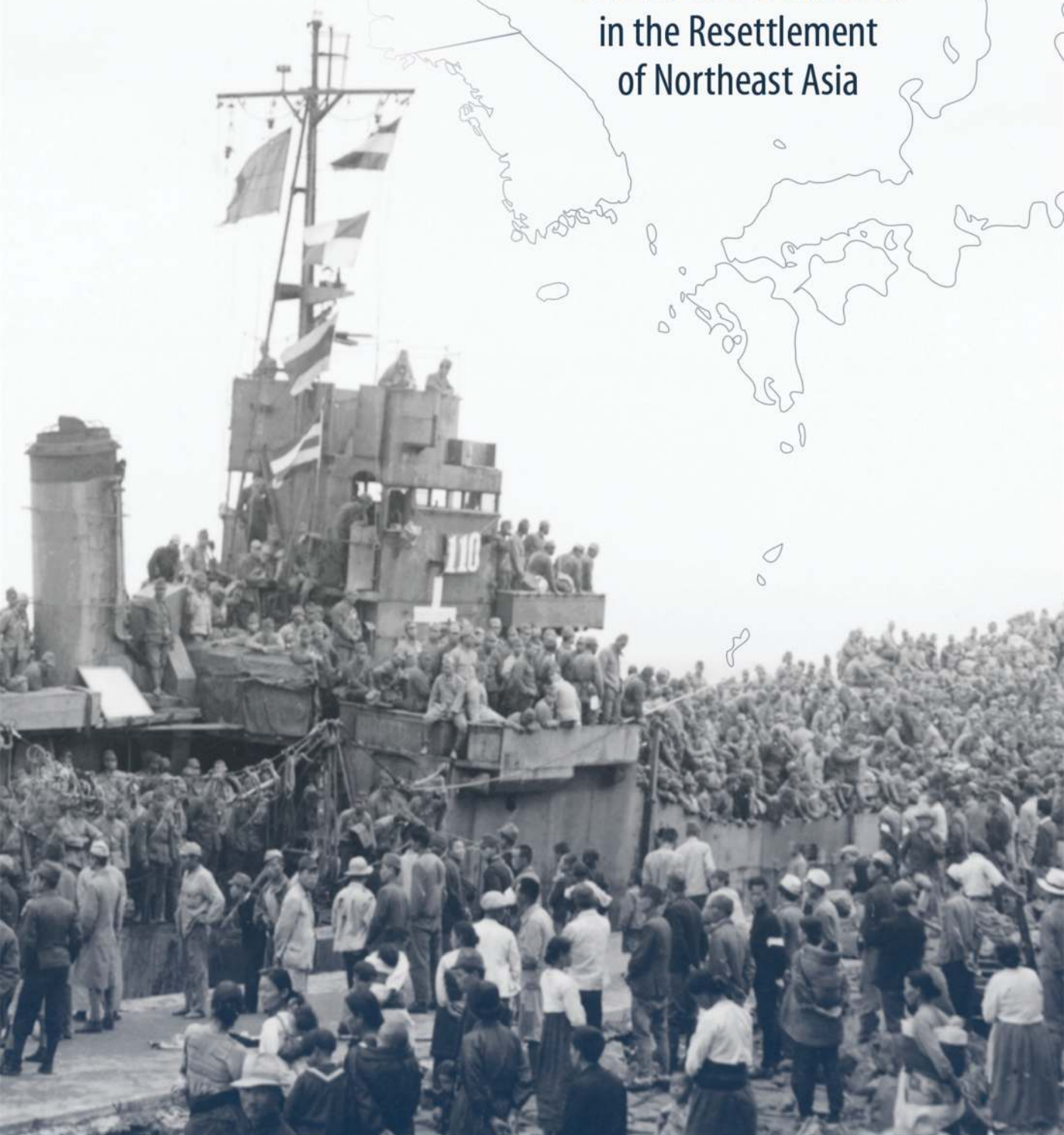


# FROM JAPANESE EMPIRE TO AMERICAN HEGEMONY

Koreans and Okinawans  
in the Resettlement  
of Northeast Asia



MATTHEW R. AUGUSTINE

**FROM JAPANESE EMPIRE TO  
AMERICAN HEGEMONY**

*Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University*

The Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University were inaugurated in 1962 to bring to a wider public the results of significant new research on modern and contemporary East Asia.

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**Matthew R. Augustine**



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## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of words follows the modified Hepburn system for Japanese and the Revised Romanization system for Korean. Exceptions include certain place names (e.g., Kyushu), historical figures (e.g., Syngman Rhee), and surnames (e.g., Kim instead of Gim) that are more often associated with conventional English renderings. Surnames precede given names for Korean, Okinawan, and Japanese persons. All translations are the author's, unless otherwise indicated.



