversion policy. Yara was concerned with his lack of experience in economic

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<sup>1</sup> The percentage of income generated directly from the US military in the prefecture's gross expenditure was 15% at the time of reversion (1972) and gradually decreased to 5 per cent in 1987, and has remained stable ever since. Direct income generated from the US military consist of local consumption made by the US military personnel and families, salaries paid to locally employed military workers, and rent paid to the landowners of the properties occupied by the US military. (Kawase 2000: 56)

<sup>2</sup> For this purpose, on the day of Okinawa's reversion, May 15 1972, the Okinawa Development Stimulation Committee (*Okinawa Shinkō Kaihatsu Shingi-kai*) was established within the Okinawa Development Agency.

<sup>3</sup> However, the central government shielded Okinawa effectively from multinationals' direct investments and placed Okinawa under its immediate control, which eliminated the opportunity for Okinawa to become a thriving autonomous economic zone, attractive to foreign investments and business opportunities (Howell 2000).

matters.<sup>4</sup> The bureaucrats and academics defined the CTS construction, aimed at increasing storage capacity of crude oil, as strategically necessary for Okinawa's industrialisation (Yara 1985: 218–21).

The Okinawa Development Agency designated the oil and aluminium refinery as the most important industry in the 1971 Industrial Regeneration and Development Plan (Yara 1985: 224), which was the rationale for the CTS construction in the Kin Bay area. Another more indirect reason for the concentration of CTS projects in Kin Bay was the mainland Japanese residents' greater awareness of pollution in local communities, which was phenomenal in this period. There were about 3,000 residents' organisations in Japan in 1972 (Kurihara 1999: 12), and environmental pollution was what these community groups typically protested against (Krauss & Simcock 1980: 187). Residents' victories in major litigations against big companies and the state had gained publicity, developed public consciousness about environmental problems, and demonstrated the capability of residents for political action (Broadbent 1998, Krauss & Simcock 1980, McKean 1981).<sup>5</sup> However, with the advent of the oil crisis in 1973, building the CTS was a priority for the multi-national oil industries.

In the Kin Bay area, the pro-industry local political leaders clashed with the residents' opposition groups, especially those who were reliant on fishing. In the Yakena District, a municipality facing Kin Bay and directly connected to Henza Island by the 'ocean road', the mayor and commercial organisations were eager to attract petroleum industries. However, repeated oil leakage incidents from the tankers had already been causing damage to the ocean and local fishery to an extent that was visually obvious to the local residents. In October 1971, for example, at one of the Gulf facilities, more than 190 tons of crude oil leaked and polluted the entire Kin Bay

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<sup>4</sup> He refers to the uneasiness he felt at the time of the 1968 Chief Executive election when asked by the conservative camp, 'the LDP is planning to induce the oil multinational, Gulf, which will lead to the construction of a power station and other industries such as aluminium. What is your plan on industrial development?' (Yara 1985: 266)

<sup>5</sup> Typical examples include the anti-*konbinaatō* (industrial complex) movement in Mishima, Shizuoka, and the 'Big Four' pollution incidents, including mercury poisoning which killed and permanently crippled many residents in Minamata, and Niigata, an extremely painful degeneration of human bones caused by cadmium-contaminated rice in Toyama, and asthma caused by air pollution in Yokkaichi.

area, killing white squid, seashells and other local fish, which threatened people who lived on fishing (Yoshida et al. 1975: 5).

In the same month, residents of Miyagi Island (Map 7.1) formed the Miyagi Island Land Protection Society (*Miyagijima Tochi o Mamoru Kai*), and successfully fended off *Arabia Sekiyu's* (Arabia Oil) CTS construction, despite the approval of the Miyagi Island's economic development committee.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, in nearby Yonagusuku village, the village council supported the landfill plan of the CTS construction by Mitsubishi Kaihatsu. In September 1972, the Yara prefecture government authorised Mitsubishi's land reclamation of 640,000 *tsubo* (2,136,347.18 square kilometres) between Henza and Miyagi islands. The landfill work started in the following month.

In September 1973, the anti-CTS local residents of a mostly fishing population formed the Kin Bay Protection Society (*Kinwan o Mamoru Kai*). The Kin Bay Protection Society repeatedly visited the prefecture government and Mitsubishi, demanding to stop the landfill work and protesting against the CTS construction in the area. In September 1974, six village fishing people in Teruma District and the Kin Bay Protection Society brought the case to the Naha District Court, claiming that the Okinawa prefecture government's authorisation of the land reclamation project was illegal.

The defendant of the case was the progressive Yara prefecture government, whom the plaintiff had voted for, and was politically associated with. The progressive political parties and unions constituted Governor Yara's support base, his platform stressed 'anti-militarism and peace in Okinawa'. However, after the reversion, those who regarded the introduction of polluting industries as a new form of colonisation of Okinawa by mainland Japan grew critical of the Yara Administration. The member organisations of the progressive parties and unions that supported the Yara government, such as the Prefecture Workers' Union (*Kenshokurō*), Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee (*Kenrōkyō*), and the High School Teachers'

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<sup>6</sup> In November 1972, the representative of the committee requested the Yara Government to facilitate *Arabia Sekiyu's* (Arabia Oil) operations (Yara 1986: 269).

Union (*Kōkyōso*) all expressed their opposition to the CTS construction (Yara 1985: 270). Yara took this seriously and announced on 19 January 1974 his intention not to authorise petroleum industries' quotas for CTS construction (Yara 1985: 278), as well as requesting Mitsubishi to introduce other industries than CTS, on the reclaimed land. In this '1.19 statement', Yara emphasised the need for an accommodation of the popular feeling against environmental destruction (Yara 1985: 275).

In May, Mitsubishi completed the land reclamation, and requested the local government to authorise the CTS construction. The Kin Bay Protection Group members, banding together in a group of 40–50, frequently demanded direct negotiation with Yara, pressuring him to immediately refuse Mitsubishi's application. A group of attorneys, who associated themselves with the 'progressive' political camp and called themselves the Progressive Attorneys' Organisation (*kakushin bengodan*), submitted to Yara an opinion statement that demanded the rejection of Mitsubishi's application. Otherwise, the attorneys warned, they would publicise that the Yara Administration's permission of landfill project was illegal in the first place, because the necessary procedures to compensate the locals for their fishing rights were not taken. Yara, however, authorised Mitsubishi's CTS construction, fearing litigation made by the company for inflicting financial damage of 50 billion yen, which would have far exceeded the prefecture's annual budget of 20 billion yen (Yara 1985: 278–9).<sup>7</sup> In court, the prefecture government argued that it was impossible to undo the land reclamation. The case ended in the plaintiff's defeat. As a result, the construction of CTS tanks proceeded, making the Kin Bay area a major crude oil station.

In terms of outcomes, the Kin Bay struggle was a defeat. The recourse to legal action, thus far a common strategy of the 'Okinawa Struggle', failed again. However, an embryo of a 'new social movement' was germinating among the Kin Bay

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<sup>7</sup> The Kin Bay Protection Group tacitly obtained the opinion statement submitted to Yara from the attorneys, and sued the Yara government over the unconstitutional landfill authorisation. However, the attorneys refused to fight against the progressive governor and did not participate in the court case (*Kinwan o Mamoru Kai* 1978: 3).

residents, which cannot be discerned in the superficial upshot of the CTS dispute. This will be elaborated further in the following sections.

### **The New Ishigaki Airport Construction Dispute: a Brief Outline**

Shiraho is a small hamlet on the east coast of Ishigaki Island (Map 7.2). In 1979, the prefecture government announced a plan to construct an airport on a coastal area next to the hamlet. In the following decade, this hamlet, with a population of a mere 2,000, became the centre of political activism that expanded into a well-known, exceptionally successful, movement that involved support from Okinawa Island, mainland Japan and overseas (see Suzuki & Oiwa 1996: 295–307).

In July 1979, Ishigaki City and Okinawa prefecture governments announced a plan to construct a new airport on Ishigaki Island. In support of this plan, 88 unions and organisations, most of them based in Ishigaki City, formed the New Ishigaki Airport Construction Promotion Organisation (*Shin Ishigaki Kūkō Kensetsu Sokushin-Kyō*). The next day, the organisation designated the construction site as the coastal area next to Shiraho hamlet, without any preliminary investigation of the area. The project for the new airport, which required a 2,500 metre runway and drastic landfill on the reef next to Shiraho, required the demolition of a mountain (locally called *karadake*) adjacent to Shiraho hamlet to obtain soil and sand. The Japanese government guaranteed a special subsidy of almost 30 billion yen for the project.

The local residents in Shiraho had not been consulted prior to the selection of the construction site. Shocked by the news, residents had a general meeting at the Shiraho Community Centre (*shiraho kōminkan*) in December 1979. The Shiraho Community Centre was the administrative body of the hamlet, in which important decisions were made. Agreed by every single villager present at the meeting, the Community Centre decided to oppose the airport construction no matter what it took. In November 1980, the anti-airport villagers formed a local opposition group, *Shin Ishigaki kūkō Shiraho Chiku Kensetsu Soshi Iinkai* (the Shiraho District Opposition Committee Against the Construction of New Ishigaki Airport).



In Ishigaki Island, the Shiraho Community Centre was the only opposition force. Late Shiraho fisherman Maedomari Shoei recalled that the mayor of Ishigaki City said, ‘The small number of Shiraho residents should ‘close their eyes’ and take the suffering for the benefit of the bigger, 40,000 Ishigaki citizens’ (Noike 1990: 66). It seemed as if the airport construction was going to be enforced, silencing the voice of the minority, in the little-known, southwest tip of the Ryūkyū archipelago.

However, in the following decade, the anti-airport Shiraho activists and a wide network of external supporters turned around their predicament. Even without the construction of the airport, red soil inflows from the Todoroki River had effectively damaged the beautiful and unique coral around Ishigaki Island. Coral in Okinawa in general is severely endangered, especially since the intensive development of harbours and roads at the time of the Okinawa Marine Exposition in 1975. In Ishigaki Island, a series of ‘land improvement schemes’ of the farmland, implemented by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, caused the red soil to flow into the ocean, and to kill the coral (McCormack 1998a: 27–8, World Wide Fund Nature for Japan 2001, Noike 1990: 24–33). However, in the ocean adjacent to Shiraho hamlet remained more than 120 species of coral, including the blue coral, one of the oldest and most rare kinds in the world. Public awareness about the importance of Shiraho’s coral reefs grew to a point that the politicians could no longer ignore it. In May 1988, then Minister of Transport Ishihara Shintarō expressed his concern with the impact of the airport on the Shiraho marine environment (*Mainichi Shinbun* 28 June 1988). Influenced by criticisms from influential scientists against the airport construction from the perspective of preservation of the rare coral species, in August 1987 the Environment Agency of the Japanese government commented that the blue coral colonies in Shiraho would not be able to survive the new airport construction on the Shiraho reef. Following this comment, Okinawan Governor Nishime (1978–90) announced a reduced length of the runway from 2,500 to 2,000 metres (Sugioka 1989: 152–3).

In 1991, Governor Ōta announced that the New Ishigaki Airport would not be built on Shiraho reef, in consideration of the extensive interest in coral conservation

from the locals and abroad. The power of the Shiraho residents' movement in conjunction with a nation-wide and global network of citizens' environmental movement presided and, thus far, the Shiraho struggle was a rare success. Although this 'success' was temporary and the New Ishigaki Airport dispute is yet to be resolved,<sup>8</sup> Shiraho was a struggle that left a strong legacy in the community of protest in Okinawa that provided a model repertoire of protest — to gain support globally — thus constituting a distinctive part of the lineage of an 'Okinawan struggle'. The following sections delve further into how this has been the case.

### **Kin Bay and Shiraho: Emergence of 'New Social Movements'?**

#### *Organisation and Participants*

Both Kin Bay and Shiraho represented cases of residents' movements (*jūmin undō*), a type of collective action made by the people concerned with the issues that affect the living conditions of the communities they reside in. The main actors of the Kin Bay and Shiraho struggles were residents and a network of sympathetic citizens who lived in other places. The central instigators of protest were the residents in the community, rather than the traditional leading figures of the anti-establishment political activities in Okinawa, namely, progressive political parties, workers' unions and teachers' associations.

It was not just in Okinawa that 'residents' were showing their presence as subjects of grass-root protest. In mainland Japan, in the aftermath of the *Ampo* protest in 1960, large-scale, centralised and established organisations affiliated with the JCP and JSP were increasingly susceptible to internal conflicts and fragmentation. As the public disillusionment with the leftist organisations — preoccupied with

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<sup>8</sup> The construction site was moved to Miyara Makinaka, further inland from Shiraho (Map 7.2). The Miyara residents, mostly farmers, firmly opposed the airport construction. Even though the necessity of a new airport was general agreed in Ishigaki Island and Yaeyama region, the project came to a halt. In March 2000, a Prefecture committee, specifically set up by the Inamine prefecture government to solve the protracted New Ishigaki Airport problem, selected a new construction site in the Kara Mountain area, again, immediately next to Shiraho. If built, the wall of the new airport would be right in front of the Shiraho reef, where the world heritage coral is. The main opponents of this site, convinced of the destructive impact of the predicted red soil effluent on the coral reefs, have been non-governmental environmentalist organisations such as the World Wild Fund for Nature Japan (WWFJ) and the Japan Union for Nature Conservation (*Zenkoku Shizen Hogo Rengō*).<sup>8</sup> However, this time, the residents' opposition movement that expanded globally in the 1980s was not to be repeated. Residents' movements, in general, are an extremely difficult and exhausting business, which involve emotional conflicts, especially with other local residents.

organisational survival and sectarian struggles — prevailed, awareness of the importance of political participation of individual ‘citizens’ became increasingly prominent. Sasaki-Uemura explains that ‘the notion of the citizen subject’ was a reaction against the dominance of the ‘Marxist framework’ and ‘the proletarian working class as the agent of social transformation’. The Japanese word *shimin* (citizen) carried an expectation of enlightened individuals ‘as the agent of history’, and instilled a need for the ‘heart and spirit of democracy’ (Sasaki-Uemura 2001: 31–2).<sup>9</sup> The citizen subject emphasised the significance of the spiritual element in political activism of the individual, which the 1947 Japanese Constitution promised. Emphasis on the independent individuals’ political participation was the most remarkable feature of the residents’ movements as a ‘new avenue of citizen participation and as a new political force in Japan’ (McKean 1981: 5–6).

Citizens’ movements and residents’ movements are terms that are used interchangeably. However, in the Okinawan context, an important difference exists between the direct subject *vis-à-vis* external ‘supporters’, who participate by supporting the residents’ movement in a community they do not live in, and those that do. A particular status is attached to local residents of these protest communities, and the boundary between the ‘residents’ and ‘supporters’ is significant.<sup>10</sup>

The late Asato Seishin was a former schoolteacher and a resident of Yakena village near Kin Bay, a founder of the Kin Bay Life Protection Society and its most respected and vocal member. Sakihara Seishū, a former schoolteacher and member of the Kin Bay Life Protection Society, recalls that Asato was openly critical of the left-wing political parties, trade unions and the coalition. In his opinion, in order to really represent the interests of the local residents, local residents needed to ‘organise

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<sup>9</sup> This expectation often results in disappointment with the ignorant and unenlightened ‘mass’, as witnessed in the lament of leading activists such as Ikemiyagi and Yonemori towards the immaturity of the Japanese masses when it comes to their apathy towards participating in collective action to enhance the public good as ‘citizens’ (Yonemori, Interview April 1999, see Ikemiyagi’s interview in chapter 6).

<sup>10</sup> McKean notes, accurately, ‘The Japanese refer to any protest movement consisting of residents of a particular locality as ‘residents’ movements’ (*jūmin undō*), but sometimes reserve the term ‘citizens’ movements’ (*shimin undō*) for the most experienced groups, those which use the most sophisticated political tools and which become principally concerned with the issue of citizen participation (McKean 1981: 6). The most often used example of a citizens’ movement, in this sense, is the Beheiren movement.

and do things themselves' (Sakihara, Interview April 1999). Asato stresses the need for the local residents to separate their struggle from external organisations, which participated in the Kin Bay struggle from the mainland and other parts of Okinawa, through activities such as demonstrations and court cases. In his oral record of the Kin Bay struggle, *Umi wa Hito no Haha de aru* (Ocean, Our Mother), he points out that the external supporters often tried to be 'movement instructors', told the residents what to do, and took the struggle away from the locals (Asato 1981: 141).

We have seen *Kakushin* (progressive) political figures, who have expressed opposition to the military bases and CTS construction, in the end give in to the state and big companies. Even progressive governors Yara and Taira (in office from 1976–8) did not make any difference. Being left-wing or right-wing is irrelevant. We, the locals, must fight our own struggle to protect our ways of living (Asato 1981: 44).

Asato stresses that the Kin Bay Life Protection Society does not have representatives or leaders. In his words, 'each one of the residents is the representative of the movement' (Asato 1981: 42). According to Asato, this organisational principle derives from the most important aim of the Kin Bay Life Protection Society, which was to establish and to transform *jiko* (self), that is, to enhance awareness of the autonomy based on the pride in one's own distinctive lifestyle rooted in the particular local environment. Only in this way does one develop the ability to reject the government's policy that destroys such a lifestyle (Asato 1981: 41–2).

The receding presence of progressive parties and unions as protest actors was a more definitive characteristic in the Shiraho struggle than the Kin Bay struggle. In the initial stage of the Shiraho anti-airport struggle, progressive parties and unions — the 'usual suspects' who normally participated in peace movements and anti-state movements — were not the main actors. For example, the Yaeyama District of the Workers Unions' Council (*Yaeyama Chikurō*)<sup>11</sup> initially joined the New Ishigaki Airport Construction Promotion Organisation, supporting the construction of the new airport. Other progressive Yaeyama divisions of the Okinawa Teachers' Union and Highschool Teachers' Union, as well as the Yaeyama Public Workers' Union (*jichirō*) followed suit. The anti-airport Shiraho residents' organisation, the Shiraho District

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<sup>11</sup> *Yaeyama Chikurō* is affiliated with other District Union Councils in Okinawa and the Okinawa Peace Movement Centre.

Opposition Committee, was the only organisation that represented opposition against the airport. Ishigaki City's mayor was a progressive OSMP member, and one of the most important supporters of the new airport.

Ishigaki public opinion generally strongly supported the new airport. Since the reversion, local villages and cities were losing economic self-sufficiency and increasing their dependence on public works and projects funded by the government. In Ishigaki City, many people expected from the new airport construction a booming construction industry, which would have created instant income and lots of temporary jobs. Some farmers expected the new airport, with the capacity to accommodate bigger aeroplanes, would enable them to transport by air and sell more off-season agricultural products grown in a much warmer climate than elsewhere in mainland Japan. In Shiraho, too, there were residents who supported the airport, mainly those engaged in local construction and sand mining companies. These people distanced themselves from the Shiraho Community Centre and formed a separate administrative body, the Shiraho First Community Centre. Thus, the airport plan divided the small Shiraho community into two camps, building up antagonism among friends, families and relatives (Yonemori Yūji, Interview 13 April 1999).

Because isolation made it extremely difficult for the Shiraho residents to sustain sole opposition to the airport project within Ishigaki Island — both financially and psychologically — external support from the environmentally concerned and nature-loving population, often dwelling in urban areas, became a crucial element. Mukaezato Kiyoshi, then leader of the Committee, flew to Naha and sought help from Yonemori Yūji, a Shiraho-born university philosophy professor. Yonemori organised the Volunteer Association of Shiraho-Born Residents against the New Ishigaki Airport (*Shin Ishigaki Kūkō ni Hantai suru Okinawa Zaijū Shiraho Kyoyū Yushikai*) in 1981. Yonemori formed this group with other schoolteachers and university lecturers living in Okinawa from Shiraho to support the local protest.

In 1983, Yonemori and his colleagues advertised a message, to appeal against the construction of the New Ishigaki Airport in Shiraho, in a local newspaper, *Ryūkyū Shimpō*, using a vivid photograph of the colourful Shiraho reef taken by a professional

photographer for a commercial purpose.<sup>12</sup> Yonemori and his fellow members made posters with this picture and an anti-airport message, which were distributed everywhere in Okinawa. The posters and the advertisement raised a high level of interest from the people living in other parts of Okinawa and in mainland Japan. A lot of people told Yonemori how they could not believe such a beautiful ocean and coral existed (Yonemori, Interview 13 April 1999).

In July 1983, members who lived in the Yaeyama region (such as Ishigaki City) other than Shiraho formed the Concerned Citizens' Group against the Airport (*Kūkō Mondai o Kangaeru Shimin no Kai*). Yonemori formed a new group called the Okinawa, Yaeyama and Shiraho Ocean and Life Protection Group (*Okinawa, Yaeyama, Shiraho no Umi to Kurashi o Mamoru Kai*), based in Naha, with other concerned Okinawan citizens. In Tokyo, some 50 people who had visited the region and held strong attachments to the ocean in Shiraho formed the Yaeyama and Shiraho Ocean Protection Group (*Yaeyama Shiraho no Umi o Mamoru Kai*). The Protection Group in Tokyo included a member of the Upper House, Minobe Ryōkichi, which helped attract publicity (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 17 May 1984). In Osaka, sympathisers formed an anti-airport group (*Ishigaki, Shiraho no Umi ni Kūkō o Tsukurasenai Osaka no Kai*). In Kobe and Kyoto, similar groups were formed.

Thus, the Shiraho coral conservation movement involved numerous small groups with usually not more than 100–150 members each, which expanded into a loose network that transcended the local community and extended worldwide. However, this also meant that many different groups with different capabilities and characteristics were involved in the same struggle. The engagement of many actors and supporting activists with different goals, motivations and preferred strategies subtly different from each other, at times contradicted those of the Shiraho residents and threatened the autonomy of the Shiraho District Opposition Committee (Anonymous activist, Interview 1999).

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<sup>12</sup> The photograph was given to the local fisher folk who guided the photographer on a boat, and was passed on to Yonemori (Yonemori, Interview 13 April 1999).

In order to minimise inter-group conflicts, Yonemori explains, ‘We (Shiraho struggle supporters) deliberately distanced our activities from political parties and workers’ unions, which tended to allow the organisations’ interests and priorities to control the direction of the movement’ (Interview April 1999). Activist lawyer Maeshiro considers that the Shiraho struggle was successful, partly because ‘Shiraho residents and non-resident participants made it clear that the political parties were not welcome, they brought in their own egos, policies and strategies. There was a clear consensus that the centre of the movement was the Shiraho District Opposition Committee. External organisations and sympathisers, including the Okinawa, Yaeyama and Shiraho’s Ocean and Life Protection Group, based in Naha, were ‘supporters’ (Maeshiro, Interview May 1999). The main concern of the actors was to prevent their local residents’ opposition cause being diluted by external parties’ vested interests.

Yonemori observes that the Shiraho residents and activists learned from the Kin Bay struggle, that supporters from outside at times disturbed the residents’ involvement in anti-CTS activities by bringing their own internal conflicts and creating divisions and tensions among the participants. A member of the Kin Bay Life Protection Society observed that the Kin Bay struggle relied on the Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee, the Central Branch (*Chūbu Chikurō*), for financial support and mobilising demonstrations and rallies (Haemi 1984: 21), with supporters from mainland Japan and the students’ New Left organisations<sup>13</sup>. The residents who joined the Kin Bay Protection Society learned the hard way that progressive political parties and unions’ participation tended to interfere with resident-centred collective action (Yonemori, Interview April 1999).

#### *Collective Identity and a Framing of Protest*

As the agency of protest expanded from established political parties and unions to conscious citizens acting as individuals, collective identity — defining who ‘we’ are

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<sup>13</sup> These organisations are often called ‘sects’, or factions, such as *Chūkaku* and *Kakumarū*, ‘both directed by the parent organisation *Kakkyōdo*’, which is a nation-wide students’ movement faction. These groups are often in conflict with each other (Steinhoff, 1984: 182). On students’ movements and sects, see, for example, (Kelman 2001, Steinhoff 1984, Takazawa 1996, Wheeler 1979)

and why ‘we’ protest — also went through a significant shift. In the process of collective action to protect the natural environment, the resident participants in the protest came to realise and emphasise the value of a distinctive lifestyle specific to their localities. This emphasis was quite different from the ‘Okinawan’ collective identity of protest against the US military administration, motivated by ‘reversion nationalism’. Rather than demanding Okinawa’s inclusion as part of Japan, residents who protested against CTS and the New Ishigaki Airport defined themselves in their own words — rather than according to official party lines or slogans — positively approving their ‘local’ characteristics in defining who they were. The meanings attached to the act of protest also derived from this fortified emphasis on ‘localness’ as a source of collective identity.

The emphasis was on autonomy, rather than assimilation to Japan. This was underpinned by the repudiation of dependency on immediate incomes gained by accepting environmentally hazardous industries and military bases. Thus, the Kin Bay struggle sent messages that appealed to many anti-base Okinawans, who were aware of the local economy’s increasing loss of autonomy to the Japanese government’s subsidies. This message was an expression of a particular ethical position about the meaning of life, especially the meaning of ‘affluence’. One of the expressions of this collective identity based on local pride was an attempt to develop locally specific industries to acquire the means of living. In the case of the Kin Bay struggle, the importance of local industry, such as *mozuku* seaweed growing, was stressed as a potentially lucrative alternative source of income to accepting the CTS. During the anti-CTS struggle, ‘I would rather eat sweet potatoes under the blue sky, than steaks in a big house’ was a favourite saying among the local CTS opponents (Sakihara, Interview April 1999).

Similarly in Shiraho, it was the coral and the ocean that defined the residents’ collective identity in the anti-airport protest. In Shiraho, residents were mostly content with the old-fashioned, slow lifestyle based on part-time farming and



fishing.<sup>14</sup> However, Yonemori explains that it was not easy for most of the Shiraho residents to see the special value of the ocean that they saw every day. Some local residents saw the ocean as something common, not particularly special. Initially, noise and disruption of serenity were the locals' main argument against the airport. Yonemori was frustrated that the locals could not fathom at first the value of the Shiraho coral reefs, though that was stressed by the conservationists who lived in big cities. He contended to the Shiraho residents, 'We can't win by complaining about the noise. We really need to stress the coral conservation, in order to stop the airport' (Yonemori, Interview 13 April). Journalists and divers came from outside, and reported in various media the unique lifestyle of Shiraho closely attached to the natural environment, with colourful photographs of the reef and marine life (For example Yoshimine 1991).

Gradually, many locals came to express pride in their ocean. They started to see the lifestyle in Shiraho epitomised a different kind of 'affluence' from that defined by advanced infrastructure and abundant cash. Shiraho was an ideal place to live for someone who wanted a calm, relaxed life listening to the sound of the ocean, away from automobiles and karaoke noise. Many older Shiraho residents particularly enjoyed the lifestyle of going to the ocean collecting food during the day and watching the ocean waves lapping in and out in the evenings. A comment made by an elderly anti-airport Shiraho resident, 'If you don't have lots of cash, does it mean you are poor?' appealed to many supporters (Yonemori, Interview 13 April 1999).

Indeed, seeing themselves as residents of a unique and wonderful place, rather than a small, impoverished region, enhanced the protesters' confidence in themselves. Residents in Kin Bay lived in multiple villages and districts around Kin Bay, including Yakena, Yonagusuku, Gushikawa, Henza, and islands such as Tsuken and Miyagi (Map 7.1). Even though closely located near to each other, each of the small villages and districts formed a distinctive community, with its own social and cultural

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<sup>14</sup>In Shiraho, one does not need to be a trained professional fisher to obtain fish, seashells and sea grasses. Farmers, housewives, old people and children obtained their daily food supplies and pocket money by collecting fish and sea grasses (*Aosa* is one of the typical kinds). In 1979 a local newspaper reported a farming Shiraho woman commented, 'I can make 10,000–15,000 yen a day, by collecting *aoasa*' (*Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun* 31 January 1979).

traditions, as well as political problems and inter-community rivalries. For the residents, participation in community events was part of their daily lives, participating in protest was integrated into these events. During the six years of the Kin Bay struggle, traditional festivals and rituals specific to central and east coast Okinawa — the annual dragon boat races, tug-of-war rope competitions, dancing festivals<sup>15</sup> and farming product expositions — occurred as this area provided a venue to enjoy and live the traditional lifestyle and culture of the community.<sup>16</sup> These community events and cultural revivalism were part of protest activities against the CTS construction.<sup>17</sup> Asato Seishin considered it necessary for the residents' movements to 'clearly express who we are, in the process of opposition, in order to demonstrate why we would not live according to the state policy, and why we are right' (Asato 1981: 41–2).

For the anti-CTS Kin Bay residents, Ryūkyū poetry provided a powerful way of expressing oneself. Ōshiro Fumi, a 79-year-old female Yakena resident, participated in rallies and demonstrations against CTS with her colleagues at her local seniors' club (Interview May 1999). Ōshiro was particularly skilled in expressing the villagers' feelings in her Ryūkyū poetry. She started reading out her poetry at a protest one day when the riot police stopped the villagers from demonstrating against Mitsubishi. Ōshiro found that the poem she read out, which 'made fun of the arrogance of the police', had the effect of intimidating the riot police mentally, encouraged, she started making more protest poems, which she read to everyone at rallies and demonstrations (cited in Asato 1981: 168–70).<sup>18</sup> Her poems were capable of energising the protest when the participants were intimidated by pressure from the state, police and Mitsubishi. Sakihara recalls Ōshiro was like a 'goddess' to the struggle (Interview May 1999).

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<sup>15</sup> In particular, in this region, traditionally, female dance meetings (*usudēku*) and youth dancing festivals (*eisah*) are performed annually.

<sup>16</sup> However, bringing in bipartisan political issues has created internal conflicts among villagers in Yakena, for example (Ōshiro Fumi, Interview May 1999).

<sup>17</sup> Since the anti-CTS protest activities in the 1970s, Ōshiro, with other villagers, for example, engage in researching classical songs and dances in *usudeku*. (Interview May 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Quoting the local newspapers' report that a police officer had committed trespass, sexual assault and murder of a female university student, Ōshiro's poetry read, '*Junsa gwa nukurenu, Kenri fuimawachi, Yuruya innai, Inagu sagute*' (An authoritative police officer during the day is a dog at night going after women) (Ōshiro cited in Asato 1981: 168).

Elderly women and housewives constituted the major participants in the protest and were also given special roles in the Kin Bay struggle. Sasaki-Uemura comments that the ‘numerical dominance’ of women came to be regarded as ‘a defining characteristic’ of residents’ movements in mainland Japan (Sasaki-Uemura 2001: 146). While men were increasingly detached from the communities they lived in,<sup>19</sup> women predominantly engaged in community activities especially related to domestic, reproductive life matters, such as consumers’ rights, education, health, and protection of the environment. For example, women played a leading role in initiating the anti-cement factory protest in Kazanashi hamlet in Usuki, Ōita Prefecture, where men tended to be absent from home on long-distance fishing trips (Matsushita 1999). In Okinawa, too, female-specific features were emphasised in residents’ movements, which were absent in traditionally dominant labour movement organisations with connections to established political parties and unions, driven by Marxist dogmas and ideologies.

Throughout Okinawa’s history, women have been associated with a spiritual role as shamans, connecting the people to gods specific to the local communities. A photographer, Higa Yasuo, from central Okinawa, summarises the female features that are important for the collective identity of the residents’ movement in Okinawa, defined in terms of attachment to the place they lived:

The centre of *shima* society was women.<sup>20</sup> We can see the traces of that time in many of the rituals we still have on remote islands. The sacred places, called *utaki*, are still found all over the islands. To me these are what is left of the sacred forests where women-gods lived. So today men are still forbidden to enter many of the *utaki*, and the gods who appear in the rituals are women. It is clear that in the ritualistic tradition the people have believed they are worshipping women and the matrilineal order (Higa cited in Suzuki & Oiwa 1996: 95) .

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<sup>19</sup> Sasaki-Uemura explains a general factor that constrained participation in residents’ movements in the 1960s and 1970s, with regards to mainland Japanese men:

They generally had to commute farther to and from work, and they increasingly were expected to engage in after-hours activities with their co-workers. They were thus for the most part physically absent from the places they lived. Hence, few men felt free enough from work-related constraints to become involved in these movements (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001: 145–6).

<sup>20</sup> The direct translation of *shima* society is ‘island society’, but ‘closed, small community’ is a more accurate meaning of the term.

Asato and his colleague from Amami went to speak to a local shaman (called *yuta* in the local language) about their protest against the CTS (Asato 1981: 59–60), not to a professional union or party activists in Naha.<sup>21</sup> Irei Takashi, a non-resident supporter who used to be an avid campaigner for reversion, observed in a protest camp in Yakena in October 1981, that central events were tasting local foods and enjoying traditional singing and dancing, which required the local elderly women’s contribution (*CTS Soshi Toso o Hirogeru Kai* 1981: 234–7).

Nevertheless, numerical expansion of women’s participation did not necessarily mean that residents’ movements were less male-centric. Traditional ‘female’ roles, which enhanced the connection with the local-specific identity, were ‘rediscovered’ by the male organisers of the residents’ movement, and incorporated by them into their struggle. Women were often collectively referred to as ‘mothers’ (*anma tachi*), without names (perhaps except for the poet Ōshiro Fumi). The use of the ‘female’ was, therefore, strategic to some extent.

The struggles in Kin Bay and Shiraho marked the importance of post-materialist views of ‘affluence’ that became part of the slogan and emphasis of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ after the reversion. Following the reversion, attachment to the traditional lifestyle embraced in the local-specific natural environment, away from the mainland-style industrialisation and development, continued to define who ‘we’ were, and gave meaning to locally oriented protest. I call this a ‘localist’ framing of protest. During the long ‘low’ period between the second and third island-wide post-war collective actions of the Okinawan people that followed the reversion, this ‘localist’ framing of protest emerged and developed, and continues to define much of what the Okinawans’ protest is about.

#### *Strategy and Repertoire of Protest*

One of the elements that worked for the residents’ movements in the Shiraho struggle was support from scientists, intellectuals, celebrities and sympathetic outsiders, which extended to the international community of environmentalist and

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<sup>21</sup> They also discovered that one of the *utaki* was contained within the CTS site, which provided another incentive to fire up opposition (Asato 1981: 60).

conservationist movements. Seeking and accepting support from specialists and activists from other parts of the world became part of the repertoire of the community of protest in Okinawa. Support from external experts has become a common repertoire of protest among many of the Okinawan ‘new social movements’.

In March 1986, the Okinawa prefecture government appointed fourteen members to form the New Ishigaki Airport Discussion Committee (*Shin Ishigaki Kūko Mondai Konwa-kai*).<sup>22</sup> Based on an advisory statement of the Discussion Committee, in July the prefectural government issued the Environmental Impact Assessment of the New Ishigaki Airport construction plan, and made it public.<sup>23</sup> The Assessment basically approved the prefecture’s evaluation that Shiraho was the most suitable site for the new airport and the landfill was compatible with coral preservation. Ui Jun pointed out the advisory statement was based on insufficient and unidentified data, and argued that the information related to the environmental effects of the airport was largely kept confidential.<sup>24</sup>

About 70 researchers and professionals in Okinawa and mainland Japan, who similarly questioned the official data on the airport construction project, formed the New Ishigaki Airport Construction Examination Group (*Shin Ishigaki Kuko Kensetsu o Kangaeru Kai*).<sup>25</sup> In their publications,<sup>26</sup> the scholars in the Examination Group

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<sup>22</sup> The members included nine mostly senior professors of biology, marine biology, economics, transport engineering, and social policy from the University of the Ryūkyūs, which was the only state university in Okinawa, and the members were regarded as the most authoritative in their fields. This added weight to the influence of the Committee’s opinion on the legitimacy of the landfill project.

<sup>23</sup> However, Ui witnessed limited public access to the report: the report was put on a small table in the corner of a floor corridor of the Prefecture Hall, blocked by busy office workers passing by. The planners of the airport had a strict policy of secrecy, which gave the impression of dishonesty, and no respect was given to the citizens’ right to access information on public projects (Ui 1986).

<sup>24</sup> Ui Jun is a scientist and environmental activist, specialising in pollution and environmental engineering. His study of the Minamata disease contributed greatly to the Minamata residents’ movement and raised public awareness on the political aspects of industrial pollution (Ui 1968). Ui has also contributed to the development of public education on pollution and environmental issues in Japan by conducting ‘pollution study’ lectures at Tokyo University after hours, which are open to the general public (Ui 1971 [1990]). When he was concerned with the airport construction in Shiraho, he had just moved to Okinawa from Tokyo University to concentrate on the devastating effects of the post-reversion industrialisation policies on Okinawa’s environment (Interview March 1999).

<sup>25</sup> The Examination Group included 27 academic staff from Ryūkyū University and a majority of staff from Okinawa University joined the Examination Group (Sugioka 1989: 146).

systematically overhauled the inadequacy and insufficiency of the content of the government's Environmental Impact Assessment on Shiraho's marine resources and the socio-economic effects of the new airport. However, the audience for their publications was mostly limited to already interested parties in Okinawa and mainland Japan.

The support of an American marine biologist, Katherine Muzik, played a key role with the opposition groups in raising concerns overseas on the political issues threatening the coral reefs in Shiraho. Muzik was living in Okinawa, researching the coral around the islands. In Ishigaki City she made a speech at the first meeting of a citizens' opposition group against the new airport based in the pro-airport Ishigaki City, stressing the value of the rare Shiraho coral reefs and the destructive effect the airport construction would have, from a scientist's perspective (Yaeyama Nippo 11 July 1983). Muzik's research was motivated by her personal distress over the coral that used to decorate the islands of Okinawa in a necklace shape, of which about 95% was killed by the government-funded post-reversion industrialisation projects since the Okinawa Marine Exposition in 1975 in northeastern Okinawa (Muzik 1983, 1992).

In April 1984, the Naha-based Okinawa Yaeyama and Shiraho's Ocean and Life Protection Group asked Muzik and Richard Murphy from the Jacques Cousteau Society to investigate the coral reefs in Shiraho (*Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun*: 21 April, 1984). The aim of the investigation was to disprove the officials' statement that the coral in Shiraho was in worse shape than other areas around Ishigaki. After comparative investigation in Ishigaki waters, Muzik, Murphy and Takaesu Asao, representative of the Okinawa, Yaeyama and Shiraho's Ocean and Life Protection Group, reported that the coral in Shiraho was exceptionally lively and healthy, compared to other areas (*Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun* 24 April 1984).

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<sup>26</sup> The members of the Examination Group based in Naha — Ukai Teruki, Tabeta Masahiro, Fukunaka Ken, Ui Jun and architect Makishi Yoshikazu — issued two booklets: *Problems of the New Ishigaki Airport Construction Plan (shin Ishigaki kūkō kensetsu keikaku no mondaiten)* and *Problems of the New Ishigaki Airport Construction Plan Part II*. The first booklet scrutinised the government's environmental evaluation report of the airport construction (*Shin Ishigaki Kuko Kensetsu o Kangaeru Kai* 1986).

In 1985, Muzik reported the rare value of the coral reefs in Shiraho at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Coral Reefs Conference held in Tahiti, as well as the airport issue that potentially endangered them (Makishi 1997: 215). In November 1987, a delegation from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) came to Shiraho to investigate the coral reefs. Based on this investigation, the 17th General Meeting of the IUCN in San José, Costa Rica in February 1988 passed a resolution on the Shiraho coral reefs. The IUCN urged the Japanese government to reconsider the airport construction project and to form a policy to protect coral in Shiraho, which the Union regarded as world heritage. The Environment Agency representatives joined the meeting, but abstained from the IUCN resolution on Shiraho. Muzik, Takaesu and a Shiraho resident, Yamazato Setsuko, travelled to Costa Rica to attend the meeting. At the meeting, the three lobbied for the resolution by distributing pamphlets, titled *The Heart Dyed in Ocean Colour (Chimu ni Umi Sumiri)*, to the attendees from all over the world. Muzik translated the pamphlet text into English. The pamphlet included colourful photographs of the Shiraho coral and explained the airport construction project and the need to stop it. Makishi Yoshikazu, an architect and member of the Naha-based Okinawa, Yaeyama and Shiraho Ocean and Life Protection Group, who was responsible for making the pamphlet, was told by the three Okinawa delegates that the conservation campaign targeting local delegates with hand-made pamphlets was a novel introduction to the IUCN meeting, with a potent visual appeal (Makishi, Interview 20 April 1999).

The IUCN resolution in Costa Rica had the decisive effect of undermining the legitimacy of the airport construction plan in Shiraho. The government moved the construction site four kilometres to the north of Shiraho, to the east of *karadake* mountain. However, the opponents in Shiraho and external supporting organisations continued the protest against the airport project. In August 1990, an IUCN delegation conducted another investigation on the coral reef ecosystem of the newly proposed airport construction site and visited the prefecture government to request another change of the construction site (*Ryūkyū Shimpō*, 30 August 1990). Consequently, another IUCN resolution on Shiraho coral was made at the 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in

Perth, Australia, in 1990. This resolution recommended the prefecture government ‘find an alternative solution to the problem, including extension of the present airport to ensure optimal conservation of the coral reef ecosystem at Shiraho’ (IUCN — The World Conservation Union 1990: 51).

Later in 1992, the president of the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Shiraho, as part of the campaign to protect the Shiraho coral. The support from intellectuals and a British royal put pressure on the Okinawa prefecture government to respond with the official Environmental Impact Assessment, and finally, to give up the airport construction in Shiraho.

Litigation was another common and more traditional strategy of protest of the Shiraho struggle.<sup>27</sup> As activists rather than as lawyers, the attorneys specialising in residents’ protests against the government undertook these cases. One of the Naha-based lawyers who represented the Shiraho fishers was Maeshiro Toshio, also involved in other court cases of the Kin Bay Life Protection Group, then for the anti-war landowners on the Public Property Law, and for the Kadena residents against the US aircraft training noise. Court cases are part of the ‘anti-base movements, just like other protest activities such as demonstrations and handing out flyers. Struggles in courts and other protest activities against the bases and the Japanese government are like two wheels of a cart’ (Maeshiro, Interview May 1999).

Compared to other activities, however, the court cases did not result in revitalising the momentum of protest, and the role of the local residents tended to be much smaller because of the highly technical and time-consuming specialisation required in the court cases. Similarly to the anti-war landowners’ lawsuits, the Attorneys’ Organisation (*bengo-dan*), based in Naha, and a group of Osaka lawyers

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<sup>27</sup>Legally, the airport construction required the local fishing population’s consensus to cancel their allocated fishing right in the area where the landfill was planned. In June 1980, the Yaeyama Fishing Co-operative agreed to sell the fishing right of the Shiraho marine district to the government, despite the opposition of the Shiraho Co-op members, who belonged to the Shiraho Community Centre. The Shiraho fishers filed a court case against the state and the prefecture government. In March 1984, 33 Shirahoans (Fishing Co-op members) made a complaint against the Yaeyama Fishing Co-operative and the prefecture government, on the grounds that the decision was made in a meeting that was not attended by more than half of the union members, and was therefore invalid. The Shiraho residents were confident of victory. However, on 24 December 1985, the Naha Local Court found in favour of the prefecture government and the Co-operative’s argument.



were amongst the supporting organisations of the Shiraho struggle.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the chances of winning court cases against the state were extremely low.<sup>29</sup> Litigation, apart from being a routine publicity-enhancing activity, did not highlight the ‘localist’ characteristic or strength, which rather resided in the resident-centrism and connection to the local-specific lifestyle.

### **Kin Bay and Shiraho in the Lineage of the ‘Okinawa Struggle’**

Collective action based on regional communities (towns, villages and hamlets) had previously existed in Okinawa, such as, most notably, the farmers’ non-violent resistance against the US military since the 1950s in Ie-jima. Arasaki explains the farmers’ anti-base resistance in the Ie-jima struggle, which led to the island-wide demonstrations in the mid-1950s, as a precursor of the residents’ movements. Similarly, the Expand the Anti-CTS Struggle Society (the Naha-based citizens’ ‘supporter’ organisation of the Kin Bay struggle) regarded the farmers’ anti-base struggle in Ie-jima as ‘the origin of residents’ movements’ (*jumin undo no genten*) in post-war Okinawa (*CTS Soshi Toso o Hirogeru Kai* 1981: 20). However, the Kin Bay struggle demonstrated many characteristics that had not been seen in the 1950s Ie-jima struggle (or in similar land struggles in Isahama or Konbu).

Some resident participants in the anti-CTS struggles and Naha-based intellectuals promoted the use of the term ‘*Ryūkyūko*’ (Ryūkyū arc) to describe islands of the Ryūkyū region plus islands south of Amami, which demarcated the new sphere of solidarity. Writer Shimao Toshio originally developed the term *Ryūkyūko* from his writings on ‘Yaponesia’. Yaponesia challenges the idea that the group of islands located to the south of Japan (*nantō*), including Amami and Okinawa and other remote islands, constituted a ‘peripheral’ region or a margin of Japan. Yaponesia is a refusal to see Japan as a monolithic cultural sphere, and provokes the image of the Japanese archipelago as a group of many islands, integrated with the South Pacific islands,

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<sup>28</sup> The Attorney Group based in Osaka with 372 members, since 1988 supported the Shiraho struggle by submitting petitions and providing legal support for the court cases (*Shiraho o Kangaeru Osaka Bengoshi no Kai* 1989).

<sup>29</sup> The Shiraho court cases were mostly cancelled in the middle, in the course of development of the airport issue.

sharing the common cultural diversity of the islands of Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia and Indonesia (Gabriel 1999, Kawamitsu 1987, Okamoto 1990, Shimao 1970, 1977b, 1977c, 1981-3). The political utility of the concept of Yaponesia for Okinawans was taken up by anti-reversionists, who emphasised the importance of Okinawa as an independent entity, from which to resist the post-1972 assimilation process into a monolithic and homogenous entity, 'Japan' (Gabriel 1996: 214–17).

The concept of *Ryūkyūko* allowed the Okinawan activists to cultivate solidarity with Amami activists.<sup>30</sup> Projects of CTS construction were planned in locations across *Ryūkyūko*, such as Yonaguni Island in the southwestern end of the Ryūkyū archipelago, Tarama Island and Edateku Island near Amami Island. Residents in communities near these areas engaged in protests similar to the Kin Bay Protection Group.<sup>31</sup> Despite the geographical and historical closeness,<sup>32</sup> there had been a general sense of distance between activists in the Amami islands and Okinawa. This was mainly because the former returned to Japan in 1954 from US military rule, and had been integrated into the Japanese socio-economic system to a much greater extent than the other islands in Okinawa (*CTS Soshi Toso o Hirogeru Kai* 1981: 12–14).

*Ryūkyūko* was a particularly important term in the construction of the myth of an 'Okinawan' movement. Seeing 'Okinawa' as part of *Ryūkyūko* allowed the activists to recognise themselves as an autonomous equal entity *vis-à-vis* Japan with a distinctive identity, thus overcoming 'reversion nationalism'. The term *Ryūkyūko* was used by Shimao to signify the geographical region placed in the southern margin of Yaponesia, together with the Tōhoku (the northeastern) region in mainland Japan, as an entity with independent cultural coherence, representing 'Japan' in its own ways.

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<sup>30</sup> Shimao focused on aspects of lifestyle in Amami Island in his works as a window that reveals 'simple', 'straightforward' 'pre-modern' elements that are existent but hidden in many places within Yaponesia suppressed under the 'modern' and 'stagnant', 'intellect-driven' face (Gabriel 1996: 211–12). See (Gabriel 1999, Shimao 1977a).