## *Introduction*

When the Allies severed imperial Japan from its Asia-Pacific empire in the wake of World War II, hundreds of thousands of Koreans in Japan departed for their liberated homeland. Hong Yeopyo, a fifteen-year-old adolescent boy born and raised in Japan, was one. Unable to wait their designated turn to board one of the large, official repatriation ships heading for Korea, he helped his mother charter an old and inconspicuous fishing vessel barely big enough to hide ten passengers. Stealthily embarking from Osaka Bay, the small boat traveled through the Inland Sea, past Shimonoseki, before arriving in Jeju Island two days later. Through the black market, Hong's family had to sell rice from Niigata Prefecture—a precious commodity in the bombed-out cities of Japan—in order to pay for this long-awaited return journey to their home island. Once back in Jeju, they sold an array of aluminum products, including cooking utensils such as pots and pans that they smuggled in from Japan, in order to buy a house for the family. Despite the economic challenges that accompanied their reintegration, Hong and his family were happy to be back home. Within two years, however, he found himself once again boarding a small smuggling ship that took him back to Osaka.<sup>1</sup>

Koreans were by no means the only group of migrants in postwar Japan who departed for their respective homelands in the wake of war—only to return again, utilizing migrant smuggling networks that spread throughout the region. Arakaki Seiichi, a twenty-five-year-old laborer from Okinawa, bought and sold whatever food he could find on the black markets of Osaka in order to survive. For a time, this included illegally butchering horses disposed of by the Imperial Japanese Army. Rubbing butter into the horsemeat, Arakaki sold it as beef, using a portion of his profits to pay for his modest wedding ceremony attended by surviving family members of the bride and groom. With the wartime blockade of Okinawa still in effect, he relied upon the kinship networks of Okinawans who supported one another in the countless black markets mushrooming across postwar Japan. Arakaki made his way to the city of Kumamoto, where he witnessed pilfered US military goods from Okinawa being sold on the black market. Drawn by this lucrative underground trade, he and his family decided to repatriate to his native

Okinawa, where he promptly joined the local network of smuggling operations. Thus becoming a *senka agiyaa*—an Okinawan term for a supplier of pilfered US military supplies—Arakaki delivered goods to Okinawan smugglers, who loaded them onto fishing vessels headed for Japan.<sup>2</sup>

The remarkable experiences of Hong and Arakaki reflect the regional scale of postwar smuggling operations, which developed in response to American occupation policies in Northeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> As Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), General Douglas MacArthur initially delegated Japanese authorities the task of controlling the congested ports and regulating the flows of people in and out of occupied Japan. Only when SCAP's restrictive customs regulations slowed down the outflow of aliens from Japan did the occupation forces take over, belatedly, implementing a mass repatriation program that commenced in April 1946. At the same time, however, SCAP's policy of dismantling the Japanese Empire through repatriation was only partially fulfilled, as an increasing number of migrants began arriving in occupied Japan. The majority were Koreans and Okinawans escaping economic hardship and political repression in their homelands, both of which were under direct US military rule. This new wave of immigrants challenged the American effort to isolate Japan from territories of its former imperial domain. Such circular migration had been common practice within the Japanese Empire, but the borders newly drawn by American occupations abruptly transformed former imperial subjects into illegal immigrants. Those who were arrested were shipped to detention camps, interrogated, and deported. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 drove US officials to work more closely with Japanese authorities to fortify territorial borders further. As a result of this collaboration, the new, postwar migration control system helped to reorient Japan from East to West, from enemy to ally, as the central base of American hegemony in Northeast Asia.

This study explores how former imperial subjects jettisoned by a defeated empire sought ways to reestablish transnational networks in a region dominated by a rising hegemonic power. In particular, it focuses on the multifaceted and evolving interactions between occupation authorities, local officials, and individual migrants trapped between borderlines newly drawn on a map. In order to understand how these interactions co-produced migration and border controls that fundamentally reshaped the region, this study addresses three specific and inter-related questions: (1) What did liberation and defeat mean for ethnic Koreans and Okinawans in Japan, and how did these interpretations affect their decisions to remain in the Japanese mainland, or to repatriate to their respective homelands? (2) Why, and how, did the challenging process of resettlement in US-occupied Korea and Okinawa contribute to the expansion of regional smuggling networks?

Finally, (3) how exactly did migrant smuggling, unauthorized immigration, and the appearance of war refugees help generate lasting exclusionary migration and border controls in the region? This examination into the transregional history of repatriation, resettlement, and illegal entry can reveal the process by which US-occupied Northeast Asia was reshaped after World War II.

### **Migrants in the Aftermath of Empire**

Individual stories of human migration, such as those of Hong, Arakaki, and many others like them, provide some of the most tangible and effective means of measuring social change. Migration not only transforms the lives of such individuals and their families, but also exerts a cumulative effect upon both the societies they leave behind and those they enter. As such, the study of migration has grappled with important questions about the relationship between individuals on the move and the societies they traverse. When emerging disciplines in the social sciences began to study population mobility in the 1880s, migrants were primarily treated as either objects or byproducts of economic production, low-class laborers who often created social problems. Other observers were more explicit, castigating migrant laborers as potential criminals belonging to “dangerous classes” and thus unfit for membership to the national community.<sup>4</sup> Along with such dominant concepts as nation and class, race was invented as a powerful category in academic debates during the late nineteenth century. Just as German scholars rendered Polish migrant workers as racially inferior, similar pronouncements were made about Italians in France and Jews in many parts of Western Europe. Such racial “science” was not discarded until after World War II, paving the way for more innovative sociological studies of migration that emphasize human agency and networks, focusing on the migrant’s decision making and experiences.<sup>5</sup> Since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, anthropologists and sociologists, critical of prevalent discourses on the nation-state, have advocated transnational perspectives on migration and its contribution to globalization.<sup>6</sup> Adopting and modifying this approach, historians have begun to emphasize transregionalism as a more valid framework in which to understand human mobility, measuring the tangible impact that migrants have on societies in a given region.<sup>7</sup>