<sup>31</sup> There were residents' groups in each area, including *CTS Hantai Yonaguni Jūmin no Kai* (Yonaguni CTS Opposition Residents' Organisation) and *Uken Mura Edateku Jima Sekiyu Kigyō Yūchi Hantai Sonmin Kaigi* (Uken Village Edateku Island Villagers' Council against Oil Companies).

<sup>32</sup> Amami and surrounding islands, administratively under the Kagoshima Prefecture, used to be part of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, until being separated early in the seventeenth century by Shimazu's colonisation. In this sense, islands of Amami and Okinawa have basic cultural and linguistic commonalities.

*Ryūkyūko* was thus a strategically applied concept, which conceptually established a community of protest among the resident activists with similar local problems.

Residents' movements in *Ryūkyūko* entailed much more than opposition against the CTS construction. Issues of concern included opposition to the construction of nuclear waste disposal sites and campaigns to use soap, instead of chemically manufactured detergent, to protect local waters. These groups held joint meetings, lectures, camps, field trips, and repeatedly held debates with other groups within the *Ryūkyūko* region, which were recorded in a seasonal newsletter, *Ryūkyūko no Jūmin Undō*, published by the Expand the Anti-CTS Struggle Society (*CTS Soshi Tōsō o Hirogeru Kai*). During its active years, the Society attracted new members such as Asato Eiko, Yamakado Kenichi, Morii Yoshikatsu and Abe Ryoichi, who organised, joined and reported on the joint activities of local groups in the region.<sup>33</sup> From the anti-CTS struggles emerged the concept of *Ryūkyūko* as a concept that represented uniqueness and positive values, instead of marginality and backwardness.

As the centres of protest in Okinawa became regionalised and fragmented, activists were simultaneously involved in many different protest activities concerning different issues, overlapping memberships in more than one organisation became increasingly common. Furthermore, supporters of the residents' movements were often engaged in other protest activities in Okinawa. Ex-Kin Bay activist Sakihara 'witnessed the forced land acquisition of the US military in the early 1950s in Isahama', and as a student and schoolteacher, participated in campaigns for reversion to Japan. Sakihara is also a one-*tsubo* anti-war landowner (Interview April 1999).

Arasaki Moriteru, the main instigator of the network of one-*tsubo* anti-war landowners, advocated building solidarity between the anti-war military landowners and the anti-CTS activists. Arasaki organised the Expand the Anti-CTS Struggle Society (*CTS Soshi Tōsō o Hirogeru Kai*) in 1974, together with a veteran activist Irei Takashi, Arakawa Akira and an academic, Okamoto Keitoku, who were both deeply immersed in consideration of Okinawa's future after the demise of the reversion movement. The main purpose of the Society was 'supporting the Kin Bay Protection

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<sup>33</sup> In total, 25 issues of this newsletter were published from July 1977 to September 1984.

Group’ (*CTS Soshi Toso o Hirogeru Kai* 1981: 20–1). It was an attempt to ‘establish a legitimate status of the residents’ movements in the *Ryūkyūko* region in the traditional lineage of the Okinawa struggle since the land struggle in the 1950s, represented by the traditional progressive organisations such as *Iken Kyōtō*’.<sup>34</sup> The intention was to diminish the distance between the residents’ movements and the progressive political organisations based in Naha. At the same time, the Society aimed to ‘set up the venues for flexible and loose solidarity based on communications for various residents’ and citizens’ movements in the region, which tended to confine themselves in respective communities’ (*CTS Soshi Tōsō o Hirogeru Kai* 1981: 20–1). The *Ryūkyūko* concept integrated many, independently unique island societies into one community of protest — whether called ‘Okinawa’ or not — through shared activities of protest.

Importantly, the anti-CTS movement created an opportunity to critically reflect on the reversion movement, and the new direction of the ‘Okinawan’ protest: as a unified concept. This activity was extremely important in creating a sense of continuity for the ‘Okinawa Struggle’, connecting past struggles to the present. In particular, the emotional attachment to *yamato* as ‘the home country’ was criticised as a remnant from the campaign for reversion. Sakihara recalls that his participation in the reversion movement was not motivated by any political awareness other than wishful thinking that a return to Japan would free Okinawans from US military oppression, particularly the forced US land acquisition of the 1950s. After this hope was betrayed, like many other reversion activists, Sakihara ‘questioned the meaning and the outcomes of the reversion movement’, and quit the OTA in 1968. He was also influenced by Arakawa Akira’s anti-reversion thoughts and his anti-state perspective. For Sakihara, the introduction of a polluting industry by the CTS construction project was a clear indication of the ‘colonial subjugation of Okinawa to the mainland Japanese capital, contrary to the principle of self-determination’ that the reversionists aspired for (Interview April 1999).

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<sup>34</sup> Seven years later, the Society wrote, ‘The concept of the *Ryūkyūko* region as a sphere of residents’ movements was now established amongst the movement activists across the region’ (*CTS Soshi Toso o Hirogeru Kai* 1981: 20–2).

Local protest in Shiraho had much in common with that of the residents in the Kin Bay area, against the CTS construction. Former anti-CTS activists had many insights to offer from their experiences, which encouraged the Shiraho resident opponents. Both cases involved major land reclamation projects over the ocean, and disputes with locals who lived on fishing. The Shiraho struggle went through the stages that the Kin Bay Protection Group had experienced. Some of the members of the Okinawa, Yaeyama and Shiraho Ocean and Life Protection Group (based in Naha) were also involved in the anti-CTS protest activities (Yonemori Interview April 1999).

In 1984, five members of the Kin Bay Protection Group visited Shiraho ‘to encourage the local airport opponents not to repeat the fate of Kin Bay’, during which visit they dove into the ocean and saw the coral reefs in Shiraho. They said Shiraho coral looked like what the colonies of coral around Ikei and Tsuken Islands near Kin Bay used to be, which had mostly been killed as a result of CTS construction under the state and prefecture government’s propaganda of promoting ‘development’ and ‘progress’ (Hanashiro 1984). A Kin Bay activist, Hanashiro Seihan, commented: ‘Compared to the reefs here (Shiraho), coral reefs in Kin Bay today look like a coral cemetery’ (*Yaeyama Nippo* 4 May 1984). Apart from providing psychological encouragement, the inter-regional support network integrated the Shiraho struggle as part of the residents’ movements in the *Ryūkyūko* region with the ‘Okinawan’ struggle.

In August 1984, a Ryūkyūko Residents’ Movements Communication Camp (*Ryūkyūko no Jūmin Undō Kōryū Gasshuku*) was held in Shiraho. Originally, Arasaki Moriteru and Asato Seishin started this camp in 1979. In the camp held in Shiraho, about 160 members joined from the Kin Bay Life Protection Society, the Expand the Anti-CTS Struggle Society, and from other residents’ and citizens’ movements in the *Ryūkyūko* region, and from mainland Japan. The Shiraho camp was the fifth of the series of annual camps that started in 1979, held every year in Amami Ōshima, Iriomote Island, Yakena in Kin Bay and Miyako Island. Some of the participants wrote articles describing the beauty of the ocean and the coral reefs, the abundance of fish and seafood, and the hospitality of the local Shiraho Community

Centre members (Miyagi 1983, Ōshiro 1983). This camp contributed to establishing solidarity between the Shiraho anti-airport struggle and other residents' movements in the *Ryūkyūko* region.

Another dimension of the Shiraho anti-airport campaign that similarly inspired the struggles in Okinawa was the locals' war experience. Before the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, a Japanese Army airbase was built in Shiraho, and was used as the launching base of the *tokko-tai* (kamikaze) air fighters that flew to the battlefield. The local residents provided labour for the construction of the Japanese airbase, just as happened in Ie-jima, Yomitan and other villages before the Battle of Okinawa. The Shiraho hamlet was raided regularly, and the residents had to evacuate to the nearby mountain without proper food and clothing, and many died of malaria, far more than in air raids and shipwrecks.<sup>35</sup>

In these crises, Shiraho elders often described the ocean as their 'lifeline' (Noike 1990: 14–5). That is, no matter how much the social situation changed, one could always rely on the ocean to sustain one's life as long as the ocean was kept in a healthy state. During the war, the ocean was the only thing they could rely on. They faced starvation because their potatoes and other crops in the farmlands were raided or taken by Japanese soldiers. But, as a seventy-four-year-old Shiraho woman says, 'Our family survived because we could eat fish and sea grasses. We lived on the stuff coming from the ocean. The ocean is life. I cannot stand it to be buried underground. That's why I joined the protest against the plan to build an airport' (quoted in Noike 1990: 22–3).

Residents' experiences during WWII, and their caution toward the possibility that the new airport might be used for military purposes, added further ground for protest. Anti-airport residents and supporters emphasised the danger of the possible military use of the New Ishigaki Airport. The 1979 airport construction plan was to extend the size of the runway to 2,500 metres long and 65 metres wide, from 1,500 metres and 45 metres respectively. For example, the group of Shiraho-born residents

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<sup>35</sup> Out of 34,936 people in Yaeyama region, 54 per cent had malaria and 10.5 per cent died (Noike 1990: 133)

in Okinawa Island who protested against the New Ishigaki Airport construction issued a protest statement emphasising the ‘danger of military use of the airport’ (*Shin Ishigaki Kūkō ni Hantai suru Okinawa Zaijū Shiraho Kyōyū Yūshikai* 1982: 17–9). Shiraho residents’ negative reaction against the fear of another airport construction was connected to the locals’ memory of involvement in war (Noike 1990: 134).

Yamazato Setsuko, a female Shiraho resident and a local opponent to the airport, thinks that the Shiraho struggle against the airport was also a struggle against militarism (Interview May 1999). She is originally from Ishigaki City, and was a member of the Concerned Citizens’ Group, based in Ishigaki City. As a teenager, she worked as a guide and an assistant for an American scholar who was conducting a geological survey of Ishigaki Island. The survey was conducted under the US military government of the time, to provide detailed knowledge about the strategic environment of the island. Yamazato agreed to work for her because she ‘wanted to learn the English language’. Later, using her English-speaking skills, she worked for a US airline company as their first airline hostess from Okinawa. However, she has always felt guilty for collaborating with the US military, mainly because she experienced war, in which she lost her family members. Her determination to act against war in the island again motivated Yamazato to move to Shiraho in 1983, and to engage in the protest activities against the new airport plan (Interview May 1999).

In the Shiraho struggle, the environmental concerns criss-crossed with the pacifist, anti-base concerns, which extends to the struggle against the US bases today. The anti-militarist motivation of the Shiraho struggle was based on the war experience specific to the locality and the idea of the ‘lifeline ocean’, which provided the residents with security that armaments and military bases could not provide. Only 0.2 per cent of the Yaeyama region is occupied by the US military, compared to about one-fifth of Okinawa Main Island (*Okinawa Ken Soumubu Chiji Koushitsu Kichi Taisakushitsu* 2000: 5). However, ‘absolute pacifism’, rooted in the residents’ experience in the Battle of Okinawa, existed in the Shiraho struggle too. Anti-militarism and war experience constitute the unifying fabric running across many struggles in the community of protest in Okinawa, together with the new concept of a *Ryūkyūko* region

as an amalgam of individually unique island societies. In this sense, the Shiraho struggle, just as the Kin Bay struggle did, contributed to the continuation of the lineage of the Okinawa Struggle, in a different direction from that led by ‘reversion nationalism’.

As it expanded into a larger citizens’ movement from a regional conflict confined within Ishigaki Island, the Shiraho struggle drew sympathy from and participation by many left-wing, anti-militarist and progressive Okinawans. Workers’ unions — ‘usual suspects’ in the ‘Okinawa Struggle’ — were initially disengaged, but gradually started to show support for the Shiraho anti-airport residents and their struggle. External organisations were in a more capable position for stating their views in support of the world heritage natural asset, without heeding the economic interests many locals attached to the airport, which prevented the progressive unions and organisations in Yaeyama from participating in the opposition. However, in 1981, Yaeyama District Workers’ Union, which included the Yaeyama Teachers’ Union and High School Teachers’ Union, withdrew from the New Ishigaki Airport Construction Promotion Organisation, after careful internal discussions (*Yaeyama Mainichi Shinbun* 26 August 1981). In 1984, public workers’ unions elsewhere in Okinawa, such as the Municipal Council Workers Unions of Yonabaru Town, Nago City and Naha City, publicly supported the Shiraho anti-airport struggle (Haemi 1984: 21), the Public Workers’ Union (*jichirō*) Okinawa Prefecture Headquarters directly negotiated with the Ishigaki mayor and requested respect for the Shiraho residents’ opposition (*Yaeyama Nippō* 14 April 1984).

Organisations and individuals based in other places participated in the anti-airport protest as ‘supporters’ as environmentalist and anti-militarist ‘citizens’. However, regardless of the degree of influence the ‘support’ had, the subject of protest ultimately rested in the residents within the community where the movement was generated. Similar dynamics existed in the relationship between anti-war landowners and one-*tsubo* landowners, also, between residents and external supporters, with regard to the anti-‘heliport’ struggle in Nago.



## Conclusion

The case studies of the anti-CTS residents' movements in the Kin Bay area and the Shiraho anti-airport struggle marked a new horizon of collective action, which centred around the local: residents in individual communities were the central actors, no matter how remote or small. The centre of gravity of protest tipped towards the residents and a loose network of non-resident supporters, away from the left-wing political parties and workers' unions. As discussed in chapter 6, the coalition of left-wing parties and unions had made an effort to maintain organisational coherence of one 'Okinawan' protest. In contrast, this chapter has examined a different dynamic within the community of protest towards fragmentation, in terms of organisation and collective identities of protest. Although government-led industrialisation and the continued presence of US military bases in Okinawa was the common target of the community of protest, actual protest was motivated by many local identities with different experiences of everyday life, involving a wider range of people who lived primarily as residents in the localities of protest, rather than as subscribers to particular ideologies or established parties and unions. In the process of interaction and solidarity building, the residents intentionally stressed the autonomy and uniqueness of individual communities. External 'supporters' — in particular, from political parties and unions from big cities and mainland Japan — played an important role, but respecting the boundaries between outsiders (supporters) and insiders (residents) became the major tenet of the 'local' framing of protest, which continues today.

However, the emerging awareness of 'local' framing did not terminate — but transformed the nature of — the myth of one 'Okinawan' struggle throughout the post-war era. A sense of solidarity within the community of protest was maintained through a shared repertoire of protest, in particular, sharing strategies of protest. As the centres of protest multiplied, communication and knowledge sharing among different actors across distant geographical regions increased, facilitated by the concept of residents' movements of the *Ryūkyūko* region. Furthermore, the memory of the Battle of Okinawa was also shared, as an important motivation for the residents'

movements, which indicated a common identification with the historical narrative of ‘Okinawan’ marginalisation.

The emphasis on the ‘local’ has also expanded the scope of activity and the supporting network, to the global civil society. It seems paradoxical that a focus on micro-community promotes international interest and activity. Representation in domestic politics, through parties, politics and municipal and national legislatures tends to promote assimilation into the existing Japanese system, especially, full rights as promised under the Japanese Constitution. In contrast, expression of regional distinctiveness has proven advantageous in expanding direct connections with informal global networks of social movements. The cases in this chapter demonstrate that localism provides a strong basis from which to relate to global social movements, in particular, the environmental movements whose activities permeate national borders.

The emergence of ‘local’ framing in the Okinawan community of protest is most relevant to the ‘new social movement’ theory and the increasing importance of post-materialist values, discussed in the introductory chapter. At a time when the high growth economy was coming to an end, and the horrifying environmental effects of blind enthusiasm for industrialisation were a major social concern, the Kin Bay and Shiraho struggles convincingly suggested that the traditional lifestyle in rural Okinawa — even in a remote community in Ishigaki Island — offered an attractive, alternative ‘Okinawan’ collective identity. Activists redirected their preferences from assimilation to positively re-defining ‘Okinawan’ distinctiveness, through discovering values in rural community and traditional lifestyle connected with nature, as an antithesis to the mainland Japanese-style obsession with industrial development. The Kin Bay Life Protection Society’s protest and the Shiraho struggle both articulated the issue that came to occupy the heart of many Okinawans’ protest in the post-reversion era: Okinawa’s dependence on state-endorsed industrialisation, which exhausts local natural resources.

The Kin Bay and Shiraho struggles represent the ‘low’ cycle of protest in Okinawa: in this period, perhaps due to the political structure that favoured increasing

flows of subsidies from mainland Japan through the promotion of industrialisation, local residents' movements did not result in the formation of a big wave of Okinawa-wide protest. Together with the 'constitutionalist' anti-war landowners and the progressive coalition, the 'localist' residents' movements laid the groundwork for constructing a new collective identity of an 'Okinawan' movement, involving many local identities and wider sectors of the population. 'Okinawa' was becoming internally splintered, divided and chaotic, but still represented a unitary community of protest.

## **The Third Wave in the ‘Okinawan Struggle’: ‘Gender’ Framing, the ‘Usual Suspects’ and Local Residents Against the Heliport**

### **Introduction**

As discussed in previous chapters, the ‘Okinawan Struggle’ has been constantly internally divided, in terms of collective identity, organisation and strategy. Some activists have had greater representation as the actors of the ‘Okinawan Struggle’ than others. Nevertheless a unified ‘all-island’ mass protest of the ‘Okinawans’ occurred for a third time in post-war Okinawan history, following the rape of a twelve-year old schoolgirl in September 1995 by three US marine soldiers. This was a quarter of a century since the peak of the previous cycle of protest. This rape case and the islanders’ expression of opposition to the US bases cast a temporary crisis upon the US–Japan security alliance.

Continuing from chapter 7, this chapter examines the complexion of the community of protest after the ‘third wave’ and beyond that is more chaotic and multi-faceted than ever before. It introduces the emergence of the ‘gender’ framing of protest of a group of Okinawan women who took the earliest political action against the rape case. The rape case turned into a political opportunity for locals to express opposition to the continuing heavy burden of the US military bases — long bottled up under the guise of acceptance and perseverance — thus temporarily challenging the US and Japanese security policy. The women’s concerns to do with the military and its violence against women provided a different frame of protest from the traditionally dominant ‘constitutional’ framing, discussed in chapter 6. The first section of this chapter examines the organisation, strategy and collective identity of the women’s movement in Okinawa that came to the fore in 1995. The Okinawan women’s collective action provided a new dimension to the ‘Okinawan struggle’, promoting and appealing to personal day-to-day issues, and ‘protection of human

rights, peace and universal human values' (Arasaki 1997: 166).

For the first time after a long 'low' period of anti-base protest, anti-war landowners, all Okinawan political parties (including the conservatives), workers' unions, women's organisations and citizens' organisations, as well as former Governor Ōta, clearly and firmly expressed Okinawans' grievances against the US military bases at the October 21 rally in 1995, which reverberated worldwide. However, the apparent unity of the powerful all-island protest was only temporary, and deceptive.

This chapter also examines a series of anti-base actions taken by the 'constitutionalist' protesters, including the anti-war landowners, workers' unions, political parties, and Governor Ōta. Basically, the anti-war landowners and local anti-base parties and unions continued with the struggle they had engaged in since reversion. The feminist perspective, and focus on women's issues, has made Okinawan civil society a little more inclusive of the previously disengaged population. However, the 'gender' framing did not replace the dominance of the 'constitutional' framing of protest, organisation and strategy of the 'usual suspects'. Thus, more perspectives and styles of protest in the community of protest came into parallel existence, which made the unity of the 'Okinawan protest' more tenuous. However, the myth of an 'Okinawan struggle' sustained itself, by embracing the growing diversity within the community of protest as they were. The protest actors were tackling many agendas from many perspectives, taking different avenues of protest, which are all located in the common 'Okinawan' historical narrative of marginalisation.

In response to the temporary crisis cast by the rape case, the Japanese and US governments set up a new policy on Okinawa and the bases, with a special budget for economic regeneration and 'reintegration and rearrangement' of the existing US bases. This included the relocation of Futenma Air Station to Nago, that is, the construction of a new, upgraded off-shore base, euphemistically called 'the heliport'.

Henceforth, the protest became conspicuously localised.<sup>1</sup> The temporary united front of Okinawan people's protest disintegrated into plural residents' movements in different communities in Nago and 'external' anti-base groups and organisations elsewhere in Okinawa.<sup>2</sup>

The third section of this chapter examines the anti-base organisations in Nago, their collective action towards a plebiscite in December 1997, in which the diversity within the community of protest and the difficulty of maintaining a unified coalition became clearer. In the anti-relocation struggle in Nago, women and residents' groups increased their presence in the community of protest. These actors in Okinawa have become increasingly capable of transnational activities, with organisations composed of loose and individual-based networks, and a greater focus on informal political activities. These characteristics demonstrate the greater presence of 'new social movements' in the community of protest. However, the anti-base parties and unions' roles still remain prominent and important in terms of representing an anti-base agenda in the formal political arena.

Okinawan anti-base groups mostly recognise and accept their differences, rather than engage in open internecine conflicts with each other. Furthermore, the division of labour signifies a greater depth and distinctive repertoires of protest, in which protesters can stage their own protest in a diverse, but still coherent 'Okinawan' civil society. The idea of an 'Okinawan struggle' has survived, as a flexible, expansive concept, which accommodates many forms of self-expression as part of the 'Okinawan' struggle. However, the emerging strengths of 'new social movements' have yet to result in an effective coalition building by merging with those of traditional unions and parties in a way that would increase the power of the 'anti-base movement' through unified action.

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<sup>1</sup> With regards to other US military facilities across the island, to which the SACO 'reintegration and reduction' plan applied, similar local residents' protest movements occurred, for example, in Urasoe City, where the SACO report suggested the Naha Military Port be relocated.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible to consider that the Okinawans' all-island protest fractured into localised NIMBY politics. Indeed, in each local protest against the US bases relocation, the opposition groups had to compete with pro-base residents who argued for the need for, and benefits of, increased government funding expected from accepting the US military facilities, regardless of their stance against militarism. The most important focus of this chapter, however, remains the dynamics within the opposition camp, namely, the diversity of protest actors in terms of organisation, strategy and collective identity.

## **The Okinawan Women's Movement and the Rise of the Third-Wave 'Okinawan struggle'**

### *Beijing, the 1995 'Girl's Incident' and the 'O21' Rally*

September 1995 was the year the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. A team of Okinawan women, which called itself the 'NGO Beijing 95 Forum Okinawa Action Committee', represented Okinawa. The team participated in 11 workshops, and gave presentations on Okinawan-specific topics: 'The environment and women', 'Ūji zome' (traditional dying as a sustainable local-oriented industry, using sugar cane), 'The structural violence of the military against women', 'Comfort women (during WWII) in Okinawa', 'Action against nuclear weapons', 'War and malaria' (during WWII, especially in the Yaeyama region), 'Women and peace panel exhibition', 'Traditional culture and gender discrimination' 'Aging society and welfare', 'Women and labour', 'The *unai* (Okinawan sister) network' (*NGO Forum Beijing 95 Okinawa Jikko Inukai* 1996).

These women were in Beijing when a girl was abducted and sexually assaulted near Camp Hansen. The local newspapers only reported the rape, in a tiny article, four days later, when the US military refused to hand over the soldiers to the local police.<sup>3</sup> Leader of *Okifuren* (the League of Okinawan Women's Groups), Toguchi Sumiko, recalls even local political parties and anti-base organisations (who routinely make protest statements) were quiet on the topic, as if making a silent agreement not to speak about the rape in public. 'The anti-base activists (the "usual suspects") were silent about the incident as if not knowing what to do' (Toguchi Sumiko, Interview April 1999). This hesitation was out of consideration of the strong sense of shame attached to the rape victim. However, Toguchi phoned the president of the Federation of Okinawan Women's Organisations and prepared a draft statement of protest (Toguchi, Interview April 1999). She took some local newspaper clippings of the incident to the local airport when she met the Okinawan delegate returning from Beijing who arrived home on 11 September, at around 10pm.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, see *Ryukyu Shimpō Sha* 1995: 19.

My colleagues from the NGO Beijing 95 Forum Okinawa Action Committee got off the plane saying, 'We had a great time!' I had to dampen their exuberance: 'Something serious happened'. I showed the article from the local newspaper. Their reaction was, 'We need to do something about this'. Several days later, we had the press conference. After we held a press conference, other prominent citizens' organisations, unions and parties all started to publicly speak against the rape (Interview, April 1999).

Takazato Suzuyo, chair of the Beijing Forum recalls:

I got off the plane, feeling rejuvenated by the discussions and workshops with NGO women from Africa, Cambodia and many other places about military violence towards women. We talked about breaking silence, and confirmed to each other that violence towards women should be treated as human rights abuse. I was determined to keep working to make the Okinawan situation widely known. Toguchi-san came to see me at the airport, which was odd because my house was near the airport. 'Something serious has been going on here.' She showed me the local newspaper articles. I suddenly thought, what was I doing in Beijing? I had neglected what I should have done here' (Takazato, Interview, April 1999).

The NGO Forum 95 Beijing Executive Committee and *Okifuren* held a press conference the next day at 10:30am. In contrast with the silence in Okinawa, major TV networks such as NHK, BBC and about 30 other media companies already knew about the incident and the press conference was widely reported to the world. Takazato Suzuyo, chair of the Beijing Committee, appealed that this rape case must be understood as organisational violence of the military against local women that has always existed in Okinawa, rather than as an exceptional crime committed by individual soldiers. The women's group attacked the sexism and contempt against local women, revealed by the Commander of US forces in the Pacific, Admiral Richard Macke, who commented in an interview that, 'The three servicemen accused of raping a 12-year-old Okinawan girl had been stupid, because they could have used the money paid for the rental car to hire a prostitute' (Purves 2003).<sup>4</sup>

Immediately after attending the Beijing conference, and presenting various aspects of Okinawan women's lives to the participants from all over the world, the members were particularly inspired and full of energy to convert into collective action. The members of the Beijing forum had just consolidated their commitment to take more active roles in addressing the problems to do with military and gendered violence in their community. On 18 November, the Beijing delegation renamed itself the

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<sup>4</sup> After this comment, he resigned (Purves 2003).



Okinawan Women Act Against the Military and Violence.

The women's delegation to Beijing was the first among Okinawan anti-base organisations to take public action on this rape case. Governor Ōta followed suit, by requesting the Japanese government review the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), originally set in 1960. On 20 September, Ōta went to Tokyo to directly negotiate with the Foreign Minister for the revision of SOFA and a correction of the disproportionate military presence on Okinawan soil compared to the Japanese mainland. In particular, the focus was on Article 17, Section 5 (c) of the current SOFA, which prevented local police holding Marine soldiers in custody. This symbolised the power imbalance between the US military and the local residents, unchanged since the period of direct US military rule.

An estimated 85,000 citizens gathered in Ginowan Marine Park, adjacent to the Futenma Air Station on 21 October, where the *Okinawa Kenmin Sōkekki Taikai* (Okinawa Prefecture Citizens' Mass Rally) was held. Local newspaper *Okinawa Times* reported:

‘This is the biggest opportunity ever to speak up for ourselves’, said the body language of the participants at the 21 October Rally... Since the All-Island Struggle in 1955–6 and the reversion movement in the 1960s, we are standing at the third turning point of Okinawan post-war history (*Okinawa Times* 22 October 1995).

The report also commented that the number and the diversity of participants did not match any of the mass rallies held during the reversion movement. The ‘O21’ Okinawa Prefecture Citizens’ Mass Rally was exceptional in post-war Okinawan history because, for the first time since 1956, major political parties and unions formed a united effort to protest against the US military bases. Members of the conservative, pro-industry LDP Okinawa Division and the Okinawa Management Organisation, who had never joined an anti-base collective action since the reversion, co-operated with the anti-base unions and parties, and made speeches on stage.<sup>5</sup> All major citizens’ groups such as the Okinawa Youths’ Organisation, *Okifuren*, the Okinawan Consumers’ Cooperatives, and representing the business sector, the Okinawa

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<sup>5</sup> The managing director of the executive committee of the mass rally was an LDP member of the Prefectural Assembly, Kakazu Chiken (*Okinawa Mondai Henshu Iinkai* 1995: 26).

Management Organisation, joined in organising the rally, except for *Tochiren*.<sup>6</sup>

The rape incident was connected with the concern and frustration of the Okinawan public at the time towards the new ‘post-Cold War’ framework of the continued and enforced US military forces deployment on Okinawa. The ‘Nye Report’,<sup>7</sup> issued in February 1995, by the US Department of Defence justified the status quo presence of the US forces on Okinawa (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region) 1995). Secretariat of the Executive Committee, Tamaki Yoshikazu, a socialist member of the Okinawa Prefecture Legislature, summarised the feelings of the citizens against the bases: ‘The Cold War ended; the role of US forces in foreign countries has changed. Why only in Okinawa do the US forces remain the same? Every political party in Okinawa shares the frustration against the US bases’ (*Okinawa Mondai Henshu Inukai* 1995: 26). The locals were aware that the forces deployed in Okinawa were responsible for regions of security that were no longer confined to the Asia–Pacific region, as they had already been extended to the Persian Gulf (Arasaki 1996: 175–6).

On 28 September 1995, Governor Ōta announced that he would not sign the documents on behalf of the landowners who had refused to consent with the inspection and official documentation of their properties required for further compulsory lease to the US military.<sup>8</sup> His signature was necessary to authorise the state’s compulsory

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<sup>6</sup> The All-Okinawa Landowners Association (*Tochiren*), an influential interest group of landowners who contract with the Japanese government for military land use, boasts 28,000 members. The Association made an organisational decision to abstain from the rally because of a ‘grave concern for the return of private land currently occupied by the US military bases, without sound substitute plans for income’ (*Okinawa Times* 22 October 1995).

<sup>7</sup> The report was written by a Harvard professor, Joseph Nye, employed by the Pentagon to ‘study ‘new threats’ to national security that might justify its expensive presence in other people’s countries’ (Johnson 2000: 47). On Okinawa, the report writes, ‘we will continue to station a Marine Expeditionary Force on Okinawa, and will also continue to forward deploy an aircraft carrier battle group, and an amphibious ready group’ (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (East Asia and Pacific Region) 1995: 25).

<sup>8</sup> One of the procedures required for the public compulsory use of non-contract landowners’ properties by the US Military Special Measures Law was the notification (*kōkoku*) and making the cases for public inspection (*jūran*) by the mayors of the municipalities where the properties in question were located. As an expression of opposition to the US military occupation, mayors of Naha City, Okinawa City, Ginowan City, Chatan town, and Yomitan village had rejected this procedure. Then, the Governor had the responsibility to sign on behalf of the mayors, which was conducted by Governor Nishime of the Okinawa Liberal Democratic Party regularly. In 1990, Ōta had an option to reject this responsibility. However, after much considerations, Ōta agreed to authorise the procedure, on the condition that the central government increase its commitment to the necessary legalisation and financial assistance for future returns of the private properties currently occupied by the US bases (Arasaki 1995: 197–9).

lease of the anti-war landowners' properties to the US military for the terms that were about to expire in May 1997 and March 1996.<sup>9</sup> It was the first case of a Governor's denial to authorise leases for the anti-war landowners' land for military use.

Ōta denies that the 1995 rape case was the direct reason for the refusal to authorise the anti-war landowners' properties' leases. Ōta was a history professor at the University of Ryukyus, elected governor in 1990, supported by the progressive coalition of the local anti-base political parties and workers' unions on the grounds of his anti-military stance. Since the Cold War ceased, 'realignment and reduction' (*seiri shukushou*) of the US bases in Okinawa had been a public request of the Ōta Administration. Ōta's refusal to authorise the leases was consistent with his anti-base policy thus far (Ōta Masahide, Interview April 1999)<sup>10</sup>. However, the internationally well-publicised rape incident and the subsequent rise of the Okinawan people's anti-base sentiment did create a favourable climate for the Governor to refuse the lease authorisation, something that did not exist in 1990.

Funabashi (1997) explains that the post-Cold War security alliance between the US and Japan had been far from a steady relationship: after the Soviet Union lowered its profile as an immediate military threat, the rationale for the security alliance had reduced to regional, remote, hypothetical military threats, namely, China and North Korea. In the context of a 'drifting' alliance that needed constant redefinition of its reason to exist, the 1995 rape case of a girl and the anti-base sentiment in Okinawa almost created a crisis (Funabashi 1997). A mass rally

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<sup>9</sup> As discussed in chapter 6, over a third of the land occupied and used by the US military and the Japanese Self Defence Force is privately-owned properties. After Okinawa's reversion, landowners of these properties received rent from the Japanese government based on legal lease contracts. An estimated 30,000 landowners received annual rents, whereas those who refused to contract received indemnities. Under the US Military Special Measures Law, the US military continued to legally occupy and use these properties owned by the dissenting landowners. Before a crucial legal change in 1997, the Local Autonomy Law required that the mayors of the villages and towns where the properties were located to sign the lease contract of the properties owned by the disagreeing landowners. If the mayors refuse to contract, the responsibility to authorise leases shifted to the governors. According to this rule, in 1990, Ōta had already authorised non-contract landowners' leases.

<sup>10</sup> During his term in office, Ōta travelled to the US every year to directly negotiate with government officials, congress members and state leaders to reduce the military presence on the island. As well as visiting Washington DC every year, the Governor invited members of the US lower house and the Security Committee, journalists, and military advisers to show people's life in Okinawa, crowded amidst the US military facilities. In particular, Ōta argued for the reduction of the US forces in Okinawa, especially the Marines (Ōta & Ikezawa 1998: 53–5).

attended by more than 85,000 locals and the governor's refusal to sign the lease contracts were powerful reminders of the level of Okinawans' antipathy against the US military's crimes and accidents, which had been barely contained by the Japanese government's generous financial compensation. At the 'O21' rally, the Okinawan people's voices were crystallised into two demands: a review of the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) with regards to the local police's right to arrest and to take into custody US military personnel who committed crimes against the local population, and a reduction of the bases in Okinawa. On this day, Okinawans' simmering grievances against humiliation, daily pressure, inconvenience, danger and incursions caused by the US military presence was expressed as one 'Okinawan' voice.

*'Gender' Framing of Protest in the 'Okinawan struggle'*

The girl's rape first seemed to be interpreted as one of the unfortunate but not uncommon incidents that the locals encountered in their daily lives. However, it was turned into a political opportunity to reveal the vulnerability of the US–Japan security alliance and the need for a new rationale to justify the foreign bases' presence in the Cold War era. It was the women's collective action inspired by the Beijing conference that sparked this political opportunity by spearheading the third 'wave' of mass protests. Who were these women, how did they engage in protest, and what was the impact of this female presence in the community of protest?

The most prominent figure in the group of Okinawan women who addressed Okinawan military bases from the feminist perspective is Takazato Suzuyo, who led the Okinawan women's delegate to the Beijing conference. Born in Taiwan to a father who worked for the Japanese colonial government, Takazato returned to Okinawa after the war and joined the Girl Scouts, which was introduced to Okinawa by the Americans in the early 1950s and contributed to reconstructing the social infrastructure in Okinawa that had been completely destroyed by the Battle. Through the Girl Scouts connections she obtained a chance to study in The Philippines for two years from 1961. In the Philippines, Takazato learned about the Japanese military aggression and killings experienced by the Philippine people during WWII, similar in many ways to what Okinawans experienced. After coming back from the

Philippines, Takazato started working for a Christian organisation (Takazato, Interview April 1999).

Since the mid-1960s, Takazato investigated the burgeoning prostitution industry around the US bases and its abusive effects on local women. In the war-torn island where everything was destroyed, prostitution was often the only way to survive for many girls and women who had their husbands and parents killed in war. In fact, prostitution and the sex industry for the US military personnel in Okinawa was a core industrial sector in the local economy. At the same time, the society nurtured persistent contempt towards women who sold sex to the foreign military for a living. Many Okinawan men — who could live and go to school because of the incomes earned by their families' labour in the sex industry — associated the memory of local women flocking around American soldiers with the shame and misery of 'Okinawa' occupied by the US forces.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the social and economic change following the reversion, discrimination and contempt against women — considered to be 'sexual breakwaters' between the US soldiers and 'normal' society — had not changed.<sup>12</sup>

Okinawan woman activists continue to understand and define the problems of US military bases in Okinawa as part of global and local gender issues. As shown by recent studies on gender and militarism, the everyday functions of foreign military service rely on the abuse of women's human rights through prostitution and the sex industry that specifically caters for military personnel, as well as on domestic violence and sexual harassment within the military (for example Enloe 1990, Moon 1997). Before the well-publicised rape in 1995, a small group of well-educated, socially active women had been addressing the problem of military bases in Okinawa, the culture that degrades women's safety and status, and also the patriarchal culture that is lenient to men's involvement in prostitution but marginalises women engaged in prostitution and ignores their well-being at the community level. For these Okinawan

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<sup>11</sup> Easy access to Okinawan women's bodies by the foreign military symbolised Okinawa's body politic humiliated by the US military (see Molasky 1999).

<sup>12</sup> With Okinawa's reversion to Japan, legislation against prostitution was introduced. The sex industry around the bases continued with migrant workers predominantly from The Philippines, who were often trafficked into Okinawa illegally through underground crime syndicates (Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1993).

women, protest against the violence specifically related to the US military bases is integral to the women's movement, defined as a social movement that 'highlight[s] women's specific oppression in relation to men, preventing this from being submerged, amid all the other unequal relationships existing in society' (Rowbotham 1992: 6). I call this perspective of the Okinawan women anti-base activists a 'gender' framing of protest.

Since the reversion in 1972, Takazato, Toguchi and their friends who share similar concerns, started to develop public space to discuss gender issues in Okinawa at the community level (Toguchi, Interview April 1999). At the same time, they brought the Okinawan women's movement to an international audience. They sent delegates to a number of international conferences on women, gender and war and militarism, such as the 1985 International Women's Conference in Nairobi. These were separate from mainland Japanese delegates. International conferences provided opportunities to tell other concerned citizens overseas about the militarised environment in Okinawa and its impacts on women, particularly issues to do with rape of local women by US military staff, and issues relating to the sex industry catering for military personnel. They also talked about the 'comfort stations' in Okinawa during WWII, which accommodated the women recruited from all over former Japanese colonies who were enslaved for forced prostitution (Takazato, Interview April 1999).

Connecting with feminism in the transnational sphere, Okinawan feminists have been particularly skilled at integrating with global civil society. This repertoire of collective action is similar to the strategy taken by the Okinawan activists who communicated with the global environmental movements during the Shiraho struggle. Okinawan women's appearances at various international conferences have obtained sympathisers among internationally renowned academics and have contributed to an increased international profile of the Okinawans' anti-base protest. As for the residents' movement in Okinawa driven by the 'local' framing, the strength of the 'gender' framing of Okinawan women activists is the ability to represent themselves to the international community of protest by stressing their 'Okinawanness'. The development of the local-specific collective identity as Okinawan women is based on

the accumulation of conscious collective action.

In 1985, a female director of a local radio network, Minamoto Hiromi, was recommended by her boss to report on the Okinawan women's attendance at the Nairobi Conference. Minamoto declined this recommendation and, in turn, asked him to give her a 12-hour slot of broadcasting and budget to make a special programme on women, produced by female-only staff. The radio network has since given a 12 hour-slot to the *Unai* Festival, each year, in which Minamoto's colleagues and friends, including Takazato and women from all sectors of the community, produced forums on 'women's issues' (Production Yui 1986). The issues they discussed were concrete life matters related to the political conditions of Okinawa, namely, food safety, pollution, clothing, health, childbirth, childcare, education, and discrimination. She named the event the '*Unai* Festival' after the Ryukyuan word, *unai*, which stands for the 'female sibling gods' who, according to folk belief, protect male siblings from misfortunes and accidents, which embodies the traditional position given to Okinawan women in patriarchal family and society. Okinawan men joined and contributed to these events, however, women intentionally placed themselves in a privileged position in order to reverse and expose the 'normal' gender relations in which females are in underprivileged positions compared to males in every aspect of the social order. Over the years, the participants called this strategy the '*Unai* method' (Minamoto Interview May 1999). Furthermore, Okinawan women have developed a strategy of creating solidarity among different women who are facing varying kinds of gender issues within 'Okinawa' through the *Unai* festivals. Similarly, they have linked with 'global feminism'; indeed, the strength of the Okinawan women is the ability to connect the local-centred approach to international action.

Takazato, Carolyn Francis,<sup>13</sup> and others developed a communication network with feminist activists in The Philippines, Korea and the US, who were concerned with problems related to gender and military bases (for example Kirk et al. 1997). In 1987,

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<sup>13</sup> Francis has lived in Japan since 1968, as a Christian missionary, and had worked for women's rights in Japan. Since 1989, she has lived in Okinawa and engaged in activities for peace, writing about base issues and women's issues in Okinawa (Francis, Interview May 1999). Also see note 6 in chapter 1.

they held an international conference on military bases and women in Naha. Their long-term contacts include Korean members of My Sisters' Place, a self-help institution for local women engaged in prostitution and service industries for American military personnel, many of whom had children fathered by US soldiers but who were denied US citizenship. Similarly, Takazato, Francis and others developed ties with Philippine women in the Buklod Centre in The Philippines, whom they visited several times, including when Mount Pinatubo erupted in 1991 (Takazato 1996: 168–9).<sup>14</sup>

In February 1996, 13 members of the Okinawa Women Act Against Military and Violence made a two-week trip to the US. This trip was called 'the Okinawan Women's Peace Caravan in America'. The members visited 28 NGO groups and several universities in San Francisco, Washington DC, New York and Hawaii, where they gave talks, discussion sessions and seminars, as well as making appeals to state and federal senators and representatives (*The Oakland Tribune* 13 February 1996, *San Francisco Chronicle* 5 February 1996). They also met feminist academics, such as Gwen Kirk,<sup>15</sup> Margo Okazawa-Rey and Betty Reardon,<sup>16</sup> who shared the Okinawan members' intellectual ground from which they argued against the military: they questioned the priority placed on national security, above the security of individuals, particularly that of women. In the trip, members focused on making the Okinawan situation known as widely as possible, by talking directly with as many US citizens as possible (Okinawan Women Act Against Military and Violence 1996: 1). In the second 'peace caravan' during October 1998, they visited San Diego, where they saw the US navy and air force facilities, met local environmental groups and Chalmers Johnson, the chief editor of the Japan Policy Research Institute and a keen supporter of the Okinawan women. This trip was enabled by the networks between Okinawan women and American NGOs expanded through long-term personal contacts,

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<sup>14</sup> The Buklod Center supports the living conditions of women who work near the US Subic Naval Base in Olongapo City, where Takazato had visited as a student and which she thought was similar to Koza City. See <http://www.geocities.com/wari9/philippines.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Kirk is a member of the San Francisco Bay Area Okinawa Peace Network (Kirk et al. 1997: 17)

<sup>16</sup> Professor Betty Reardon at Columbia University who teaches peace education visited Okinawa in September 1997, gave talks on militarism and women and studied the situation of US bases on the island (*Yui [Okinawan Women Act Against Military and Violence Newsletter]* 10 January 1997).



campaigning techniques and information about the military bases in the US.

Attending international forums, Takazato and her colleagues found common ground with women in many other parts of the world. For example, just as violence towards women is commonly treated as an issue marginal to the US–Japan security alliance and Okinawa’s sovereignty, in many other countries women’s agendas are sidelined by ‘national’ goals, such as independence from colonial rule and economic development (Takazato, Interview April 1999).<sup>17</sup> These informal, international activities have provided first-hand opportunities for Okinawan women to elevate the representation of their struggles as a global gender issue. This has helped them overcome the isolation and containment of Okinawan women in the private realm.

*Distance between Women’s Struggle and the ‘Okinawan struggle’*

In September 1995, Takazato and more than 200 women protested against violence against women’s human rights and marched to the gate of the Kadena Air Base:

At the rally, one man spotted me and yelled, ‘Don’t try to trivialise things by making this all into a “violation of women’s human rights”; the important issue here is the Security Treaty!’ He only understood half the problem. Yes, the treaty is problematic, but the threat of structural violence against women by military bases is the issue (Takazato 1995a: 3).

Importantly, the women’s struggle has been mostly placed outside the discourses of the ‘Okinawan struggle’. Takazato says:

In the past, reversion activists used to say, ‘Pain in the little finger hurts the entire body’, in order to demand the mainland Japanese feel the suffering of Okinawans. But I have always wondered, in that ‘pain in the little finger’, how much of it was women’s pain? It is difficult for people to understand that women’s human rights is a political issue, because there are always ‘bigger’ ‘more important’ issues. Prostitution has always been a social issue, but not presented to the public in the same way as the compulsory military occupation of land, or accidental explosions in the bases (Takazato, Interview March 1999).

Indeed, it has been difficult to get this point across to the rest of the community of protest.

The conflict within the community of protest revealed at the rally reflects the different order of priority placed among the list of problems generated from the US military bases in Okinawa: repatriation of Okinawan landowners’ property; the

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<sup>17</sup> See for example Takazato, Interview March 1999, Kandiyoti 1991, Yuval-Davis 1997.

unequal Status of Forces Agreement attached to the US–Japan security treaty that infringes Okinawans’ sovereignty by the US military personnel’s behaviour and mere presence; the environmental degradation introduced by the double economic structure of dependency on public works and the base-related subsidies from the government.

This difficulty highlights the nature of the male-female relationship in Okinawan society. Those Okinawan activists engaged in anti-base protest who do not subscribe to or see the need to change traditional gender relationships in Okinawa and the ‘feminist’ activists are usually engaged in separate struggles, except in occasional larger events that are not women-specific, such as the Okinawa Prefecture Citizens’ Mass Rallies. However, in September 1995, it was the women who represented the anger of the entire ‘Okinawan’ people, being at the forefront of the ‘Okinawan struggle’, albeit temporarily. This is because Takazato and the Beijing team’s accusations about the rape case and the US military’s violations of Okinawan women’s rights escalated into a violation against ‘Okinawa’ in general. The escalation of rape from a women’s issue to the rape of Okinawa’s sovereignty enabled the women and the ‘usual suspects’ to work together, albeit temporarily.

In the context of racial/national/ethnic conflict, rape often has a political meaning of transforming bodily violence against women and girls into mental violation against sovereignty over land, nation and territory.

Rape is a good place to start thinking about democratic space, the creative space between differences. Because rape, like other forms of torture, is outrageous bodily closeness, violent touching, a travesty of intimacy. And the word ‘rape’ is used metaphorically to convey that feeling of abuse, as when someone or some group penetrates, invades and damages the space (the land, perhaps, or culture, or thoughts) in which another or others dwell (Cockburn 1998: 223–4).

Angst (2001) points out, however, that precisely because of this effect of elevating the physical event into the abstract, the Okinawans’ outrage following the rape case also demoted the importance of the arguments made by the Okinawan women’s group; their protest against gendered violence of the military was sidelined by the importance given to Okinawan sovereignty. At the October 1995 rally, Ōta and other Okinawan activists described the rape of the twelve-year-old girl in September 1995 as the sacrifice of an ‘innocent girl’, which transformed rape into a symbolic violation of

Okinawa's body politic. The image of the sacrifice of 'an innocent girl' toned down the gruesome physical details and obscured the connection of rape and various gender discriminations in society, instead emphasising an abstract victimisation of 'Okinawa'. This is problematic for feminists, because the purified image of a girl victim is predicated on discrimination against other local women — in particular, against those engaged in prostitution — who were similarly raped and assaulted, but who were not twelve-year-old virgins (Angst 2001).