The migrations of Koreans and Okinawans through the ruins of the Japanese Empire provide two subjects particularly illuminating for the study of mobility and social change. With a rapidly expanding population reaching over 2 million people, spurred by imperial Japan’s wartime mobilization program, ethnic Koreans constituted the largest colonial immigrant community in Japan at the end of World War II. Upon hearing the Allies had liberated Korea, many of them emerged



from the dark coal mines and damaged munitions factories in which they had been conscripted to work, while others departed from the countryside, where they had taken shelter from the relentless American air raids. Hong recalls how elated his father and close acquaintances were at that moment: “It was as if everything changed overnight, as if we were headed for heaven the very next day.”<sup>8</sup>

Despite the liberation of Korea, Japanese authorities were initially reluctant to assist their colonial subjects in Japan, except to deport those laborers and military servicemen who had been mobilized for the war. Many Korean men and women took matters into their own hands: Rallying around newly established Korean organizations, they crossed the Korea Strait in what quickly became a mass exodus. In particular, the League of Koreans in Japan emerged as a powerful institutional force, which in the absence of official aid helped to facilitate a more orderly return of compatriots. At the same time, the leadership of the League was determined to secure social, cultural, and political autonomy for Korean residents remaining in postimperial Japan.

The second largest migrant community in occupied Japan was the Okinawans. Combined with former residents of other island groups in the Ryukyu archipelago, they numbered over 200,000 in early 1946. Unlike Koreans and Taiwanese, these were not colonial subjects celebrating liberation; rather, these were Japanese nationals, whose home islands had fallen under US military rule since the Battle of Okinawa. Nevertheless, due to their distinctive history, culture, and language, Okinawan migrants had endured discrimination since the Ryukyu Kingdom was absorbed into Japan as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. This lingering problem was further aggravated after World War II when a Japanese military commander spread a vicious and groundless rumor in Kyushu, accusing Okinawans of “spying” for the enemy because they spoke a dialect incomprehensible to mainland Japanese. Such discrimination and prejudice, compounded by the absence of government policy and consequent uncertainty of status, spurred Okinawans to form associations for mutual aid. Foremost among these was the League of Okinawans, which consciously modeled itself after—and brokered close relations with—the League of Koreans, advocating repatriation and pursuing greater autonomy. The League’s leadership repeatedly criticized the postwar Japanese government for its indifference to the plight of Okinawan men, women, and children. Upon becoming a member of the Kumamoto branch of the League, Arakaki participated in the May Day demonstrations of 1946, chanting their organizational slogan: “Return Okinawans to Okinawa now!”<sup>9</sup>

Noting the numerous hardships faced by Korean and Okinawan migrants, earlier studies have often portrayed them as passive victims, abandoned by the Japanese state and society. In fact, however, both migrants on the move after

the war and those who remained minority residents in a defeated nation actively worked to determine their own fate. Recognizing and exploring the individual agency and subjectivity of these migrants enables us to bridge the social and political history of migrant men and women who attempted to negotiate basic freedoms and rights within the constraints of a military occupation. Korean and Okinawan organizations not only played a central role in returning their compatriots; they also struggled to protect the rights of those who remained in Japan. Although these ethnic organizations did not control the underground networks that helped migrants enter Japan, individual members often used them to maintain close links with their respective homelands. However, what the operators and clients of these transborder networks considered to be a justifiable venture in the absence of commercial transport was deemed by the state as a threat, and thus made illegal.<sup>10</sup> This study on how the occupation state's policies affected—and, in turn, were affected by—migrant minorities is aided by a comparison of the intertwined, postwar experiences of Koreans and Okinawans, stressing both their commonalities and differences. Such an approach additionally helps to give voice to the lived experiences of ethnic minorities who have, until recently, largely been excluded from historical narratives of postwar Japan.

### **Migration and Border Controls in Occupied Territory**

Scrutinizing the struggles between migrants and states also offers an insightful means of tracing political change. Often invoking urgent sociopolitical contingencies, state authorities have frequently attempted to regulate and restrict human mobility, claiming migration controls as a fundamental right of sovereignty. During the modern era of rapidly increasing world migrations, emergent nation-states began to fundamentally redirect their attention, as well as significant resources, from containing emigration to controlling immigration. The “invention of the passport” from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century greatly contributed to this process, transforming a travel document into a powerful means of national identification, which was used widely to exclude unwanted migrants.<sup>11</sup> Driven by racist instincts and rhetoric, white settler nations like the United States, Canada, and Australia led this globalization of border controls to contain the so-called “yellow peril” that Asian immigrants allegedly represented.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, contentious relations between states and individual border crossers—conflicts that played out over migration and citizenship laws—permeated the colonial empires that were spreading throughout the modern world. From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, imperial powers endeavored to control not only the external, territorial boundaries of the nation but also the internal, administrative

boundaries within their empires. Accomplishing this task often required the implementation of two sets of migration laws in relation to one another, while grappling with difficult questions of how to legally define imperial citizens versus colonial subjects.<sup>13</sup> Such tensions between internal and external boundaries—between the nation and the empire—remained largely unresolved when World War II came to a grinding halt.

In 1945, for those most devastated by the recent global war, the “Year Zero” marked an epochal moment, demarcating a fundamental departure from the recent past and the corresponding dawn of a new era. One world had ended and a new, uncertain one was beginning, marked by regime change across Asia and continental Europe.<sup>14</sup> In the midst of such sweeping political changes, old and newly emergent nation-states alike adamantly insisted upon exercising their sovereign right to restrict and regulate human mobility at their borders. The military occupation of much of Europe and Asia by the victorious Allied powers raised a number of knotty questions: When a state’s national sovereignty is suspended by an occupying power, what happens to that state’s self-proclaimed right to control migration and authority to enforce those controls? What if the occupier’s authority extends beyond the nation, encompassing its former colonial empire? How does the occupation of an empire affect migration and border controls in both the metropolitan and colonial states? Any answers to such challenging questions will require us to explain how borders of occupation are controlled, and to pay close attention to how such efforts reflect the occupier’s desired shape and composition of the occupied territory.