Takazato and her colleagues were committed to changing gender relations in Okinawan society, including women's position in the family and workplace, and, particularly, 'the culture that is tolerant to prostitution but intolerant to the prostitutes' (Takazato 1996: 106–11).<sup>18</sup> Members of the Okinawan Women Act Against Military Violence have argued that it is necessary to address not just the existence of the US military bases, but also the complementary relations of war, militarism, patriarchy and oppression against women (for example Miyagi 2000, Yuimaru Seminar 1997). However, Takazato also relies on a metaphor of the Okinawan predicament as a 'daughter of Japan' sold as a prostitute to the US forces in order to sustain Japan's post-war economic prosperity, which relies on a purified image of the daughter in patriarchal order (Angst 2001: 251, Takazato 1996: 29). Here, Takazato is speaking as an 'Okinawan' activist. The Okinawan women's struggle is bound by double collective identities as 'women' and as 'Okinawans'.

When the Okinawan women's movement and mainstream local anti-base activists cooperate, however, the most important dimension of Okinawan women's struggle — the struggle against patriarchy — becomes suspended. Furthermore, there is a solid division of labour between the 'feminist' anti-base activists who 'do women's issues' and other, predominantly male activists in the community of protest who focus on repatriation of land and the meaning of the US–Japan security treaty. With both parties occupying different territories, peace is maintained within the

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<sup>18</sup> For this reason, changing a still influential Okinawan patriarchal family inheritance system *tōtōme* (a paternalistic family order that limits family asset inheritance to male offspring, this not only disadvantages the social and economic status of women but also discriminates against women who cannot produce sons) is important (Takazato 1995b).

community of protest. The conflict between the ‘gender’ framing of the Okinawan feminists and the ‘usual suspects’ — most of whom are coming from the ‘constitutional’ framing — is perhaps not as pronounced as it could be, precisely because of the marginalisation of the women’s struggle within the ‘Okinawan struggle’. The division of labour, however, does not necessarily indicate an equal relationship but the recognition of the women’s movement as part of the community of protest, on the condition of its marginalised position.

Nevertheless, the Okinawan women have been accepted as important players in the ‘Okinawan Struggle’ because the strengths of Okinawan woman activists demonstrated in 1995 after the rape incident ‘energised’ the community of protest as well as advancing the international profile of the ‘Okinawan’ — not women’s — problem. At the 8<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing before the Land Expropriation Committee in October 1997, a female one-*tsubo* anti-war landowner specifically referred for the first time to the marginalisation and disempowerment of women, children and the disabled, as the reason for refusing the land lease to the US military. At the hearing, she mentioned the ‘comfort women’ and the more than 131 ‘comfort stations’ which existed in Okinawa during the war (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 106). This is an example of the ‘mainstreaming’ of women’s rights in the community of protest. The need to protect ‘women and children’s human rights’ started to constitute part of the discourse of protest against the US forces in Okinawa in general.<sup>19</sup>

The ‘gender’ framing of protest has not upset the male-centred order in the community of protest in a revolutionary way. Importantly, Okinawan women contributed to sustaining the myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ by adapting the narrative of marginalisation expressed in the metaphor of Okinawa as ‘a daughter sold to the US’. However, as the ‘local’ framing has done, the ‘gender’ framing has increased alternative channels of protest — manifest in the ‘*Unai* method’ — beyond the party and union-based ‘constitutional’ frame, and made the perspective of an ‘Okinawan

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<sup>19</sup> One of the concrete changes during the Ōta administration was the establishment of a ‘women’s affairs section’ ‘within the implementation headquarters on August 22’ (Eldridge 1997). However, this section was significantly reduced in status, from a section (*ka*) to a room (*shitsu*) and in funding, after Inamine took over the administration.

protest' more complex and inclusive of a formerly disenfranchised population. The 'local' and the 'gender' framing reflect the emerging 'new social movements', which are increasingly tolerated and enjoy some acknowledgement by the traditional actors, albeit on the condition that their organisations, strategies and ideas remain subordinate to those of the traditional constitutionalists.

### **'Constitutionalist' Framing Revisited**

Meanwhile, *Rengō Okinawa*, a regional branch of the biggest workers' unions' coalition in Japan, with 48,000 members, started a campaign in February 1996 for a prefecture-wide referendum. Although a referendum at the prefecture level was a formal political exercise with no binding power on the state, it was the first attempt in Japan ever. The main instigators of this referendum were the progressive OSDP, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the JCP Prefectural Assembly members, who had won the majority of seats in the mid-1996 Prefectural Assembly election after 16 years in opposition, and their various supporting citizen groups, including members of *Rengō*, *Kenrōkyō*, and a majority of *Zenchūrō*.<sup>20</sup>

It was the commitment to the Constitution that defined the aim of the referendum: 'To reform the current conditions of the US military bases, which prevent Okinawan citizens from enjoying the rights guaranteed by the Constitution' (Article 1 of the Prefectural Citizens' Referendum Ordinance, quoted in *Rengō Okinawa* 2001: 3): more specifically, to increase civic involvement and participation in decision-making processes, discussion, education, and checks on public administration (*Rengō Okinawa* 2001: 7). The referendum, scheduled for 8 September 1996, was promoted under the top-down organisational structure and union-based style of collective action, which exemplified 'the stale and choreographed nature of much anti-base activism' (Siddle 1998: 205), still influential in the community of protest. *Rengō* and the prefecture government mobilised union members, prefectural and municipal workers, who collected mandatory signatures from a fifth of all eligible voters, to request the Prefectural Citizens' Referendum

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<sup>20</sup> The Okinawa prefecture government set up the Coordination Committee for the Promotion of the Prefectural Referendum (*Kenmin Tohyō Suishin Kyōgikai*), and allocated a budget of approximately 480 million (Eldridge, 1997).

Ordinance. With each union member assigned to obtain 10 signatures, more than 41,000 signatures were collected by May (*Rengō Okinawa* 2001: 5). The referendum was an attempt by the constitutionalists to represent Okinawan citizens' opposition to the US military bases — dramatically expressed in the citizens' protest rally in October 1995 — within the democratic, institutional framework.

Another important product of the 'third wave' was that the anti-war landowners finally gained wide recognition for their long-term battle, following the Governor's refusal to authorise land leases. On 1 April 1996, the US military's legal occupation of a plot of land in Yomitan village, owned by an anti-war landowner, expired. A supermarket owner and part-time peace guide, Chibana Shōichi, (see chapter 3), who had been arrested and jailed for burning a *hinomaru* flag at a national sporting event (see Chibana 1992, Field 1993), had also become an anti-war landowner of property in a US military facility, the Sobe Communications Site.<sup>21</sup> In May, Chibana and 30 family members and friends, including a famous Okinawan folk music star, Kina Shōkichi, entered the property in the Site where entrance had been forbidden since the end of the Battle of Okinawa. They had a picnic, and spontaneously performed music and dance, whereby they publicly demonstrated the US military's illegal use of dissenting landowners' properties (*Okinawa Times Weekly, Monday Evening Edition* 20 May 1996, 22 April 1996, 2 April 1996).

Furthermore, the ten-year lease period for those properties owned by the anti-war landowners and *one-tsubo* landowners was coming to an end on 15 May, 1997. The land committee was appointed, and public hearings started in February 1997. However, the committee was unlikely to reach a final decision as to whether and how many years the lease would be granted before 15 May. The Japanese government's illegal occupation of 43.3 hectares (owned by 2,068 landowners) and 11.5 hectares (owned by 575 landowners) was imminent (*Okinawa Gunyōchi Iken*

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<sup>21</sup> Since reversion, Chibana's father owned the property in Yomitan and refused the contract as an anti-war landowner, however, in April 1976 he was pressured into signing the contract by the Japanese government's strategy to return anti-war landowners' properties together with those of other contract landowners in the community who were receiving rent. After 20 years, in 1992, Chibana senior decided to pass on the property to his son, who was an adamant and famous anti-war and anti-military Okinawan activist (Chibana 2000).

*Soshō Shien Kenmin Kyōtō Kaigi* 1998: 9). Arasaki observes:

The landowners had been generally regarded as morally respectable, but exceptionally stubborn, ‘weird’ people, generally with a negative connotation. Since last year, however, I have strongly felt that the Okinawan general public’s attitude towards the anti-war landowners changed drastically, in a more positive way. I am convinced that the anti-war landowners themselves are feeling that way, too, and also, finally, they must have felt proud of being anti-war landowners. Their battles have been rewarded marginally, if not entirely (*Zen’ei* Staff, 1996: 97).

A long-time anti-war landowner, Shimabukuro, (see chapter 6) also notes:

Many people who participated in the 1995 October mass rally shamelessly became sympathetic towards us,<sup>22</sup> including those who had been receiving money from the government for co-operating with the US bases. Some apologised to me for not having been more understanding in the past, and said, ‘We have thought you (the anti-war landowners) were a very intimidating bunch of people’ (Interview, April 1999).

In April, the lower house passed the US Special Measures Law reform bill, which allowed the US military to use privately owned land without landowners’ consent, after the lease expired, until the land committee granted another lease (*Okinawa Times* 6 April 1997). According to this reformed law, if the land committee rejected or delayed lease authorisation, the lease was still legal, merely by virtue of the matter being forwarded for the Construction Minister’s consideration. Furthermore, with a major reform of the Local Autonomy Law, which passed the Diet in July 1999, the authorisation of land expropriation for the US military’s use shifted from the mayors and governors to the state (Imidas 2002: 324, Sasaki 2000: 26–8).

On 25 March 1996, the Fukuoka High Court issued a verdict supporting the government’s claim against the Governor, regarding the charge laid by Prime Minister Murayama of the Social Democratic Party<sup>23</sup> against Ōta, for neglecting his administration duty by refusing to authorise the leases on behalf of the anti-war landowners. At the Supreme Court, the Governor appealed, citing Okinawans’ rights for ‘constitutionally guaranteed property rights, people’s rights to a life in peace, and [the prefecture’s] right to home rule’ (Ōta 2000: 213). Furthermore,

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<sup>22</sup> Shimabukuro critically describes the lack of integrity of the Okinawan general public: ‘At the rally they think they are protesting, but quickly change their minds when the supermarkets go on sale because of the US bases’ (Interview, April 1999).

<sup>23</sup> In forming an anti-LDP coalition, the Socialist Democratic Party (formerly Japanese Socialist Party) temporarily suspended their basic opposition to the security alliance with the US, which was regarded as ‘not an imminent agenda’ at the time (Arasaki, 1996: 60–1).

if the Mutual Security Treaty is important for Japan ... responsibility and burdens under the treaty should be assumed by all Japanese citizens. If not, many of my people point out that the outcome is discriminatory and goes counter to [the principle of] equality under the law (Ōta 2000: 212).

Immediately before the reversion, Ōta (1969: 72–4) expressed his limited reservation against turning to the Japanese Constitution as a basis of Okinawa's liberation, taking into account critical opinion within Okinawa, especially those of anti-reversionists such as Arakawa Akira. Nevertheless, his position in the 'Okinawan struggle' has basically been consistent with 'constitutional' framing: although the principles of the Constitution are not fully realised even in mainland Japan, they are the most important foundation not only for Okinawa and Japan but for humanity in general (Ōta 1969: 100). Ōta has consistently argued for viewing Okinawa's predicament as Japan's predicament, using the Constitution as a common guideline. The Supreme Court, however, dismissed Ōta's appeal on 28 August, 1996. At the same time, the Japanese government set up the 'Okinawa Policy Committee' and a 'special adjustment budget' of 5 billion yen to reinvigorate the Okinawan economy. In early September, Ōta agreed to authorise the leases. This decision disappointed many anti-base Okinawans, which reduced the momentum of the anti-base opposition.

Ōta's agreement to authorise the leases was immediately followed by a low voting rate (59.53%) at the prefectural referendum, which took place on 8 September, 1996, even though 89% of those who voted agreed with the reduction of US forces and revision of SOFA. The LDP members called for boycotting the referendum, for fear of damaging Okinawa's relationships with Tokyo and its policy of favouring the Okinawan economy (*Okinawa Times* 27 August 1996, Eldridge 1997). The referendum was thus not a collective action that involved a united coalition of all political sectors; it revealed the familiar internal opposition among conservative and progressive political forces.<sup>24</sup> The referendum asked the Okinawan population whether the US military presence should be cut down; however, no concrete level of reduction was suggested. Moreover, if the question was limited to 'reduction', Prime

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<sup>24</sup> A small faction which split from *Zenchūrō*, as well as restaurants, bars and small business owners in 'base towns' especially Kin Town, the All-Okinawan Rental Housing Committee and *Tochiren* with an estimated 28,000 members, also opposed the referendum for their specific interests (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 18 August 1996, *Okinawa Times* 21 August 1996, Eldridge 1997).



Minister Hashimoto had been undertaking negotiations with the US to ‘reduce’ US military presence under SACO, albeit insufficiently reflecting Okinawans’ level of expectation. The expected outcomes of the referendum were unclear to the general public, other than to the anti-base ‘usual suspects’, to whom the rationale was clear: Okinawa’s inclusion within Japan, in terms of equal entitlement to constitutional rights is an unaccomplished goal since the reversion movement.

The third-wave ‘Okinawan struggle’ started with a group of women who spoke out against the rape case. The central agenda then shifted to anti-base Governor Ōta, the anti-war landowners and the ‘usual suspects’, who had gained the political opportunity to enhance their position from which to make demands *vis-à-vis* the Japanese government. The strategy of their protest was to rely on the formal procedures of democracy, justified by the ‘constitutional’ framing. The requests the anti-war landowners, union members and the progressive governor were basically the same with those they made before 1995: Okinawans’ opposition to the US military is based on the principles of democracy, equality, local autonomy and protection of basic human rights, guaranteed by the Japanese Constitution, which Okinawans are supposed to be entitled to since the 1972 reversion. However, their consistent request was countered by the Japanese government’s equally consistent strategy of bringing in more money, bending the constitutional principles, and prioritising the needs of the US military bases on Okinawa, considered crucial for maintaining the US–Japan Security Treaty.

### **Uneven Complexion of the Community of Protest after the Third-Wave Okinawan struggle**

#### *SACO and Futenma’s Relocation to Nago*

In April 1996, Prime Minister Hashimoto announced that the US and Japanese governments agreed to return the Futenma Air Station, located in the middle of Ginowan City for more than fifty years. The news about Futenma Air Station created a brief euphoria among anti-base Okinawans, which soon disappeared after the government announced its condition: the construction of an alternative airbase on Okinawa. The Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO), comprising US and

Japanese diplomats and high-ranking officials, reported plans to return 11 US military sites, including Futenma Air Station. The plan included the relocation of the live fire training across Road 104 in Kin Town, the ‘drop’ trainings using parachutes in Yomitan village and the Naha Military Port.<sup>25</sup> Most of the ‘returns’ in this plan, however, were ‘replacements’ of old facilities with new, updated ones within Okinawa, funded by the Japanese government’s ‘sympathy budget’.<sup>26</sup> The establishment of SACO was an important milestone that indicated the effect of the anti-base mass rally in October 1995. On 2 December 1996, SACO released a final report, which summarised the ‘reorganisation and reduction’ plan (see Appendix 1).

In September 1996, immediately after the referendum, Prime Minister Hashimoto came to Okinawa, and announced a plan to construct a ‘sea-based heliport’, that had been suggested by the US state officials, as an alternative facility to Futenma (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 11). The word ‘heliport’ belied the scale of the new base, which would be a major US Marine Corps air base with a mile-long runway, newly accommodating accident-prone Osprey helicopters (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 1997). The condition of the return was construction of the alternative air base (‘heliport’), maintaining the equivalent facilities to current functions capable in Futenma, plus upgraded facilities *somewhere in Okinawa*. The question was, *where?*

In the ‘reintegration and reduction’ plan, presented with the SACO final report (Appendix 1), return of the Futenma Air Station, a long-time base used by the US

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<sup>25</sup> These particularly hazardous facilities for the locals had been considered urgently in need of some kind of resolution. In April 1994, the director general of the Japanese Defense Agency demanded the US Secretary State work for resolution. However, no progress had been made, ‘until the Secretary of State Perry received a wake-up call by the 1995 rape incident’ (Funabashi 1997: 351).

<sup>26</sup> In November 1995, the state elites such as State Secretary Perry, Prime Minister Hashimoto, State Department Undersecretary Campbell and US Ambassador to Japan Mondale set up the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO), and introduced a ‘reduction and realignment’ plan of the military bases in Okinawa, as a means to soothe the locals’ sentiment against the US military presence on the island. Specifically committed to ‘recommend ways to reorganise and reduce the impact of US military operations and training on the people of Okinawa (<http://www.jpri.org/public/op14.html>)’, SACO was the first comprehensive official setting, in which Japanese and US high-ranking officials representing the US State Department, US Department of Defence, Japanese Foreign Ministry and Japanese Defense Agency plus the Prime Minister and the US Ambassador to Japan sat together to specifically discuss the reduction of the military presence on Okinawa (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 17).

Marines since the end of WWII, was the most significant item.<sup>27</sup> Futenma epitomises the unwanted US military presence. It resides in the middle of crowded residential districts of Ginowan City where 84,000 people live. Combat helicopters train and fly over this city, where up to 50 aircraft crashes had been recorded by September 1996. There are sixteen schools including a university around the bases, where the noise of helicopters and planes regularly interrupt classes (Fukuchi 1996: 21–2, 52–4).<sup>28</sup>

In December 1996, the SACO final report designated the east coast of Nago, next to Camp Schwab as the desirable location for a new sea-based air station (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 1997). On this decision, Prime Minister Hashimoto commented, ‘the government would not force the issue, but try to *solicit* the consensus of local municipalities’ (*Okinawa Times Weekly, Monday Evening Edition* 9 December 1996, *italic added*). Since the SACO final report, the Japanese government has explicitly promised bringing quick and visible material benefits for the local economy where the US base facilities are planned to be relocated to. Camp Schwab in Henoko District, near the east coast of Nago City, was the last remaining candidate.<sup>29</sup> (Map 8.1).

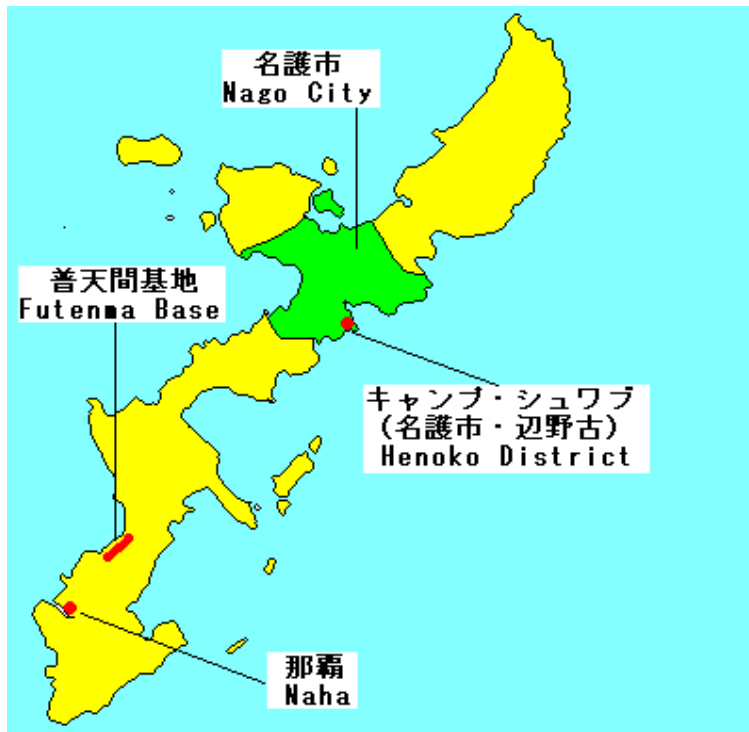
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<sup>27</sup> The final report stresses that the US and Japan have responded to the Okinawans’ anti-US base feelings, by making dramatic change in the US military presence: ‘approximately 21 per cent of the total acreage of the US facilities and areas in Okinawa excluding joint use facilities and areas (approx. 5,002 ha/12,361 acres) will be returned’ (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 1997).

<sup>28</sup> For more general impacts of US air bases on Okinawan residents’ health and life, see [http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/okinawa\\_kankyo/souon/english.html](http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/okinawa_kankyo/souon/english.html)

<sup>29</sup> There were three major candidate locations. To the first possibility, the Kadena Ammunition Storage area, three local assemblies of Chatan town, Kadena town, and Okinawa City jointly opposed (*Ryukyu Shimpō* 17 September 1996). Another candidate was Nakagusuku Bay, adjacent to a US navy port (known as White Beach). Likewise, residents in Katsuren town and Tsuken Island next to White Beach expressed clear opposition to the plan, due to anticipated effects of the ‘heliport’ on the local fishing industry (*Ryukyu Shimpō* 25 September 1996). These two possibilities were scrapped for various reasons, including these staunch residents’ opposition (Funabashi 1997: 194–200, *Okinawa Times Sha* 1998:11).

Map 8.1 Nago City ([www09.u-page.so-net.ne.jp/xj8/nago/map/okinawa5.gif](http://www09.u-page.so-net.ne.jp/xj8/nago/map/okinawa5.gif))



First, Nago Mayor Higa Tetsuya was clearly opposed to the relocation.<sup>30</sup> In July and November 1996, the mayor organised citizens' rallies opposing the relocation, with 4,100 and 2,600 residents attending respectively against the construction of an alternative sea-base facility. Apart from the mayor, the executive committee of the rally included all major organisations in Nago City, including the Nago City Assembly, District Mayors' Associations, City Education Committee, City Chamber of Commerce, City Women's Association, City Elderly Citizens' Association, All-Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union Northern Branch (*Jichirō Hokubu Sōshibu*), Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee, Northern Branch (*Hokubu Chikurō*), and *Rengō* Northern Regional Branch (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō*

<sup>30</sup> In January 1997, he criticised the Japanese government's 'base rotation' (*Kichi no tarai Mawashi*) policy, that is, 'passing unwanted US military facilities over to the northern region, without obtaining consent from the local residents' (*Okinawa Times* 22 January 1997). Higa also attacked Governor Ōta for giving silent agreement on relocations to the northern region, in contrast with the prefecture's firm opposition to the relocation suggested in the Nakagusuku Bay area (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 31).

*Hōkokushū Kankō Iinkai* 1999: 46).<sup>31</sup> The Naha Defence Facility Bureau sent delegations to Nago in order to proceed with the preliminary site investigation for the new base construction. On every visit, Mayor Higa refused to co-operate with the investigation (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 31–3).

#### *Splintered Anti-‘Heliport’ Organisations*

Thus, Nago became the major location of anti-base opposition in the phase after the SACO report. Chapter 7 examined the residents’ movements originating from the local environment and lifestyle unique to individual communities, rather than from established organisations and ideologies of the workers’ movement, which have been traditionally dominant in the community of protest in Okinawa. Likewise, residents’ movements inspired by the local unique natural environment and lifestyle, with ever greater female participation, characterised the anti-heliport struggle in Nago. The examination below highlights the influence of the ‘local’ frame of protest that had been developed after the reversion in 1972, discussed in chapter 7.

#### *Henoko Residents*

The planned site of the offshore base was adjacent to Camp Schwab, located in Henoko hamlet on the east side of Nago City (Map 8.1). Henoko is one of the 13 districts in the Kushi Region, all of which suffer from declining agriculture, and a shrinking, aging population. Residents in these districts still abide by centuries-old traditional rules and customs, such as annual spiritual rituals, as well as those to do with production and consumption.<sup>32</sup> However, all of these communities receive abundant special government funding, awarded to the municipalities located around military bases (Takahashi 2000: 241–55).

Since 1956, Henoko has hosted Camp Schwab, a US Marine Corps base, and a

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<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Nago City Assembly made resolutions to oppose the relocation of Futenma facilities to Nago twice, one in June, one in November 1996. The Nago Chamber of Commerce later dropped out from the opposition, due to its decision to approve the construction of the alternative base, following the Northern Region Construction Union’s decision to support the alternative sea-based facility construction in the suggested area (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Iinkai* 1999: 46)

<sup>32</sup> For example, in some communities, until several decades ago, marrying outside the hamlet was banned, for fear of losing the labour force. Also, in some communities, villagers who violated the code of behaviour of the community had to pay certain amounts of money to the community, until someone else did the same. Inheritance of family estates and assets with *tōtōme* (a family ancestry card) to the eldest sons is still preferred (Takahashi 2000: 244–51).

major ammunition storage area. The construction of the major Marine base required the acquisition of mountains and forests, as well as some residential areas and farmlands of Henoko, Kushi, and Toyohara districts. The residents were at first opposed to the base construction. However, after being warned they would be removed by force with no compensation, and having seen the tragedy and struggles following the US forced land acquisition in Isahama and Ie village in the early 1950s (see chapter 4), they agreed to the construction of Camp Schwab. In return, they received special benefits, in addition to the lease contracts and compensation, such as preferential employment of residents at the base, introduction of electricity and water system for the residents, dam construction, responsibility for securing residents' housing, and permits for continued farming in the military property. Camp Schwab has provided job opportunities for the local economy in construction, restaurants and bars, and other businesses. During the Vietnam War, US dollars flowed into the Henoko commercial area (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 49). Job seekers came from outside and migrated to the hamlet, which transformed the dynamics of traditional hamlet life (Inoue 1999: 194–212), and Henoko has become, and still is, the biggest hamlet in the Kushi Region, with 1,444 residents (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Iinkai* 1999: 38). Today, the bars and restaurants in the Henoko entertainment area next to the main road, which thrived once in the Vietnam War days with throngs of US soldiers, are mostly closed. Still, there are not enough jobs for young people, who increasingly emigrate (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 49–51). Agriculture has declined, due to dwindling of the under-60 years of age population. Only the construction industry has grown steadily, which has provided jobs (mostly temporary or part-time) for the remaining working population (Takahashi 2000: 265).

The Henoko community has generally constructed amicable relationships with the American soldiers and officers through communal efforts such as annual festivals, sport meetings and markets. At the same time, it has maintained traditional social elements such as the power structure in community rule according to male seniority and traditionally prominent families. Inoue explains that in Henoko the ability to be friendly and open to outsiders (the US military) and visitors co-exists with tenacious

traditional rigidity of kinship rule that excludes outside influence from the core power structure, which is believed to keep the community together. These contradictory elements make up a distinct Henoko identity different from any other ‘Okinawan’ identities (Inoue 1999: 298–314).

The head of the Henoko Community Centre represents the major administrative institutions of Henoko.<sup>33</sup> The Henoko Administration Committee and the Head of District are the central controlling body within the Community Centre. Institutionally, most residents are virtually excluded from decision-making at the level of District administration, and are uninformed about the details regarding the District budget (Takahashi 1998: 262).<sup>34</sup> Importantly, Henoko obtains more than ¥100 million rent from the government for land used by Camp Schwab, as well as various other funds related to hosting military facilities.<sup>35</sup> In Henoko, the community decision-making system is closed to the public. The socio-economic situations reinforce dependence on the military, making it difficult for the residents to talk about the heliport construction.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, Higa Seijun, 57, a farmer from the Henoko hamlet, was one of the first residents who openly opposed the ‘heliport’ plan: he wrote ‘No Heliport Relocation! Stand Up, Henoko and Kushi Residents’ on two flags, and stood them at the main entrance to the Henoko hamlet (Takahashi 2000: 131).

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<sup>33</sup> The Henoko Community Centre (*kōminkan*) ‘historically has been the heart of social, cultural, and political activities since the age of the Ryukyu Kingdom’ (Inoue 1999: 228). As in Shiraho (chapter 7), the Community Centre ‘has been owned and run by the community, at the same time functioning as an intermediary organization between residents on the one hand and different levels of administration’, vertically connected to Nago City, and the Japanese government (Inoue 1999: 331).

<sup>34</sup> The Heads of District are employed by Nago City Council, and are usually selected by ‘verbal consensus’, without formal election processes. The 12 members each represent a neighbourhood group called *han*, and other locally based organisations including the local agricultural co-operative, youth group, women’s group, senior citizens’ club, students’ association, and the association and commercial and entertainment businesses in Henoko. The Administrative Committee is composed of ‘twelve relatively older male residents (the average age is 53.8)’ (Inoue 1999: 232), and there is no obligation for the Committee to inform citizens of the Committee’s decisions regarding District affairs. Most crucial agenda items are decided by the Committee and the Head.

<sup>35</sup> Nago municipalities received ¥261,869,000 in 1998 (*Okinawa Ken Soumubu Chiji Koushitsu Kichi Taisakushitsu* 2000: 46–7). Henoko also receives ¥120,000,000 in compensation for access to the forest area occupied by Camp Schwab (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 51). Thanks to the government subsidies, Henoko holds numerous community events, sometimes spending a few million yen on one event (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 50).

<sup>36</sup> Villagers rarely express anti-base opinions, given that many community members work for the base or live on rent (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 37).

In January 1997, the Japanese Communist Party Northern Okinawa Branch organised discussion forums in three districts (Henoko, Toyohara and Sedake) on the ‘heliport’ and its impacts on the communities. These communities have traditionally been politically conservative; residents were generally fearful of the Communist-influenced, informally referred to as ‘red’ (*‘aka’*), organisation (Inoue 1999: 248). Because any political activities of the villagers were highly transparent to each other, it would not have been easy for them to participate in a Communist-led forum. Usually, because of the communities’ dependence on base-related incomes, villagers are reluctant to express any form of opposition to military bases (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 50). However, at this stage, opposition was predominant amongst the residents, most of whom did not express opposition to the existing Camp Schwab. Fifty Henoko residents participated in the discussion forum, some of whom said, ‘Why don’t they build it in Nago Bay (on the west side of Nago)?’ (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 37, Takahashi 2000: 160–1)

On 27 January, 27 Henoko residents formed the Henoko Heliport Construction Opposition Committee (*Henoko Helipoto Kensetsu Soshi Kyōgikai*), later known as the Henoko Life Protection Society (*Henoko Inochi o Mamoru Kai*) (Takahashi 2000: 160). The Henoko Life Protection Society became the first organisation against the ‘heliport’. The Society is solely based on the identity of ‘Henoko residents’, and stresses its non-affiliation to any political organisations or ideologies. Distinguished from unions and party-affiliated opposition, the residents’ bodies against the ‘heliport’ construction is often described as a ‘*shimin* (citizens)’ movement (*shimin undō*, see chapter 7) (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inkai* 1999: 77). The anti-heliport ‘struggle hut’ stands in front of the planned construction site, where the Life Protection Society members accept visitors from outside.

The most stubborn and dedicated members of the Life Protection Society have been the elderly residents, who have lived through the Battle of Okinawa (Ishikawa 1998: 223–4). The importance of keeping the beautiful ocean is their main reason for opposing the heliport construction; they know their lives have been protected by the



endowments from nature in northern Okinawa.<sup>37</sup> Just as for the war survivors in Shiraho, they survived food shortages during and after the war by catching fish from the ocean<sup>38</sup>. One elderly woman raised nine children by catching fish and selling them at the Nago market: 'I wonder why people in the south don't oppose the construction; their drinking water comes from *yanbaru*' (Higa et al. 2000: 40). The strong attachment to the ocean, related to the wartime experience, is a common trait that also motivated the Kin Bay and Shiraho struggles.

The anti-'heliport' protest in Henoko and other regional communities are strongly influenced by the 'local' frame of protest. Organisations express strong collective identity as 'residents', which is distinguished from the established parties and unions in Naha and Tokyo. The main motivation of their protest is the wish to protect local-specific natural assets and lifestyles from the heliport construction.

#### *Nago: Workers' Unions*

As elsewhere in Okinawa, labour unions have been prominent actors in anti-base protests and the building of anti-base coalitions in northern Okinawa. Along with demanding better working conditions and pay, it has been a central commitment of the Okinawan labour union movement to pursue 'anti-base' and 'anti-war' activities (see chapter 4). Tamanaha Koushin is a veteran anti-base activist and executive member of two regional workers' unions. In the 1960s during the reversion movement, he was 'a student activist wearing a helmet', and 'believed we could go back to Japan and get rid of the bases' (Interview February 2002). Tamanaha sees the 'Okinawan struggle' as a continuation of the reversion movement, still trying to come to sense with the question, 'What was reversion all about?'; daily struggles in Okinawa are struggles against the continuing marginalisation of Okinawa caused by the US–Japan Mutual Security Treaty, despite Okinawa's reversion to Japan and its Constitution (Interview February 2002).

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<sup>37</sup> After the US forces landed on the island in 1945, people in the central and southern regions escaped to *yanbaru* and avoided gunfire.

<sup>38</sup> Some Henoko residents still make a living by fishing in the ocean next to Camp Schwab, watching the US amphibious tanks coming in and out of the ocean. In the reef area, because of the red soil contamination, fish have disappeared (Ishikawa 1998).

In April 1997, the mayor of Nago dramatically reversed his opposition and agreed with the preliminary survey of the planned heliport construction site. The night before the mayor's announcement, anti-base Nago residents, mainly members of the Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee (*Hokubu Chikurō*), held a rally at the Workers' Centre in Nago City. Local opposition groups interpreted the mayor's decision as a 'betrayal' of Nago residents (*Heli Kichi Hantai-kyo* 1999: 44). The members of these organisations felt that the central government's intention to 'solicit' the locals' agreement, written in the SACO final report, really meant 'solicit agreement from the local authority (mayor), not the local residents' (*Helicopter Iranai Nago Shimin no Kai*: 100). At the rally, union members suggested a plebiscite as a means to stop the construction of the heliport (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 48).

In Nago District, local labour unions gathered and formed the Five Party Coalition (*Goshakyō*) in February 1997. Participant organisations included the Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee, (*Hokubu chikurō*), Japanese Trade Union Confederation Northern Regional Council (*Rengō Okinawa Hokubu Chiiki Kyōgikai*), All-Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union Northern Branch (*Jichirō Hokubu Soshibu*), Nago City Municipal Workers' Union (*Nago Shishokurō*) and the Okinawa Peace Centre.<sup>39</sup> The aim of the Five Party Coalition was 'to form solidarity with the Henoko Life Protection Society and to recruit [external] support to stop the heliport construction, prefecture-wide and nation-wide' (*Hokubu Chiku Rōdō Kumiai Kyōgikai* 1999: 87).

In May, for the first time, the Naha Defense Facilities Bureau (*Naha Bōei Shisetsu Kyoku*) conducted a preliminary inspections<sup>40</sup> of the planned offshore heliport construction site. The Five Party Coalition initiated locals' 'surveillance' activities to stop the inspections by organising a rally<sup>41</sup> at the Henoko Fishing Port

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<sup>39</sup> The Okinawa Peace Centre, a loose Okinawan-wide coalition of labour unions for anti-base and anti-war activities, joined this coalition in order to bring the support of other trade unions from Naha and other areas in Okinawa into opposition activities against the Futenma relocation in Nago (*Hokubuchiku Rōdō Kumiai Kyōgikai* 1999: 87).

<sup>40</sup>The inspection conducted surveys on fishing activities and transport, took aerial photographs, and inspected coral and seagrass habitats, and current general situation of the targeted area (*Okinawa Times Evening Edition* 9 May 1997)

<sup>41</sup> The rally was called '*Helicopter Kensetsu, Jizen Chousa Danko Soshi Shūkai*' (Rally to Stop the Heliport Construction and Preliminary Inspection).

(*Ryukyu Shimpo Evening Edition* 6 May 1997). Some of the locals and union members got on small boats and physically clashed with the Bureau's inspection vessels. About 280 locals gathered mainly from Henoko, which was reported by the local media, and created a sense of emergency in the community of protest in Okinawa Main Island.<sup>42</sup> The Five Party Coalition, with the Henoko Life Protection Society members, set up picket fences and a 'surveillance tent', and protest placards with anti-heliport messages such as 'Do Not Disturb Our Sleep, Peace of Mind and Rights', 'Nature, Life and Health: Our Treasure' (*Okinawa Times Evening Edition* 7 May 1997). Daily 'surveillance mobilisation' (*kanshi douin*) of the Five Party Coalition continued from May to September (*Hokubu Chiku Rōdō Kumiai Kyōgikai* 1999: 87).

Organising a rally, making placards, and sit-ins have constituted standard repertoires of collective action of the anti-base labour unions. It is the organisational strength of the unions to mobilise union members' presence at the scene of protest, and to use media reports to publicise their opposition, although the audience is often restricted within Okinawa. In sum, the trade unions played an important role in igniting local opposition through their trademark mobilising capacities.

#### Nago: Residents

Residents on the west side of Nago City also gathered in support of the Henoko Life Protection Society. In late April, the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport (*Heliport Iranai Nago Shimin no Kai*) emerged out of the 'Absolutely No to Heliport: Informal Discussion Forum' (*Chashin Naran Heliport Yuntau Forum in NAGO*), held at the Nago City Community Centre, to discuss the Futenma relocation and its consequences, attended by 240 people from Nago and elsewhere. At this forum, attendees discussed the possibility of demanding the mayor's resignation and the Nago residents' plebiscite on relocation of Futenma to Nago. At the forum, an anti-base union member from the City Council Union of Ginowan, where Futenma is located, reported what it was like living next to the Futenma Air Station. A young female illustrator appealed, 'We are only temporary tenants of this earth, renting it

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<sup>42</sup> Usually this type of local anti-base collective action is rarely reported in the mainstream mainland Japanese media.

from the future generation; we have an obligation and right to express our concern towards the implication of construction of a new base on the ocean, and make a decision' (*Ryukyu Shimpo* 21 April 1997).<sup>43</sup> She became a representative of the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport, despite having no previous experience of anti-base activities.

On 28 April 1997, another group of anti-base Nago residents organised a lecture on plebiscites. They invited Imai Hajime, a journalist who had written a book on plebiscites (1997). Imai talked about an example of the victory of the opposition to the construction of an industrial waste disposal facility in Mitake town, Gifu Prefecture. At the end of the lecture, the attendees and organisers launched the All-Nago Citizens' Group against the Heliport (*Heliport Kichi o Yurusanai Min-na no Kai*). Its 115 members emphasised a commitment to the principle of citizen-centred decision-making, which was summarised in a slogan, 'Everyone should participate in important decision-making' (*daiji na koto wa min-na de kimeyō*) (*Heliport Kichi o Yurusanai Min-na no Kai* 1999: 85)

In June 1997, the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport suggested forming a coalition, the Nago Citizens Plebiscite Promotion Council, to campaign for a plebiscite in Nago City, composed of 21 Nago-based anti-base groups and organisations.<sup>44</sup> Other member organisations included the Nago Democratic Association of Commerce (*Nago Minshu Shōkō Kai*),<sup>45</sup> an association of local small businesses, clearly expressing their opposition to the new base construction. The members were mainly business owners in the central business district in the west side

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<sup>43</sup> Most of the attendees at the forum, about 230, became 'supporters' of the Society, however, active members are only a small number of them, and no official leader or office were set up at that point (21 April 1997).

<sup>44</sup> At the beginning, organising members of the Council invited the pro-base organisations, such as the Nago City Chamber of Commerce, to join the coalition, none of them responded positively. The mayor and the pro-base sectors obviously wished, in negotiation with the government, to keep a bargaining chip of possibly accepting the heliport, therefore, were reluctant to hold the plebiscite (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999 46). Clearly, only those who refused to deal with the central government's attempt to 'solicit' the locals into accepting the new base, by way of promising economic benefits that conducted the plebiscite campaign.

<sup>45</sup> This organisation is the Nago branch of the National Business Organisation Union (*Zenkoku Shōkō Dantai Rengōkai*), a cooperative of small businesses in Japan. The Nago Democratic Association of Commerce had 516 members at the time of joining the Council (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai*, 1999 83).

of Nago City, which was in severe recession and full of vacant buildings. Many business owners were reluctant to express opposition, influenced by the Nago Chamber of Commerce's decision to support the base. They were also inclined to believe the rumour that the new heliport would bring a new high-rise building and renew the shopping arcade. Nevertheless, about 100 members of the Association appealed to the Nago residents to vote against the base, arguing, 'for invigorating business, we need peace' (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999: 83). As is very common in the Okinawan community of protest, membership of these small groups was non-exclusive; activists often belonging to more than one anti-base organisation at the same time. For example, a member of the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport was also a member of the Northern Bloc of the *One-Tsubo* Anti-Landowners' Organisation.

These relatively new local anti-base groups joined forces with the branches of socialist and communist political parties, and workers' unions.<sup>46</sup> The Plebiscite Promotion Council became the official initiator of the Plebiscite Regulation (*Shimin Tōhyō Jorei*), and started collecting signatures on 9 July. The minimum requirement was 757 signatures from Nago residents, according to the one-fiftieth of the population mark; however, the Council set a goal to collect 12,616 signatures, one-third of the

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<sup>46</sup>Member organisations were the Socialist Mass Party Nago Branch (*Shadai-to Nago Shibu*), Social Democratic Party Nago Branch (*Shamin-to Nago Shibu*), Japan Communist Party Northern Regional Committee (*Nihon Kyosanto Hokubu Chiku Inikai*), Komei Party Nago Branch (*Komei Nago Shibu*), union-based organisations such as the Okinawa Prefectural Labour Union Committee Northern Branch, (*Hokubu Chikurō*), *Rengō* Northern Co-operation (*Rengō Hokubu Chikyo*), *Jichirō Hokubu So Shibu* (All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union Northern Headquarters), *Jichirō* Nago City Hall Workers' Union (*Jichirō Nago Shishokurō*), All-Medical Doctors' Union Okinawa *Airakuen* Branch (*Zen-I Ro Okinawa Airakuen Shibu*), Okinawa Peace Movement Centre Northern Branch (*Okinawa Heiwa Undo Centre Hokubu Shibu*), and the *One-tsubo* Anti-War Landowners' Organisation Northern Bloc. Other members included the Nago City Peace Committee (*Nagoshi Heiwa Inikai*), a branch of a nation-wide franchise and an off-shoot of the Japan Communist Party, the New Japan Women's Association Nago *Shibu* (NJWA) (*Shin Nippon Fujin no Kai Nago Branch*), and 11 Nago City Assembly's anti-base members representing 'progressive' political parties (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999: 75).

population.<sup>47</sup> Thus, with modifications agreed at the City Assembly,<sup>48</sup> the Plebiscite Regulation was passed.

The Council, a collection of different organisations and groups, emphasised a citizens' movement (*shimin undō*) character, and intentionally stressed the importance of solidarity among parties and unions and the three resident-based organisations, namely, the Henoko Life Protection Society, the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport, and the All-Nago Citizens' Group against the Heliport (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999: 87). *Shimin* in this context carries an implication of ordinariness, non-affiliation to any political organisation, and a non-ideological position. The self-definition of an organisation as a 'citizens' movement' indicates the belief that opposition and protest of citizens' organisations are more genuine, for not being dominated by the interests of the established, professional organisations. From the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport, Miyagi Yasuhiro was chosen as representative of the Council. The choice of Miyagi, only 37 years-old at the time, politically non-affiliated and non-experienced, indicated the intentional emphasis on the *shimin* character.

On the other hand, the unions and parties are basically branches of centralised organisations in mainland Japan. They have been leaders of the anti-base or other protest in Okinawa throughout the first and the second waves of protest, and have their own established organisational structures and headquarters elsewhere, either in Naha

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<sup>47</sup> Signatures from one-third of the population were enough to request the mayor's resignation, 'This was a warning towards the mayor: it showed our capacity to collect signatures for his resignation' (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999: 46). In August, the Council submitted a request for the plebiscite regulation with 19,735 signatures. Even though the Election Management Committee effectively allowed only 46% of them, the number of signatures amounted to 52% of the eligible voters. There were 18 ruling party members of Nago City Assembly who were against the plebiscite before the signature collection, as opposed to 11 who supported it. However, given the number of the people who demonstrated approval, both the mayor and the ruling party members were pressured to pass the regulation (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999: 46–7).

<sup>48</sup> As a counter-measure, the LDP party members of the City Assembly submitted a modified draft for the Plebiscite Regulation: instead of asking the voters whether they 'approve' or 'object' the construction of the offshore heliport in Nago, the modified plebiscite question was a choice from four answers: 1) I agree with the construction plan, 2) I agree because environmental measures and economic improvement can be expected, 3) I oppose the construction plan, 4) I oppose because environmental and economic improvements cannot be expected. This modified regulation was passed 17 versus 11 at the City Assembly. According to the perception of the anti-base residents, inserting 'environmental and economic improvements' was a manipulation of the pro-base LDP members to make it easier for the Nago residents to vote 'yes' to the heliport construction (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inikai* 1999: 49).

or Tokyo, as well as a distinctive and ideological character.

In contrast, a major characteristic of newly formed, local, anti-base organisations was that the members were inexperienced in anti-base or any protest activities. The Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport, which defined itself as a ‘citizens’ movement body’ (*shimin undōtai*) of free-willed individuals, requested that the anti-base organisations run by trade unions and political parties ‘step back and restrain themselves’ (*Heliport Iranai Nago Shimin no Kai* 1999: 100). This is a clear sign that these Okinawan anti-base activists were conscious of the distinguishing characteristics between more experienced, established, and hierarchical political organisations and *shimin* groups.<sup>49</sup>

The Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport played a central role in the campaign to request a plebiscite and the formation of the Nago City Plebiscite Promotion Council (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Suishin-kyō*). During the period leading up to the plebiscite, the Society members chose many kinds of methods campaigning for ‘no’ votes, including fundraising activities by advertising in various media, such as *Shūkan Kinyōbi*, a left-wing magazine in mainland Japan. Core members also travelled and explained the situation in Nago at various peace movement and left-wing organisations’ meetings and forums, for example, those held by the Japan Coalition on the US Military Bases (a mainland Japanese anti-base group in Oita), and the Japan Labor Party. The members also sold fundraising bandanas and postcards featuring spectacular ocean views seen from Henoko (*Heliport Iranai Nago Shimin no Kai* 1999: 101).

The de-politicised image attached to the ‘citizens’ was portrayed as the new type of desirable main actor of the anti-base movement. Aragaki Shigeo, Secretariat

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<sup>49</sup> The All-Nago Citizens’ Group against the Heliport stressed having a *shimin* character, too. Yet their style of collective action was closer to that of unions and parties, compared to the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport. For example, during the plebiscite campaign, the members demonstrated a great degree of commitment to physical effort in necessary, routine work such as building signboards and collecting as many signatures as possible. Strength in these kinds of activities is a basic requirement for winning elections, however, it comes with less emphasis on inventive, original activities of free-willed individuals. Furthermore, the group placed its headquarters in the Social Democratic Party and Prefectural Assembly member Tamaki Yoshikazu’s office, which signified strong links with an anti-base political party. With study groups and lectures, this group emphasised proselytising with the principle of participatory politics and a plebiscite as the avenue to democracy.

of the Okinawan Socialist Masses' Party, witnessed and endorsed the changing role of political parties and trade unions in the Okinawan community of protest:

The role of progressive political organisations that have long led struggles of the Okinawan people since the 1950s land dispute and the 1960s reversion movement is changing. Political parties and trade unions should no longer be leaders of the movement. The main players are now individual citizens with their own motivations to participate in the process of decision-making about an important matter. We need to be careful not to dominate the movement and to focus on a supporting role (Aragaki Interview May 1999).

The changing self-definition of veteran anti-base unions and political party actors of the 'Okinawan struggle' signifies a nascent development of tolerance towards diversity in the community of protest. It also suggests the formation of a new definition of idealistic relationships between 'citizens' movements' and party politics/organisational interests, which posits the latter in a 'supportive' position.