This examination into the process of determining, maintaining, and reinforcing the borders and boundaries of occupied territory must first begin by defining “military occupation.” As Sarah Kovner’s study suggests, it is useful to compare and contrast occupations with colonial rule, particularly since the two terms are often used interchangeably.<sup>15</sup> Colonialism and military occupation both refer to the unequal state of the relationship resulting from a ruling power establishing direct control over territory beyond its borders. To be sure, the political, economic, and social inequality between colonizer and colonized is similar to such inequality between occupier and occupied, but the design and duration of the latter relationship are usually intended to be limited. According to the Hague Regulations, codified in 1907, an occupier is constrained from imposing indefinite control over the sovereignty of the occupied. This constraint technically distinguishes a military occupation from outright colonialism. Furthermore, the occupying power is “precluded from annexing the occupied territory or otherwise changing its political status and is bound to respect and maintain [the] political and other institutions that exist in that territory.”<sup>16</sup> This would suggest that an occupation

administration must not tamper with preexisting local laws, including migration and nationality laws. As we will see, however, occupying powers have not always honored the law of occupations.

One of the first real tests of the Hague Regulations came in the wake of World War I, when the victorious Allies occupied German territory. For example, the League of Nations mandate in Micronesia blurred the line between military occupation and colonialism, as the imperial Japanese government never showed any sign of relinquishing its administration of the formerly German-held islands.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Allied authorities largely upheld the law of occupations in administering the German Rhineland, but their handling of the colossal task of massive population transfers in the wake of war reveals a mixed record. They did create a repatriation commission, which supervised the return of millions of war refugees and prisoners of war to their respective countries of origin. On the other hand, the Allies also approved of the large-scale “unmixing of peoples,” initiated by new nation-states in territories formerly ruled by the Central Powers. The postwar political reconfigurations thus spurred such migrations of ethnic unmixing, resulting in the deportation and resettlement of millions of ethnic Germans, Hungarians, and Turks who were driven out of their homes in the defeated, discredited, and dissolved multiethnic empires.<sup>18</sup>

World War II resulted in still larger mass population movements in the aftermath of war and empire. Allied occupation authorities once again relied on repatriation as the solution, discounting significant problems associated with it. The term “repatriation” is broadly defined as the act of returning people, as well as assets or artifacts, to their country of origin. It does not, however, indicate whether this return is voluntary or enforced.<sup>19</sup> This is a crucial distinction that determines the scale and order, not to mention the intended nature, of the population transfers. Nevertheless, the Allies indiscriminately spoke of the need to repatriate non-combatants as well as military servicemen, concerned only with the ultimate goal of matching peoples to territories where they purportedly belonged. Their priority was to demobilize and send home over 7.6 million German POWs in Western Europe, and 3.7 million Japanese troops abroad. As Lori Watt’s pioneering study of the postwar repatriations explains, few plans had been made for the 3.2 million Japanese civilians outside of their home islands. The lack of planning makes a stark contrast with the case in Europe, where the Allies prepared for the transfer of an estimated 11 million displaced persons and refugees through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitations Administration (UNRRA).<sup>20</sup> Watt makes a strong case for considering the consequent hardships suffered by Japanese and German civilians, but the Allies were more preoccupied with “displaced persons”—a term that was employed to refer to various victims of the Axis powers.

In practice, this meant that war refugees, forced laborers, military conscripts, and others mobilized and displaced by the war were given the choice of returning home or not, while the Allies attempted to expel all enemy nationals from occupied territory.

After the masses of demobilized soldiers and displaced civilians were repatriated to their respective territories of origin, they still had to be given safe passage home to rebuild their lives. Driven by a combination of humanitarianism, public opinion, and political interests, the US government and its Western Allies ensured that victims of Nazi racist and genocidal policies would receive the attention and aid they needed.<sup>21</sup> Displaced persons in Asia, however, were not accorded the same political status or economic resources that their European counterparts enjoyed. Although the UNRRA provided the largest sum of its commodity aid to China, its operations were marred by the Nationalist Chinese regime's misappropriation of this aid to support its civil war against the Communist Chinese.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Allied authorities in the region considered their duty in executing the mass repatriation program to have been accomplished once returnees were shipped out of their respective zones of occupation. The follow-up task of domestic resettlement, an important process of internal migration and social reintegration, was delegated to local officials to deal with.

The policy of matching ethnic groups to territories, first implemented through repatriation and resettlement, also drove Allied authorities to reinforce powerful migration controls based on the legally enforced distinction between "nationals" and "aliens" in Europe and in Asia. Indeed, the intense nationalism that accompanied World War II, combined with the escalating political-ideological conflict referred to as the Cold War, contributed to new and restrictive immigration regulations around the world. An exclusionary trend was set in 1946 when the Allies decided to establish inter-zonal travel permits in occupied Germany. Though rarely issued in practice, these permits came to symbolize the division between East and West. Borderlines drawn by the Allies also meant redefining citizenship laws in liberated colonies. In the Mediterranean and East African regions, for instance, Italian colonial settlers abruptly became aliens subject to a new set of state regulations.<sup>23</sup> Those who violated these regulations, knowingly or unwittingly, became "illegal immigrants." As we will see, Korean migrants who entered occupied Japan either to rejoin family members, to receive an education, or to seek refuge from the civil conflicts that wracked their homeland—like Hong Yeopyo—would also be treated as illegal entrants and subject to arrest, incarceration, and deportation. Such was the harsh reality facing postcolonial migrants, who so recently had been expected to live and die for the Japanese Empire.