However, internal relations among the 'citizens' movements' are not as harmonious as they are supposed to be by the picture drawn by the 'supportive' unions and parties. The aforementioned union member and anti-base activist Tamanaha explains that the role of the workers' unions and political parties should be 'supportive', in the community-based struggles such as the anti-CTS struggle and the anti-'helicopter' struggle in Nago. 'The most important actors are the (non-affiliated) residents in the community'. On the other hand, he also says, 'The unions are still the main actor in the citizens' movements (*shimin undō*) in Okinawa' (Interview, February 2002). This contradiction indicates the difficult relationship among unions, parties and non-affiliated residents. As is the case with the women's group, beneath the surface of tolerance and mutually supportive relationships, there are tensions and even irreconcilable differences at times between the older, established parties and unions, and the relatively inexperienced 'residents'.

#### Residents in Other Kushi Districts

Other micro-communities within the Kushi Region on the eastern side of Nago, closest to the planned off-shore 'helicopter' construction site, faced similar problems. Henoko, Toyohara and Kushi Districts within the Kushi Region have received substantial incomes from being adjacent to Camp Schwab. Another ten districts,



however, benefited significantly less than these three districts, although located close to the base. The planned site for the new offshore base is only five kilometres from Sedake District. Sedake is located only two kilometres from Henoko, Camp Schwab and the Henoko ammunition storage area across Oura Bay. The new base would also affect Sedake residents' lives significantly, with noise and effluent into the ocean. Sedake's population is declining — even more significantly than Henoko — with shrinking agriculture and the younger population moving away (see Table 8.2). It took much longer for the residents in these districts to organise an anti-‘heliport’ group. Residents in these groups had never been involved in residents’ movements before; furthermore, the opposition was even more difficult because of the community’s dependence on government subsidies in the name of ‘special funding’ every year.

Despite the adversary climate, on 12 October 1997, the Society Against the Heliport 10 Districts North of Futami was established (*Heli Kichi Iranai Futami Ihoku 10 Ku no Kai*). (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inkai* 1999: 78).

Table 8.2 Populations of 13 Districts in the Kushi Region

Kushi	Toyohara	Henoko	Futami	Ōura	Ōkawa	Sedake
626	436	1,444	88	104	74	527
Teima	Mihara	Sokoniya	Teniya	Abe	Kayou	
245	328	189	87	160	137	

(Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inkai, 1999: 38)

There is a significant rift between these ten districts north of Camp Schwab and the three in the south. In 1997, 58 per cent of the rent from the US military that Nago City received came from the Kushi Region. However, as opposed to the Y120 million that Henoko and Kushi districts each received for ‘compensation for access to forest and mountains (prohibited by the base)’, Futami received only Y1 million. In addition to this north-south division, there is a significant east-west socio-economic difference in Nago City. In August 1970, Nago town and four nearby villages, Kushi,

Yagaji, Haneji, and Yabe, merged into Nago City.<sup>50</sup> In Mihara District, a rubbish disposal plant was built immediately following the merger, which later moved to Kayou District. One resident says, 'Nago dumps rubbish to the east; same with the 'heliport'. Build it on the west side' (*Okinawa Times Sha* 1998: 52).

*The Women and the Environmentalists: New Social Movements after the 'Third Wave'*  
*Expansion of Female Participants*

The plebiscite was held on 21 December 1997, and 53.8 per cent voted against the heliport construction.<sup>51</sup> The local plebiscite was a victory for the opposition camp. However, Nago Mayor Higa Tetsuya officially ignored the majority 'no' votes, and approved the relocation in Nago on the condition that the state provide special assistance for the local economy, and then resigned on 24 December. The victory in the plebiscite, if only judged by the fate of the heliport construction, clearly did not help the anti-base opposition. Subsequently, the anti-'heliport' coalition dissolved;<sup>52</sup> nevertheless, the battle of groups and individuals continued.

The opposition to the 'heliport' has been often described as a 'citizens' movement'. The idea of 'ordinary citizens' has been stressed elsewhere in Japan, especially by the Beheiren movement, as subjects of the movements different from the Marxist, Old Left movement (Morris-Suzuki 2002, Sasaki-Uemura 2001: 31–2). However, the unitary description of 'ordinary citizens' often obscured the ethnic/gender discrimination that existed within (Morris-Suzuki 2002). The concept of a 'citizens' movement' that insidiously represents the identity and interests of one hegemonic group often creates another internal marginalisation similar to those of women and ethnic minorities. The women-only groups against the 'heliport' had emerged as a protest — albeit mostly a non-intentional one — against the dictatorial, unifying operating system of the 'citizens' movements' that flatten out individualities

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<sup>50</sup> The names of previous towns and villages stand for the districts of the city today.

<sup>51</sup> In total, 82.45 per cent (31,477 votes) of the eligible voters cast their votes. The breakdown of the votes was: 1) I agree with the construction plan ... 8 per cent, 2) I agree because the environmental measures and economic improvement can be expected ... 37 per cent, 3) I oppose the construction plan ... 52 per cent, 4) I oppose because environmental measures and economic improvements cannot be expected ... 1 per cent, 5) Invalid ... 1 per cent.

<sup>52</sup> The Plebiscite Promotion Council ceased its organisational existence after the plebiscite, and renamed itself the Anti-Heliport Coalition (*Heliport Hantai Kyōgikai*).

and differences under the influence of male-seniority rule.

Women had always been present in the 'Okinawan struggle', during the 1950s land struggle and the reversion movement. Female members in conventional anti-base unions and organisations have usually been allocated the role of kitchen workers and maids who washed men's clothes, and have often been objects of sexual harassment. The internal gendered power relations and the role of women in subordinate positions within anti-base organisations had not become a major, public issue. However, the example of the Okinawan Women Act Against Military and Violence (OWAAMV) cultivated the 'gender' framing of anti-base protest in the 'Okinawan struggle'. In the following phase of the anti-heliport struggle with a strong regional focus on Nago, many new women's groups, organisations and informal networks emerged all over Okinawa in protest against the heliport construction. Unlike the predominantly professional and educated membership of OWAAMV that is more cross-regional and international, the new women's groups are much more focused on the issues and collective identity defined by specific localities and specific dimensions of anti-base protest at the time, for example, the plebiscite. The groups have been instantaneous, and short-lived.

A number of female individuals in Okinawa became concerned with the consequences of the construction of the heliport and ventured into voluntary political action. Some of them had experience in collective action.<sup>53</sup> However, many had never experienced collective action to do with politics before the heliport issue came up, and did not know how to start a 'protest movement'. These newcomers mostly did not wish to visit the offices of established anti-base organisations; political parties and trade unions or any 'anti-military', 'peace', 'anti-Ampo', 'anti-war' organisations, which sounded unapproachable. Some concerned female individuals with no experience in political action were more attracted to 'approachable' groups close to where they lived, such as the Society of Nago Citizens Opposed to the Heliport, and helped collect signatures or distributed pamphlets. In the process of trying out new

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<sup>53</sup>They have been members of women's divisions of workers' unions, local women's associations or other social movements organisations such as *Okifuren* and New Japan Women's Association (NJWA).

experiences in political activities, female locals separately formed female-only anti-base groups.

Higa Shima is a long-term resident in Ginowan City. She lives immediately next to the Futenma Air Station, sees and hears the helicopters and combat aircrafts' training, and hears English conversations from the other side of the fence. The explosive engine noises, and neighbours' physical and psychological problems, have been part of her life, and of those close to her.

When I heard the news that the Futenma would eventually close and might be relocated off Henoko, I was really angry. I was also frightened to think about the possibility that the citizens' plebiscite result might support the heliport construction, because of the local industrial sector's commitment to it. I felt the need to inform the local people about what it was like to live next to the US Air Force. I asked around others, to do something about it together. The ones who said yes were all women, around ten of them to start with. We had no representatives, or rules. The name of the group was the Gathering of *Kamadhu* (*Kamadhu-gua no Tsudoi*), representing a traditional, common female name given to Okinawan women (after a big pot to prepare food). We did not want to use the word '*kai*' (organisation or group). We started from making fliers called *Koe, Koe, Koe* (Voice, Voice Voice) (Higa, Interview, May 1999).

The members of the Gathering of *Kamadhu* were all female, without intending to make it such, when they first started.

We did not know anyone in Nago; we started by knocking on people's doors and explained how noisy it is to live next to the air base. The people we talked to had no idea. It was my impression that men more often than not did not have time for us. Many of them did not take us seriously and said, 'Well, it's our turn, isn't it?' In Ginowan, you have tolerated Futenma for more than fifty years. If the marine heliport is built, money will come in and the city will become richer. That's how it works. There is nothing we can do about the new base,' which was understandable because the boost in construction industry would affect their work. Women seemed to be ready to listen to us more carefully and to tell us they were worried, too.

One day we had an exchange meeting between *Kamadhu* and residents in Kushi, north of Futami. The attendees were all women. They said, 'We have been embarrassed to see that women from Ginowan were working so hard in our community, while we haven't been doing anything' (Higa Interview, May 1999).

Those in Kushi, 10 Districts north of Futami, formed a small local group, *Jannukai* (*Jan* is a local word for 'dugongs') against the heliport.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> On members and activities of *Jannukai*, see (Mashiki et al. 1999).

On the western side of Nago, during the summer of 1997, about 20 women who were campaigning for the plebiscite organised their own group, '*Nuchi du Takara* (Life is Treasure), Woman's Powers, *Yarukies*'. A leading member, Akita Lisa, a Nago resident, joined the plebiscite campaign in the summer of 1997. It was her first experience in joining any protest activity against the US military bases. As she started working with the Plebiscite Council members, she noticed that the campaign activities were conducted strictly under the instructions given by senior male members. In leaflets, posters, and speeches to address the locals, the veteran activists who experienced the reversion movement in the 1960s and 1970s preferred to use certain internal language popular amongst left-wing activists — such as 'solidarity', 'anti-war', 'a sacred battle' — that sounded intimidating and off-putting to younger generations. Being an articulate woman, Akita made a suggestion:

Using this kind of language (Solidarity, Protest, Our Supreme Struggle) may scare youngsters who may be thinking about the implications of the heliport issue in their own way, and may be interested in joining some kind of collective action. Why don't we try using normal language as in daily conversation, for example, no-one will find out whether you voted for or against the heliport?

However, the veterans told me to keep quiet, because I was only a novice activist, and should ask, and pay respect to the instructions of the more experienced members. In response to my concern that younger, inexperienced potential participants might feel discouraged by the language and outdated style of protest, they would say, 'We don't want those who get easily discouraged. We only want the young ones with high motivation and awareness.'

In the midst of the plebiscite campaign, with about 20 other like-minded members, seven or eight students, some local NJWA members, mothers in their 30s and 40s and some hippy travelers from mainland Japan, who were feeling the same way about the suffocating environment for collective action, organised our own group, *Nuchi du Takara* (Life is Treasure) Woman's Powers, *Yarukies* (*Yaruki* means energy or motivation) and decided to go our own way.

Elite members of the Council welcomed the formation of a newly sprouted women's group, positively evaluating it as a vibrant new move that could contribute to the momentum for the plebiscite. The Council even spared campaign funding for the new group, and encouraged us to do whatever we wanted for the campaign, such as making pamphlets with cartoon characters and daily conversational language that looked drastically different from the familiar, 'progressive' style that people were used to looking at in various phases of the 'Okinawan struggle' (Interview, February 2001).

During the pre-plebiscite campaign, the women from Ginowan, Kushi and Nago paired up in a team, and made door-to-door visits. Women's participation in the campaign was a decisive contribution to the result of the plebiscite (*Nago Shimin Tōhyō Hōkokushū Kankō Inkaï* 1999: 59).

As a strategy to enliven their spirit by doing something unusual,<sup>55</sup> mainly female members invented a special kind of demonstration called *michi-junay* that looked like a traditional Okinawan *eisah* performance on the street. At this *michi-junay* in Nago, a greater solidarity among women elsewhere in Okinawa developed. Members of the Okinawa Women Act Against the Military and Violence in Naha, *Yarukies*, *Jannukai*, and *Kamadhu* formed the 'Reach to the Heart Women's Voice (*Kokoro ni Todoke Onna-tachi no Koe*) Network'.

In February 1998, the Reach to the Heart Women's Voice Network tried to arrange a petition meeting with Ōta, and caught the Governor at the lobby of the Prefecture Hall. This was a spectacular event, with the lobby filled up with 300 women (Higa Interview May 1999). Governor Ōta had signed the land leases on behalf of the refusing landowners. He had also made difficult decisions to mend relationships with Tokyo, to save the local economy from its subsidies drying up, by being more moderate on the base issues. Soon after the women's petition at the lobby, Governor Ōta readjusted his position on the heliport, and expressed his opposition officially, even though he denied a direct connection with the Network's appeal (Ōta Interview April 1999).

Why were these all-women groups, not specifically involved in feminist purposes, a convenient and accessible form of anti-base collective action? Higa explained that communications and building teamwork were easier in women-only groups because they had much in common. For example, their schedule similarly centred around children, annual rituals and family affairs. Their hand-made fliers (Voice, Voice, Voice) were informal, unsophisticated, but different from the stereotypical, usual anti-base campaigns of the traditional organisations seen

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<sup>55</sup> Towards the end of the plebiscite campaign, people in the anti-base camp were feeling intense pressure from the pro-base campaign, which did not hesitate to distribute cash to local households. Many of them felt there was no chance of winning.

everywhere in Okinawa. Importantly, their style of collective action particularly appealed to those who silently felt fearful of the new heliport and its effects, but did not have access to traditional anti-base protest organisations, or knew exactly how to express their concerns.

Tamaki Hiroko, a female coffee shop manager and a keen member of the Reach to the Heart Women's Voice Network, living in the southern region of Okinawa, also says, 'I could not just watch these women. They really sounded like they were personally addressing me, "Let's do this together"' (Interview, May 1999). She contacted her mostly female friends in Okinawa and in mainland Japan, formed the Women Say No to the Heliport Base (*Helikichi No! Onnatachi no Kai*) Network, and raised funds to advertise in a newspaper women's opposition to the heliport construction. Tamaki has continued informal anti-base activities through a local radio program and by selling T-shirts with dugongs and a message 'No Need for a Base in Our Future'.

It was groundbreaking that 'ordinary, inexperienced women' became the subject of collective action. In the Okinawan community of anti-base protest, apart from veteran feminists such as Takazato, women were usually not protestors *per se*: a majority of women played supportive roles as wives and secretaries of male protesters. Typically, it is women who make tea in the protest offices, for example, and the wives of activists contribute to their husbands' 'citizens' movement' by undertaking housework and part-time work so that their husbands could focus on their protest activities until late at night. Most women accepted such roles and did not consider otherwise.<sup>56</sup> Higa comments that *Kamadhus'* collective identity as a small group of 'ordinary' women not accustomed to political action was effective: the first step of obviously novice protesters sent a significant vibration to change the usual ways of collective action in the community of protest (Interview, May 1999).

These newfound, female-only anti-relocation groups have not explicitly expressed a feminist message, apart from saying 'we are concerned with the

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<sup>56</sup> Wives of anti-war landowners and anti-base activists discuss their experiences in (Ikehara et al. 1996).

construction of a new base from a woman's perspective, as mothers, for our children', which exudes an essentialist image of woman as mothers or as a caring subject. When they are given a public presence, Okinawan women activists are often represented as 'mothers', or romanticised carriers of a primordial religious aspect of life who are closer to nature and antithetical to war and military bases. During the campaign against the bases, women's messages as mothers against the new base construction were used by male members against the heliport, and were one of the most oft-used expressions during the plebiscite campaign. One member, who also joined the plebiscite campaign as an 'ordinary, inexperienced activist' and a mother, says, 'These days, when I hear the word 'mother' in relation to the base issue, I feel instantly exhausted; I feel my 'motherhood' is being used' (Interview, February 2002). Furthermore, the celebration of a 'women's anti-base movement' was temporary. After Mayor Higa ignored the plebiscite result against the heliport construction and resigned, the election of a anti-heliport Mayor became the next important goal for the campaigners. Then, their general attitude changed completely: tolerance towards new attempts and refreshing ideas gave way to traditional, hierarchical, choreographed, top-down manners of campaigning (Interview, February 2001).

During the anti-heliport struggle, the anti-base women stepped into a new type of collective action, which is to change, or be aware of, the gender dynamics within the community of protest, though often expressed in casual, humorous comments such as, 'We cannot leave this to the men any more'. Forming female-only groups separately was an act of 'saying *sayonara*' to a male and seniority-dominated anti-base organisation, without explicitly engaging confrontation with specific individuals, namely, experienced male activists in their 40s and 50s who were limiting the expansion and improvement of the protest movement. This implicit attempt is deeply relevant to, but a separate political action from, protest against the US bases in Okinawa as a regional depot of the global patriarchal system of military violence from a feminist perspective, as the OWAAMV did.

Organising female-only collective action separately from male counterparts itself was a political statement that questioned the internal unity of 'citizens'



movements’, and a lack of recognition and tolerance towards diversity, that has caused stagnation in the community of protest in Okinawa.

### Dugongs and the Environmentalists

Dugongs are endangered, large marine mammals, still occasionally found off the coasts of northern Okinawa.<sup>57</sup> Nakamura Shūhei has campaigned for dugong conservation as part of the protest against the heliport construction. He was born and grew up in a farmer family in a small farming village in Kushi Region. After working in Naha for a construction consultant company, he returned to the village.

When I heard a dugong was witnessed off the coast of northeastern Okinawa during the state’s preliminary inspection of the planned ‘heliport’ construction site in April 1997, I thought there would be more dugongs. About ten Sedake and other 10 District north of Futami residents met with other environmentalists from Naha and other places in Okinawa, including Takaesu and Makishi, who were experienced environmental campaigners in the Shiraho struggle. About 30 of us started a small group, LOVE Dugong Network and started diving. We found traces of dugongs’ sea grass grazing.

Nakamura, Miyagi Yasuhiro (former representative of the Plebiscite Promotion Council) and others established Save the Dugong Campaign Centre (SDCC) in October 1999, as an organisational base with branches in Tokyo and Osaka.<sup>58</sup>

I thought simply repeating the mantra of removing the bases could not stop the ‘heliport’. Okinawans had been saying the same thing for decades, but the bases were never removed. We needed something different, more interesting and closer to life” (Interview, February 2002).

With the support of WWFJ, the Centre sent delegates to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Conference held in Amman, Jordan, in October 2001. It was Nakamura’s first overseas trip. He demonstrated traditional Okinawan *eisah* at the conference, to advertise Okinawan dugongs. Even though most of them did not speak English, the delegates prepared about 5,000 leaflets written in English, T-shirts and other dugong paraphernalia and appealed to the attendees at the conference (Interview, February 2002, Tamaki Hiroko, Interview February 2002), just as Takaesu

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<sup>57</sup> The World Conservation Union (IUCN) lists the dugong as an endangered species that needs protection. Dugongs used to live throughout the Okinawa region. Disappeared from elsewhere in Okinawa, the current distribution of the dugongs is only along the northeastern coast of the main island of Okinawa, and the number is thought to be very small, possibly less than 50 animals’ (Save the Dugong Campaign Centre, 2003b).

<sup>58</sup> With the support of National Assembly of Peace and Democracy (ZENKO), a mainland Japanese labour union-based peace organisation (see <http://www.zenko-peace.com/index.html>), SDCC established widespread support in mainland Japan.

Asao, Katherine Muzik and Yamazato Setsuko did at the Costa Rica 1988 session, for Shiraho coral conservation (chapter 7). They also submitted a petition with 50,000 supporting citizens' signatures to the IUCN, and with the support of other English-speaking environmental NGOs,<sup>59</sup> succeeded in inducing an IUCN resolution, which recommended the US and Japanese governments introduce steps to protect dugongs (Save the Dugong Campaign Centre 2002, 2003a, World Conservation Union (IUCN) 2001).

The SDCC has been engaged in regular activities: seminars by marine biologists specialising in dugongs;<sup>60</sup> conducting research to provide alternative (to the government's) environmental assessments on the destructive effect the new 'heliport' would have on the local ecosystem; also building a 'dugong home' (*dugong no sato*) to host high school students on fieldtrips or other visitors and take on tours to show them the local, abundant, natural resources on the eastern coast of Nago for developing a sustainable local industry not dependent on subsidies from the government that favor the temporary construction business.

For the protesters against the 'heliport' construction, the campaign for protection of the local dugongs has opened doors to a network of global environmental and conservation movements in the informal political arena. In the anti-relocation struggle, dugongs have played a role in creating a different kind of 'Okinawan' identity: the natural environment was the marker of the identity of the 'Yanbaru' region, which is different from other regions within Okinawa. Pride in natural resources unique to the local areas in Okinawa was the basis of the 'localist' framing of the residents' movements exemplified in the anti-CTS struggle (chapter 7) and the

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<sup>59</sup> Since the IUCN meeting, Miyagi Yasuhiro of SDCC and Onishi Masayuki, professor in Humanities at Meio University in Nago, have developed a support network with the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) (see <http://www.nrdc.org/>) and the Centre for Marine Conservation (<http://www.oceanconservancy.org/>). Also, they have developed contacts with the influential Marine Mammal Commission, an independent administrative body that monitors US government activities and advises Washington on the protection of ocean mammals such as manatees. Miyagi and Onishi have traveled to Washington to talk to the president and vice president of the US Marine Mammal Commission who planned to investigate and write reports about the dugongs (Onishi Masayuki, Interview, November 2000).

<sup>60</sup> Helen Marsh at James Cook University in Queensland, Australia, who has visited Okinawa and given seminars, is one of the regular supporters (Save the Dugong Campaign Centre 2002: 4).

Shiraho struggle. This ‘localist’ framing continues in the campaign for dugong conservation.

To my question, ‘Does the ‘Okinawan struggle’ still exist?’ Nakamura’s answer was negative:

Some of the people who have engaged in the anti-base struggle for a long time have said to me, ‘whatever happens, we will continue our movement’. We want to end the movement as soon as possible by achieving our goals. This is the biggest difference in our points of departure. There have been countless occasions when quick decision-making was prohibited due to organisational reasons (need to have proper organisational meetings, need to discuss with other members. etc). This is why we end up working separately. This is why another ‘all-island struggle’ (*shimagurumi tōsō*) will be very difficult.

The progressive coalition has been demanding, complete and immediate removal of the bases, according to the pacifist principle and anti-*Ampo* ideology. This message has not changed for decades, but the bases are still there, almost unchanged. Nowadays, Okinawans, including the LDP leaders, are moving towards demanding gradual, minimal reduction of existing US bases, even if it means constructing a new base in Okinawa.

That is why I think it’s important to appeal to everyone about the need to protect the local environment, and residents’ human rights, rather than repeating the anti-base mantra.

Most people, even Nago citizens on the west side, have never seen what the ocean looks like and how beautiful it is, where the new US air base is planned to be constructed. It is more effective to have people visit the east coast of Nago, and ask them, ‘What do you think? Are you going to let them build the new base here?’ It is important to start here [eastern Nago]. The Shiraho struggle has been very important because we were able to persuade the state to admit it would be wrong to build an airport on the world heritage coral reef. If we can make Nago home to lots of dugongs, the next struggle will be much easier.

## **Conclusion**

The October 21 protest in 1995 marked the third peak of the post-war mass protest in Okinawa, preceded by the 1956 All-Island Struggle, and a series of mass rallies in the 1960s requesting reversion (Arasaki 2000). This chapter examined the dynamics of community of protest in the third-wave ‘Okinawan struggle’ and subsequent internal diversity in organisations, collective identities and strategies.

Women’s political activism in Okinawa, as elsewhere, has provided a critique of the political arena from the private realm of individual life where women have traditionally been located. The Okinawan women’s movement has simultaneously

addressed the US military presence and its violence against women along with women's status and well-being in Okinawan society. They have shown strength in developing networks with women in other places, classes and nationalities. The strategy of the women's movement embodies greater ability to connect with global civil society, and reflects characteristics of 'new social movements'.

The new direction and repertoire of protest that the women's movement showed, however, mostly remained separate from the traditional actors inspired mainly by the 'constitutionalist' framing of protest. In the subsequent anti-'heliport' struggle in Nago, many smaller citizens' (*shimin*) groups not affiliated to political parties and trade unions were formed, with collective identity and organisation of protest inspired by pride in one's local environment, as well as past war experience. In Nago, these movement groups inspired by 'local' framing were, at the same time, engaged in a struggle towards more individual freedom and equality within the community of protest, rather than uncritically obeying the organisation and strategy based on the male-seniority rule and the legacy of the 'Okinawan struggle'. The growing 'new social movements' and the 'usual suspect' parties and unions in the community of protest have so far failed to merge effectively, maintaining their divided territories of informal and formal political activities. These qualitatively different actors refuse to enter a relationship in which one is subordinate to the other, which has kept the autonomy of the actor organisations but has hindered the development of a united and effective coalition-based movement. This chapter has tried to show that, the emerging 'new social movement' actors have been tolerated and enjoy some acknowledgement by the older, more traditional actors. However, underneath the appearance of an expanded and complementary relationship, the relationship is volatile, filled with differences, tensions and conflicts.

Nevertheless, this chapter observed important continuity in these 'new social movements', including the women's group's activities and the 'local' groups from the past 'Okinawan struggle'. The historical narrative of marginalisation — past war experience and the victimised image of 'Okinawa' as a sacrificed daughter — are resurrected in today's anti-base protest. In this sense, the myth of an 'Okinawan

struggle' is as alive as ever. Today, however, different actors exploit it for different agendas using different techniques: there is no single Okinawan 'movement', as there was temporarily in approximate form during the first and the second waves. The idea of a singular 'Okinawan struggle' continues to function. It is an idea that is compatible with many definitions of who 'we' are and what is at stake for varying constituencies within the community of protest. Indeed, the increasing diversification of that community shows no signs of diminishing the power of that idea.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the development of a community of protest in Okinawa, and the survival of the myth of the ‘Okinawan struggle’. It has analysed the changes of dynamics within the community of protest in the three major cycles — described as the ‘three waves’ — of protest. As discussed in this thesis, since the immediate post-war years, the community of protest in Okinawa is characterised by internally diverse actors with different organisations and reform agendas, which betrays the often homogenous representation of Okinawans’ protest or ‘anti-base movements’. However, the diversification has intensified with time, and a coalition of protest organisations has been increasingly a tenuous and difficult proposition. Disagreements and divisions in viewpoints among protest actors have always existed in the Okinawan community of protest. After the reversion, internal differences have compounded over the desired reform agendas, organisations, strategies and interpretations of who they are, and what the protest is ultimately for. The overarching question of this dissertation has been: what does this intensification of pluralism mean for the strength, form and orientation of collective protest and the prospects of a successful ‘Okinawan struggle’? The main points of this dissertation in response to this question are distilled below. They underline that, while the expansion in the number and range of protest groups over time may not have been an unambiguous boost for the realisation of the shared essential goals of the protesters, none of this appears to have dented the powerful myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’. Rather, and paradoxically, its veracity appears only to have gathered momentum and is likely to continue to endure. The myth has proved an adaptable one that is attractive to many, varied protest groups across history.

The first major point to emphasise is the diversification and change of ‘Okinawan’ identity, expressed by collective action and protest in the post-war period. To start with, how to interpret ‘Okinawan’ identity has always been a terrain of contention among the locals. As discussed in chapter 2, the ‘Okinawan’ identity has constantly oscillated in the interpretation of how ‘Japanese’ it is, since annexation in

the late nineteenth century. In the context of collective action, strong identification with mainland Japan — explained as the ‘assimilationist’ position — has manifested in the orientation for institutional integration with the Japanese democratic system and enthusiasm for the principles of the Japanese Constitution. During the first and second waves of protest examined in Part II, the progressive coalition employed the ‘assimilationist’ orientation to the extreme, motivated by the most prominent political goal at the time, reversion. However, as soon as the reversion was achieved and the aim of protest became more focused on opposition to the US military presence, the former reversion activists replaced the slogan of assimilation with emphasis on Okinawa’s historical narrative of marginalisation. The re-interpretation of the memory of the Battle of Okinawa played an important role in the establishment of Okinawan-specific pacifism, as discussed in chapter 3. The swing of ‘Okinawan’ identity away from ‘sameness’ with mainland Japan has been a prevalent reaction to the disappointing result of the reversion for the anti-military Okinawans. On the surface, identification of the ‘Okinawan’ identity with Japanese nationalism, inspired by ‘reversion nationalism’ discussed in Part II, has definitely subsided.

However, the ‘assimilationist’ tendency of the reversion movement survived, in the strategies and organisations of the anti-base coalition, *Iken Kyōtō*, the anti-war landowners and their supporters: this tendency was underpinned by the strong attachment to, and belief in, the democratic process: representation through election, the rule of law and separation of the court and the government, endorsed by the post-war Japanese Constitution, which was a product of the US occupation. As discussed in chapter 6, the ‘constitutional’ framing of protest has inherited the basic backbone of the reversion movement, as a relentless pursuit for Okinawa’s ‘true’ reversion to Japan, that is, fair and equal treatment. Overall, the protest motivated by the ‘constitutional’ framing is directed at the Japanese government, and its scope is mostly limited to the domestic arena. Furthermore, mainland affiliation with Okinawan parties, unions and organisations has furthered the absorption of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ by the leftist anti-*Ampo* movement in Japan. In this sense, the ‘assimilationist’ tendency of the progressive political forces in Okinawa is not dead.

Most importantly, the ‘constitutional’ framing symbolically and ideologically re-defined and succeeded the myth of an ‘Okinawan struggle’, as a continuous project from the land struggle and the reversion movement.

Meanwhile, the actors of emerging ‘new social movements’ in Okinawa have expressed the distinctiveness of ‘Okinawan’ identity in different ways, through their collective action. Chapter 7 explained that the participants in the community-based environmental movements identified themselves as ‘residents’ of the communities in which they lived, rather than as members of political parties or unions, thus expanding the scope of protest from traditional organisations and strategy. I described the framework of protest of Okinawan residents’ movements as a ‘local’ framing of protest: the ‘Okinawan’ identity was expressed not in terms of its relation with mainland Japan — whether Okinawa was part of Japan or not — but rather an expression of traditional lifestyle, culture and history specific to the community, with pride in its uniqueness. The expansion of these residents’ movements involved the female population that was previously not organised into collective action. Chapter 8 discussed the development of Okinawan women’s protest against the US military presence from the distinctive Okinawan feminist perspective. Okinawan women have directly appealed to the issue of gender and military violence, which has global relevance, rather than appealing to mainland Japan.

This newfound expression of ‘Okinawan’ identity, recognised in its own right, has reached out to the larger audience of international civil society, away from the domestic confines of Japanese democracy. Interestingly, many Okinawan protesters with this strong ‘local’ pride have expanded connections with global social movements, especially environmentalist, and also, feminist. The Shiraho struggle, discussed in chapter 7, was particularly remarkable in this respect. In particular, the Okinawan women’s movement has demonstrated exceptional skills in obtaining an overseas audience on the issue of gendered violence of the military in the private sphere that Okinawan women are facing, presented as a universal gender issue, as discussed in chapter 8. For these Okinawans, the scope of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ is not limited to protesting against the US–Japan security alliance, or rectifying the



unsatisfactory conditions under which Okinawa reverted to Japan. In this sense, the ‘new social movements’ in Okinawa have expressed Okinawan distinctiveness and separation from Japan, not by claiming political ‘independence’, but by their expression of Okinawa as a unique community of protest, with a direct networked link to global civil society. Arakawa Akira’s anti-reversionism (see chapter 5) — which sees Okinawa as a distinctive community that resists belonging to the framework of the nation-state — has been indirectly put into action without apparent recognition of his idea.

However, this dissertation has emphasised that the historical narrative of Okinawa’s marginalisation remains very important across the board. Interestingly, whether emphasising distinctiveness of, or the sameness between, Okinawa and *yamato*, protest actors — as long as they are ‘Okinawan’ — see themselves as part of many Okinawans’ struggles against a long history of marginalisation, that is, a consistent and historical ‘Okinawan struggle’. Almost universal reference to the experience of the Battle of Okinawa, the history of the all-island land struggle in the 1950s, and Okinawans as a unitary and marginalised entity throughout the post-war period indicate the importance of the myth.

Second, this dissertation has examined the impacts of diversifying protest on coalition-building, and on the effectiveness of the Okinawans’ protest to bring about the reduction and eventual removal of the US military bases on Okinawa. At the basic level, Okinawan protest actors agree that they all want removal of the bases. What they disagree on is how to achieve that. These disagreements derive from the different perspectives on the most important reform agendas — constitutionality of the US bases, violence towards women, and the protection of the local-specific environment and lifestyle, or opposition to the US security alliance — and, at a deeper level, on what being ‘Okinawan’ means. However, it is the contention of this dissertation that this has not necessarily been all negative. It has been helpful not only for realising a more open civil society that respects differences, but also for building depth in the idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’.

During the first- and second-wave mass protests, coalition-building was relatively successful, albeit temporary: in this period, ‘reversion’ functioned as a goal that was capable of being a dominant goal of the community, and unified heterogeneous groups and organisations into an umbrella organisation. Part I described how the central actors of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ were mainly unionised workers, landowners, teachers, and communist/socialist party members. These traditional actors were good at synthesising their activities, and organisations; they formed a united progressive coalition. Also, the slogan of ‘reversion nationalism’ was capable of mobilising the Okinawan public, temporarily creating one ‘Okinawan’ voice for reintegration with Japan. In the sense of achieving a goal with a clear slogan and a united coalition, the reversion movement was effective. However, in the end, the reversion — achieved without any major change in the US military presence — was not what the Okinawans had wanted. In the process of the reversion movement, the Council of Reversion and its campaign became detached from Okinawans’ day-to-day humiliation and danger inflicted upon those in proximity to the US military dictatorship in Okinawa. As discussed in chapter 5, the Council’s campaign did not fully address the grievances of workers in and around the bases who wished for an anti-US base general strike: in order to achieve early reversion, the Council called off the planned general strike, which would have seriously inconvenienced the US military and damaged the Japanese government. Furthermore, the spontaneous and mob-ruled Koza riot revealed that the voices of base town workers and victims of crimes and accidents caused by the US military were neglected in the process of the reversion movement. The plight of those involved in prostitution was not even represented.

After the reversion, coalition-building became more and more difficult in the community of protest. Increasingly, protest became geographically sub-divided within the Okinawan archipelago. Organisations became much more fragmented, smaller, and more scattered in different regions. Okinawan protest disintegrated from one ‘reversion movement’ to many residents’ movements: anti-base activities (in villages such as Onna, Ie, Toyohara, Kunigami and Kin) and anti-pollution residents’

movements in countless communities, represented by those in the Kin Bay area and Shiraho hamlet, discussed in chapter 7. It was as if the post-reversion community of protest had developed a silent consensus to resist a centralised, binding organisation with the power to suppress individual collective actions for the sake of achieving one goal. As in mainland Japan, the influence of communist and socialist political parties, the New Left sects and factions, and the workers' unions has deteriorated and given way to the residents' voluntary associations and women's groups, in organising protest (Sasaki-Uemura 2001).

The pluralisation within the community of protest — in terms of protest organisations, strategies and reform agendas — has made the coalition building of the protest actors increasingly difficult: it has become almost impossible to form a united social movement, that is, an 'Okinawan movement'. A result has been that the effectiveness of the Okinawans' opposition against the US military bases has been sacrificed, indicated by the 'low' period between the second and the third waves of post-war Okinawans' mass protests. However, in this period, multi-faceted social grievances in Okinawan society demonstrated by those inspired by the 'local' and 'gender' framings, which had been previously excluded from the community of protest, found their own voices for collective action. Another result of pluralisation, therefore, has been that individual protest actors more genuinely represent what their protests are for, and are less likely to lose sight of it under the pressure of one, hegemonic organisation and reform agenda.

This is not to say that all the protest actors' concerns are represented equally as the 'Okinawan' collective will in the formal political arena. Collective action of women spearheaded the temporary prominence of Okinawan anti-base sentiment following the 1995 rape case, and created a rare political opportunity which induced the SACO plan to remove the Futenma Air Base. However, the reform agendas staged by the 'gender' framing of these women activists — elimination of gendered violence and discrimination — quickly disappeared from the realm of political representation (Angst 2001). Progressive political parties, anti-war landowners and union-based peace organisations reasserted Okinawa's sovereignty against foreign

military rule and re-emphasised fair and equal treatment of Okinawa within Japan as the issue. The focus of the Okinawan community of protest and the public came back to the question of Okinawa's marginalisation in Japan measured against the central government's priority to maintain US–Japan security alliance at Okinawa's expense.

Consequently, the 'third-wave' mass protest that rose in October 1995 settled down, as the government assuaged the local anti-base sentiment with its old instrument, compensation politics. The protest in Okinawa has been decentralised into multiple regional centres of military facility locations, the most crucial of which is the anti-heliport protest in Nago city, as discussed in chapter 8. In Nago, the base issue was transformed into an economic issue: whether Nago citizens can do without the construction industry supported by government funding, which has been crucial to the survival of the small local economy. The terrain of contest shifted to the localised confrontation between the pro-base and anti-base camps in the form of collecting votes for the referendum and mayoral elections. The power of subsidies and developmental projects as the central government's instrument has revealed that materialism is still the dominant consideration not only in Nago but also in Urasoe and other regional communities in Okinawa. Nevertheless, within the community of protest, post-materialist values and reform agendas have become increasingly influential. Not surprisingly, then, the development of a plural and open civil society in Okinawa has not resulted in a successful campaign against the US military presence. The community of protest has remained fragmented, sub-divided and resisted a unified, hegemonic coalition.

The main focus of this dissertation has been the internal dimensions of protest, such as organisation, strategy, collective identity and framings of protest. It is obvious that the effectiveness of protest actors also depends on the external political environment, explained by Tarrow as political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1994). The trajectory of an 'Okinawan struggle' suggests that each of the three 'waves' of mass protest was remarkable, in the sense that the popular protests were able to take advantage of, and contributed to, creating a major political opportunity for pivotal changes in the tripartite US–Japan–Okinawa relationship, such as reversion of

Okinawa, the relocation of the Futenma Air Station and rearrangement of the US–Japan security treaty. Yet these occasions are few and far between. The timing and consequences of protest ‘waves’, that is, ascendance and decline of a cycle of protest, have not been completely under the protest actors’ control. The three waves, which all resulted in the continuation of US military presence in Okinawa, may have taught a lesson to the individual protest actors to remain faithful to their different causes as Okinawan residents, rather than losing sight of what they really wanted, in the cause of a unified ‘movement’.

The third important point in response to the overall question of this dissertation is how relevant and powerful the myth of a unitary ‘Okinawan struggle’ has been and still is, whilst the actors become increasingly splintered. In its investigation, this dissertation has attempted to conceptualise the protests and popular struggles in post-war Okinawa as examples of social movements. It has found that concepts of social movements, among others, the ‘new social movements’ theory and the concept of collective identity, have been particularly relevant for Okinawan protest actors. The trajectory of Okinawan protest demonstrates that despite the divisions and diversification, an idea of an Okinawan ‘struggle’, based on a sense of a community and tradition of protest, has been maintained. Out of internal diversity and conflicting positions within social movements, participants and observers recognise a coherent collective identity:

Collective identity takes the form of a field containing a system of vectors in tension [that] seek to establish an equilibrium between the various axes of collective action and between identification that an actor declares and the identification given by the rest of the society (adversaries, allies, third parties) ... At any given moment both actors and observers can give an account of this field through a unified, delimited, and static definition of the ‘we’ (Melucci 1995: 50).

The recognition of a tradition of struggle against marginalisation of Okinawa itself has been an important common ideological resource for different actors vying for contrasting reform agendas, because it enables them to delimit who ‘we’ are. This dissertation has stressed that, despite the growing differences among the protest actors, the idea of a unitary, coherent Okinawans’ struggle has survived, and is still powerful. Different organisations and groups have supported, relied on and exploited this idea

through the three cycles of protest, because it has been useful and beneficial for their particular protest.

The endurance of the idea of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ as a unified struggle is at odds with the increasingly obvious coexistence of different social movements in Okinawa. It also explains the generally harmonious relationship between different groups (especially new and more traditional actors) on the surface, despite the divisions and seeds of conflict underneath: even though they may disagree on priorities and what is really at stake, the internal differences have never intensified into the type and degree of conflict that could damage the myth of a unified struggle. In this dissertation, I have argued that the continuous interactions, tensions and mutual learning among different actors have produced a community of protest — which is similar to the concept of the ‘field’ explained above by Melucci — and the idea of an ‘Okinawan’ struggle itself constitutes the collective identity of Okinawan protest. The historical narrative of Okinawa’s marginalisation that extended from the annexation of the Ryūkyū kingdom and the Battle of Okinawa has been maintained and is as strong as ever across the board in the community of protest. The emergence of ‘new social movements’ have altered the nature of the community of protest, and produced a more flexible and all-encompassing, holistic idea of an ‘Okinawan struggle’, rather than the ‘Okinawa Struggle’: the term that signifies an offshoot of the mainland Japanese leftist movement.<sup>1</sup>

Sharing common ideas is an extremely important element that sustains the loose, invisible, non-binding fabric that connects different protest actors in Okinawa. The common historical narrative of marginalisation represents the important common element that connects different protest actors, and is an important element in sustaining the myth of the ‘Okinawan struggle’. As discussed in chapter 3, Okinawan citizens’ movements for representing residents’ memories of war have been a

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<sup>1</sup> The ‘Okinawa Struggle’, as defined by Arasaki, stresses the link between the Okinawan predicament with the current US–Japan security alliance that structurally discriminates Okinawa (Arasaki 1997: 246). His idea may be most consistent with the ‘constitutionalist’ framing of protest because of its definition of the problem as mainly the government’s placing priority on security over principles of democracy, peace and equality.

particularly important element of how Okinawans understand who ‘we’ are today, and what the present anti-base protest is about.

The dissertation has also emphasised the importance of a common ‘repertoire of protest’ accumulated and shared in the Okinawan community of protest, in forming and maintaining a sense of unity among heterogeneous actors. The clear content of this ‘Okinawan struggle’ is not defined or written out anywhere. It is akin to a myth that resides in an abstract world, which different Okinawan activists can rely on, in their own terms in their respective struggles. The undefined nature of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ — but whose connotation everyone understands the moment it is uttered — works positively, because it leaves the idea or myth open to be used or exploited with unrestricted possibilities. It is also the contention of this dissertation that what continued the lineage of an ‘Okinawan struggle’ has been the repeated reflection on past experience and passing on of new lessons to the struggles that have followed.

The tradition of protest in Okinawa predates and will outlive the ‘anti-base movements’. Popular opposition to the presence of US military bases has been the most prominent protest in post-war Okinawa. However, Okinawans have been engaged in protest before the US military occupied the island; among the earliest examples being the petition of Miyako farmers to mainland Japan to abolish the Shuri Court’s toll tax. The myth of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ has a power to connect marginalisation of different forms: military bases, poverty, economic dependency, and violence towards the environment and women. In the near future, the US re-examination of global security interests may result in the transfer of US forces from Okinawa to Korea, The Philippines, Australia, or somewhere in Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> However, this is unlikely to mean the end of the ‘Okinawan struggle’ against marginalisation.

This thesis examined the numerous past and present struggles in Okinawa, drawing on the concepts and theories of ‘social movements’, and explained the dynamics of increasing internal plurality within the community of protest, and the

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<sup>2</sup>O’Hanlon and Mochizuki analyse that it would be ‘preferable’ for the US to spread part of the Marine forces concentrated on Okinawa to these regions (O’Hanlon & Mochizuki 2003: 165).

enduring myth of unity. A question that invites further examination is if the Okinawan case has implications for the study of 'people's movements' in other places. The complex problems related to Okinawan identity, and the historical narrative of marginalisation that this study has examined, do not allow simple uprooting and transplantation to other studies. Yet the internal complexity, divisions and differences that are often disguised under a united front may not be a problem only in Okinawa. In the Okinawan case, the heterogeneity and differences are left intact by an increasingly less rigid, but nevertheless persistent, myth of one unified people that can instantly expand the community of protest when needed, for instance, when a 12-year-old girl was raped. What are the myths that keep providing the basis of a seemingly united 'movement'? Which social movements are represented, and silenced in the process? How do these myths help the coalition building among different groups, with different reform agendas and identity? These questions could indeed be instructive for investigations into other experiences of anti-US base movements in the Philippines, or the ongoing struggles of the people in South Korea and Puerto Rico against US bases, and indeed social movements in general.



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## **Newspapers and Magazines**

*Asahi Shimbun*

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*Shin Okinawa Bungaku*

*The Australian*

*TIME International*

*Washington Post*

*Yaeyama Mainichi*

*Yaeyama Nippō*

*Yomiuri Daily News*

## Appendix 1

### SACO final Report's Plan on Reintegration and Reduction of US Military Bases on Okinawa (2 December 1996)

(Okinawa Prefecture Military Base Affairs Office,  
<http://www2.pref.okinawa.jp/oki/okinawa.nsf/0/aae8116c63dabbbb4925692f0081892f?OpenDocument>, 2003.)

#### 1. Land Return

Name of Facility	Return Portion	Total Area (ha) of Facility	Land to be Returned (ha) Year of Return (Aim)	Preconditions and other items
Futenma Air Station	All	4 8 1	4 8 1 (within 5 or 7 years)	Pursue the construction of a sea-based facility (1,500m long) Transfer 12 KC-130 aircraft to Iwakuni Develop additional facilities at Kadena Air Base
Northern Training Area	Over half	7 , 5 1 3	3 , 9 8 7 (end of Financial Year 2002)	Provide approx. 38 ha land area and approx. 121 ha of water area for ocean access Relocate helicopter landing zone from the areas to be returned to the remaining area inside this site.
Aha Training Area	All	( 4 8 0 )	( 4 8 0 ) (end of FY1997)	(*Release U.S. joint use of facility) (water area 7,895 ha)
Ginbaru Training Area	All	6 0	6 0 ( end of FY1997 )	Relocate the helicopter landing zone to Kin Blue Beach Training Area Relocate other facilities to Camp Hansen
Sobe Communication Site	All	5 3	5 3 ( end of FY2000 )	Relocate antenna facilities and associated support facilities to Camp Hansen
Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield	All	1 9 1	1 9 1 ( end of FY2000 )	Return Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield after The parachute drop training is relocated to Ie Jima Auxiliary and Sobe Communication Site is returned
Camp Kuwae	Large Portion	1 0 7	9 9 ( end of FY2000 )	Relocate the Naval Hospital to Camp Zukeran (This figure, 99ha, includes the northern portion which was

				previously agreed upon)
Senaha Communication	Nearly All	6 1	6 1 ( end of FY2000 )	Relocate the antenna facilities, and the other facilities to Torii Communication Site Retain the land area where microwave tower stands(approx. 0.1 ha)
Makiminato Service Area	Portion	2 7 5	3 (in order to widen the road)	Relocate the facilities that will be effected by the return within the remaining Makiminato Service Area
Naha Port	All	5 7	5 7	Jointly continue best efforts to accelerate the return in connection to its relocation to the Urasoe Pier area (approx. 35 ha)
Housing Consolidation		6 4 8	8 3 ( end of FY2007 )	Consolidate U.S. housing areas in Camp Kuwae and Camp Zukeran
Sub-total		9 , 4 4 6	5 , 0 7 5	
New provision			▲ 7 3	( Naha Port 35 ha, Northern Training Area 38 ha )
Total		11 facilities	5 , 0 0 2	Total area (ha) of the U.S. facilities and areas in Okinawa would be reduced by approx. 21%

## 2 . Implementation of Noise Reduction Initiative

Items	Outline
Relocation of Navy aircraft and MC-130 operations at Kadena Air Base	Relocate Navy aircraft operations and supporting facilities to the other side of the major runways. Move the MC-130s to the northwest corner of the major runways
Construction of noise reduction baffles at Kadena Air Base	Build new noise reduction baffles at the north side of Kadena Air Base