## American Occupiers in Northeast Asia

The transformation of Northeast Asia in the wake of World War II took shape under the powerful auspices of American occupiers, who were deployed in some of the most strategically significant parts of Japan's imperial domain. In the process of breaking up this vast empire, SCAP assumed control over the four main Japanese islands, which it administered indirectly through the Japanese government. The US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) directly controlled the southern half of the peninsula. First the US Navy, and then the Army, presided over the United States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands (USMGR), with Okinawa as its central base. General Douglas MacArthur, the larger-than-life American war hero, was designated the "Supreme Commander," presiding over SCAP's civil administration while continuing to serve as the commander of the US Army Forces in the Pacific. MacArthur also held tactical and governmental responsibilities for Korea. He delegated these to General John R. Hodge, commander of the US Armed Forces in Korea, who appointed USAMGIK's military governors. Meanwhile, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, another American war hero and commander in chief of the US Pacific Fleet, designated chief officers for USMGR. Together, these powerful military leaders commanded over a half million American occupiers in the region, a formidable force that replaced rapidly demobilizing imperial Japanese servicemen.

Because these distinct institutions were responsible for their respective military occupations, historians have tended to treat the US occupations of postwar Japan (1945–1952), southern Korea (1945–1948), and the Ryukyu Islands (1945–1972) separately. As a result, few attempts have been made to examine the American interlude in Northeast Asia as a closely integrated, regional history. The narrowly defined boundaries of area studies—which, until recently, were largely confined to national histories—have also hampered broader, integrated perspectives.<sup>24</sup> The long and continuing fascination of American scholars and policymakers with the occupation of Japan, and its legacies, constitute an important factor as well. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning study of occupied Japan, John Dower could write that, after 1945, the once aggressively imperial Japan withdrew from the world into an "embrace with its American conquerors."<sup>25</sup> As insightful as this metaphor is, however, neither national nor binational approaches alone suffice to explain how Americans played a decisive role in removing Japan from its regional empire. Only by examining the history of US occupations in Northeast Asia can one begin to understand how the Japanese "embraced" America, in stark contrast to Korean and Okinawan resistance. Occupied Japan was a remarkably "privileged



site” within the US-dominated regional system. In the words of Laura Hein, its “good fortune is particularly clear when contrasted to the experience of Okinawans, South Koreans, and Taiwanese, all places sullenly under Japanese control in early 1945.”<sup>26</sup>

Beyond such broad comparisons, recent scholarship has begun to explore the multiple interconnections between American occupations in a transnational context.<sup>27</sup> Detailed studies about repatriation, smuggling, illegal immigration, and border controls in US-occupied Northeast Asia, written in both Japanese and Korean, have led the way towards breaking down the invisible barriers of national histories that have long dominated the field.<sup>28</sup> Inspired by this rich material and engaging analysis, scholars writing in English have also contributed original works on these subjects.<sup>29</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s *Borderline Japan* best exemplifies this transnational approach to migration and border controls, with its focus on Korean migrants who crossed in and out of Japan, legally and illegally, during the postwar era.<sup>30</sup> Focusing on what happens on the ground at frontiers, she deftly describes how the often contentious encounter between former colonial subjects and regional authorities strongly influenced the formation of postimperial Japan’s migration system. Echoing Ōnuma Yasuaki’s earlier work, she demonstrates the astonishing degree of close collaboration between American and Japanese officials that shaped this exclusionary system, which continues to regulate the lives of Asian migrants in contemporary Japan. Morris-Suzuki further contributes to this trans-Pacific approach by emphasizing the significant role played by the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) in enforcing occupied Japan’s restrictive border controls.

Building on these new and innovative studies, this book takes a different tack: a transregional examination of how each American occupation in Northeast Asia related to the others. Conventional historiography has stressed that this relationship was determined by the hierarchical structure of General MacArthur’s command in the region. In this view, SCAP exercised overall responsibility over American military governments in the region through its Government Section’s Korean Division, which in 1947 was reorganized as the Korean-Ryukyuan Division. To be sure, there was a regional hierarchy: The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) in Washington, DC, formulated basic occupation policies, which were first transmitted to SCAP in Tokyo, before being relayed to Korea and the Ryukyu Islands. However, a different picture emerges from detailed investigation of the actual content of memorandums, reports, and telegrams exchanged among the authorities of these occupations. Taken together, they show how USAMGIK and USMGR were, like SCAP, policymaking bodies in their own right, with their own vested interests in the territories they occupied. The

Korean-Ryukyuan Division therefore functioned less as an organ of higher power than as a liaison office of an embassy, reflecting a horizontal structure of neighboring occupation administrations interacting with one another. This trans-regional perspective presents the possibility of exploring inter-occupation relations, and of understanding how US-occupied Northeast Asia was reshaped after World War II.

Although the United States had plenty of experience occupying foreign territory by 1945, no formal rules or regulations clarified the conduct of inter-occupation relations. World War II convinced US military leaders and policymakers that, under conditions of total war, military government operations would have to assume newly expanded roles, not merely to win battles but also to win the peace.<sup>31</sup> Such an expanded role placed the military government in a central position for executing US foreign policy, including nonmilitary—or civilian—activities involved in governing occupied territory. The War Department thus established special training programs for civil affairs officers early in the war. In December 1943, it published a field manual (FM 27-5), which spelled out the newly defined principles of military government and civil affairs.<sup>32</sup> Generals MacArthur and Hodge, as well as Admiral Nimitz, would have been familiar with this field manual, especially those sections delineating the responsibilities of theater commanders. They would also have noted that the authors explicitly stated the field manual was intended to serve as a general guide, thus recognizing the necessity of departing from its terms where “special circumstances dictate otherwise.” In other words, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington had granted these theater commanders considerable discretionary authority in the execution of occupation policies—sometimes with unintended consequences, as when MacArthur directed his staff to rewrite the draft of what eventually became the new Japanese constitution.<sup>33</sup> Another significant, if unforeseen, development was the establishment of new migration regulations in occupied Japan, Korea, and the Ryukyus. These regulations had direct and immediate consequences for the movement of people among these neighboring occupations. Bereft of any specific policy directives on the subject emanating from Washington, American civil affairs officers in each occupied territory had to determine their own migration regulations, albeit in consultation with local officials.

Official wartime documents had at least anticipated the potential need to prepare for the homeward transportation of large numbers of people to and from occupied territory. FM 27-5 accurately predicted conditions in Europe and in Asia, noting that the “enemy may have brought in large numbers of forced laborers from distant areas, who will desperately seek repatriation.”<sup>34</sup> It then specified that the repatriation or relocation of such forced laborers, along with political prisoners,



civilian internees, and Allied prisoners of war—and other groups of displaced persons and enemy nationals in general—was one of many tasks that civil affairs officers were expected to administer.

In the waning months of the war, State Department officials deliberated about practical issues that American authorities would need to address during the coming occupation of Japan and Korea. This led officials in the Inter-Divisional Area Committee on the Far East to draft a series of policy proposals with repercussions for both areas of administration, including one that pertained specifically to Koreans in Japan. Succinctly making the case for repatriation, it predicted that “racial and political animosity between Japan and Korea would necessitate the departure of Koreans from Japan for their own protection and for the maintenance of peace and order.”<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), predecessor to the CIA, drafted a series of civil affairs guides for US servicemen to be deployed in occupied territories. One such guide, entitled “Aliens in Japan,” recommended that the estimated 2 million aliens in Japan be offered the choice between repatriating to their respective homelands or remaining in Japan.<sup>36</sup> In such texts were the seeds of postwar repatriation sown. It would be up to occupation authorities in Japan and neighboring territories to decide whether to adopt these recommendations or chart their own course of action.

The task of matching peoples to territories through repatriation depended upon how the realm of the Japanese Empire would be divided and, in turn, which of the Allied powers would administer the respective zones of occupation in the Asia-Pacific region. American policymakers spilled much ink over such critical questions, determined to gain direct control over strategically important territory in and around Japan. For example, in July 1943 the Territorial Subcommittee of the State Department drafted its first policy document regarding the “Liuchiu” (Ryukyu) Islands, proposing that they be detached from Japan.<sup>37</sup> Subsequent reports by the OSS and US Navy prepared the way for the US military invasion and occupation of Okinawa beginning on April 1, 1945, when Admiral Chester Nimitz declared the administrative detachment of the Ryukyus from Japan. Meanwhile, following the Cairo Declaration’s pledge to free Korea “in due course,” in March 1944 the State Department prepared a memorandum that proposed a joint Allied occupation of Korea to ensure American influence on the peninsula. But it was not until August 11, 1945, three days after Soviet troops attacked Japanese forces in Korea, that the SWNCC decided to divide the Korean peninsula into two zones of occupation along the 38th parallel.<sup>38</sup> Emperor Hirohito’s surrender broadcast four days later, before Soviet troops could reach the Japanese archipelago, helped to ensure that American forces would dominate the postwar occupation of Japan.

The three American occupation administrations set up in Northeast Asia quickly discovered that they would have to rely on one another to a large degree in order to secure and maintain the newly defined borders of jurisdiction that they shared. At first, the spirit of inter-occupation cooperation appears to have prevailed, as US military authorities attended a conference in Tokyo in January 1946 to address outstanding issues concerning repatriation operations in each zone of occupation. However, policy disagreements soon surfaced, as USAMGIK officials became increasingly critical of SCAP's customs regulations, which prevented repatriates from carrying more than ¥1,000 in currency. This paltry sum did not buy much at all in inflation-ridden Korea, where USAMGIK's misguided policies resulted in delayed economic development.<sup>39</sup> USMGR officials also resisted General MacArthur's repeated attempts to return Okinawans from Japan, as the US Navy was barely able to supply sufficient food and shelter to the civilian population in war-ravaged Okinawa Island. This ongoing dispute was not resolved until the Navy's jurisdictional authority was transferred to the Army in July. Effective control over repatriation clearly depended on cooperation and coordination among occupation forces within and outside of Japan, especially in neighboring Korea and the Ryukyus, where parallel policies were put in place. One object of interest in this book, then, is the extent of cooperation and coordination, as well as competing jurisdictions and interests, among American occupiers in the region.

Exploring the migration and border controls of US occupations in a transregional framework demonstrates how the relative successes and failures of American policies in one occupied territory very often had a considerable impact upon neighboring territory. Any assessment of the effect of these policies should begin by measuring the effectiveness of regional occupation forces in executing them. This involves an examination of official and personal accounts of occupation forces that served in the US Eighth Army and BCOF in Japan, the XXIV Corps in Korea, and the various US Navy and Army units in the Ryukyu Islands. Examining these accounts promises valuable insight into how these servicemen viewed the military government policies that they had to implement. While many such documents offer dry descriptions of the operational procedures and actual processes of repatriation and resettlement, others are surprisingly frank in their direct criticism of related policy measures. For example, some officers in the XXIV Corps blamed SCAP's strict customs regulations for the destitute conditions of many Korean repatriates, which contributed to the spread of black markets and smuggling in and around the repatriation port of Busan. Meanwhile, Eighth Army officers and their BCOF counterparts periodically expressed dismay at the XXIV Corps and the nascent Korean Coast Guard for their failure to enforce preventive measures against Koreans traveling without authorization to Japan. The causes and effects

of such regional migrations cannot be properly understood without recognizing the role of occupation policies and their implementation in sequential relationship, from repatriation to resettlement, and then from resettlement to (illegal) return.

More broadly, the process of occupying Northeast Asia in the wake of World War II unfolded in the dual context of decolonization and the Cold War that engulfed much of the world. An examination of the process of occupation must therefore be framed not only as transregional but also as a transhistorical study, transcending the temporal divide between the fall of the Japanese Empire and the rise of American hegemony. Empires do not disappear overnight, as Barak Kushner succinctly points out in his study on the aftermath of the Japanese occupation in China.<sup>40</sup> In order to remedy the exclusion of Northeast Asia from comparative and global histories of decolonization, I examine the important role that repatriation and resettlement played in dismantling the Japanese Empire. While this dismantling process divided both territory and people of the former Japanese Empire, the erection of Cold War barriers—most notably symbolized by the partition of the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel—further subdivided Northeast Asia. The regional Cold War conflict solidified these divisions, which remain today, more than a half century after devastating warfare in Korea and China. This study focuses on the American zones of occupation in the region, in part to demonstrate that US efforts to contain the threat of communism at the frontiers of occupied territory were closely intertwined with the simultaneous attempt to solidify and perpetuate its military power in the region.<sup>41</sup>

Scholars in various fields have begun to focus on this global US military presence, some labeling it an empire of bases, a new type of informal empire that has replaced colonial possessions with military bases.<sup>42</sup> While contentious debates over the new American empire continue, Bruce Cumings argues that the vast network of US bases more plainly reflects a politico-military predominance, or hegemony. His use of the term is consistent with its original Greek meaning, as described by Thucydides.<sup>43</sup> In other words, these bases are not territorial possessions of the United States, but rather territorial markers of the American power that has permeated the world since World War II. The enduring US military presence in Northeast Asia today is perhaps the most visible legacy of the post-war American occupations in the region; these occupations thus serve as useful sites for examining the rise of American hegemony. Others have defined the emergence of hegemony when “one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations.”<sup>44</sup> This book uses the term to describe the process by which US officials used their authority as the occupying power to govern external relations with its allies in Northeast Asia after World War II.

In exploring the extent of America's hegemonic power through a study of border and migration controls in their occupied territories, an important caveat to that power needs acknowledgment: Absolute control over human mobility can never be fully achieved, regardless of the strength and authority of any occupying power. Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton remind us that an occupying power cannot administer territory by force alone, and that successful occupations rely heavily upon collaborators.<sup>45</sup> Just as the implementation of effective controls over transborder mobility in postwar Asia depended on inter-Allied cooperation, the legislation of new migration laws in occupied territory required close collaboration between the occupier and the occupied. An important corollary to such migration laws, redefining legal boundaries of national inclusion and exclusion, also entailed an intricate process of collaboration. As Timothy Brook has argued persuasively, occupation creates collaboration.<sup>46</sup>

The second theme of this book adapts his argument by examining this process of collaboration and how it affected border-crossing migrants. Following Brook's method of looking at what went on at the most local level of the occupation state, this examination begins with how the massive congestion of repatriates at Japan's peripheral ports led local officials to actively support American efforts to establish order and stability. This crisis at the periphery required the central government of occupied Japan to adopt an analogous collaborative relationship with SCAP. Accordingly, I will examine how and why Japanese officials first registered certain individuals as "non-Japanese" (*Hi-Nihonjin*) to prepare them for SCAP's mass repatriation program, then registered those who remained as "aliens" (*gaikokujin*) as part of an effort to apprehend illegal immigrants. Not only were these categories useful to SCAP in repatriating and deporting Asian migrants; they also enabled Japanese officials to subsequently constrict the boundaries of nationality. Analyzing the motives, processes, and outcomes of this collaboration at both the central and local levels of the occupation is essential to understanding how each side viewed former colonial subjects and other Asian minorities over the course of the occupation period.

Collaboration was by no means limited to brokering power-sharing relations between new occupiers and the local officials they chose to work with. Occupiers could, and often did, seek cooperation from a broad range of nongovernmental and social organizations, as long as both parties found the working relationship to be mutually beneficial. In occupied Japan, members of the League of Koreans at first actively sought to ingratiate themselves with SCAP officials and Eighth Army officers—a tenuous relationship dependent upon their respective relations with Japanese officials. Although the Home Ministry recruited the League's assistance in facilitating the repatriation of Koreans, the growing influence of the

organization drove weary ministry officials to plead with SCAP to check its self-designated authority. When SCAP's sympathies with the government became apparent, the League mobilized resistance movements over such issues as alien registration, compulsory taxation, and education, thus running into conflict with the American occupiers. In contrast, the League of Okinawans gradually toned down its critical stance against the government while distancing itself from the Korean League, in order to maintain SCAP's support and protection over the smaller and more vulnerable Okinawan community in Japan.

### **From Japanese Empire to American Hegemony**

Long before American occupiers established their respective migration and border controls in the wake of World War II, successive East Asian states had intermittently endeavored to regulate human mobility since premodern times. The main subjects examined in this book—repatriation, migrant smuggling, illegal immigration, and deportation—therefore have historical precedents that must be properly understood in order to appreciate how American policies fundamentally reshaped the region.

Premodern state policies aimed at controlling cross-border mobility were implemented according to specific historical contingencies, such as when the Chinese Emperor Hongwu banned maritime shipping (*haijin*) in 1371 to curb piracy and smuggling.<sup>47</sup> Joseon officials in Korea enacted strict maritime border controls in the wake of Japanese and Chinese invasions from the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, while the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan passed its own set of maritime regulations in the 1630s to combat the spread of Christianity.<sup>48</sup> The Satsuma Domain implemented a modified version of the shogunate's regulations in the Ryukyu Kingdom, which it invaded in 1609, ensuring they did not hamper the profits derived from the continuing Ryukyuan tributary trade with China. These regulations contained special provisions for repatriating foreigners shipwrecked at sea, though daring merchants are known to have taken advantage by posing as castaways while secretly engaging in private trade, which was strictly forbidden. Accidents and exceptional circumstances aside, any act of willfully violating the maritime shipping ban by smuggling people, goods, or heterodox ideas was punishable by death.

The modern nation-states of East Asia eliminated the practice of executing individuals for illegal entry, but border controls remained a paramount concern, especially in the face of the Western imperialist encroachment. Governed for a time by a treaty port system that granted extraterritoriality to Euro-American powers, Japan's Meiji government inaugurated in 1868 was the first East Asian

state to adopt modern laws and institutions regulating mobility. These early migration laws and regulations were based upon Japan's newly defined territorial borders, which were drawn and redrawn to incorporate neighboring islands to the new nation-state. The process of nationalizing Japanese borders began with the Meiji state's expansion of its sovereignty into the so-called Ainu territory (Ezo-chi) to the north in 1869, renaming it Hokkaido. Three years after annexing the Ogasawara Islands in 1876, the Meiji state sent five hundred troops to enforce the incorporation of the Ryukyu Islands into Japan as Okinawa Prefecture. The state's subsequent imposition of migratory regulations in these frontier territories, including the forced resettlement of local inhabitants and promotion of Japanese settler migration, were an integral part of a process that some scholars have called Japan's "internal colonization."<sup>49</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, the Meiji government held that the borders around Hokkaido, Ogasawara, and Okinawa not only defined the outer limits of national territory, but also delineated the administrative boundary between the nation and its expanding colonial empire. Within the Japanese Empire, the newly acquired colonial possessions were eventually called *gaichi*, literally meaning "outer territory," to distinguish them from *naichi*, or "inner territory," referring to the home islands of metropolitan Japan. Okinawa as a prefecture was thus included into the administrative jurisdiction of *naichi*, while Taiwan was designated as a part of *gaichi*, since the island had been acquired as imperial Japan's first formal colony in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. Korea was added to the latter category when imperial Japan established a protectorate in the peninsula after the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, only to annex it as a formal colony in 1910. The outer boundaries of *gaichi* also included southern Sakhalin (Karafuto), the leased territory of the Kwantung peninsula (Kantōchō), and the mandated islands of Micronesia (Nan'yō). The *naichi/gaichi* dichotomy was invented in the late 1930s to break down legal distinctions among these colonial territories, while demonstrating their integration with metropolitan Japan.<sup>50</sup>

Like other contemporary imperialist states in Europe and the United States, imperial Japan sought to control the movement of people between the colonies and the metropolitan homeland. In the case of imperial Japan, the *koseki* (family register) system was adopted as a legal framework for differentiating between the people of *gaichi* from those of *naichi* when they began migrating in both directions. Modeled after the Meiji government's first nationwide registration of common domicile in 1872, Japanese colonial administrations in Taiwan, Korea, and elsewhere established their own family registration laws. The status of colonial subjects was defined by their possession of *gaichi koseki*, which recorded the births, marriages, and deaths of every household member in the colonies. While colonial



subjects were permitted to migrate to Japan, they were not free to transfer their registration to *naichi koseki*, except through marriage and adoption into Japanese households, or the payment of high rates of taxation.<sup>51</sup> This system ensured that the legal status of colonial migrants to Japan remained distinct from the metropolitan population. It also enabled the imperial Japanese state to differentiate between the formal status of nationality and the substantive civil rights of colonial migrants in Japan.<sup>52</sup> The government passed its first Nationality Act in 1899, defining all people residing in the empire as imperial subjects. Colonial subjects with *gaichi koseki* were automatically recognized as Japanese nationals, but their membership in the imperial community did not confer civil rights equal to those of Japanese subjects with *naichi koseki*. After much parliamentary debate, the passage of universal male suffrage in 1925 applied to all imperial subjects who resided in Japan proper, paving the way for male colonial migrants to register to vote and run for public office. However, the hierarchical status of imperial subjects was primarily determined by the degree of their loyalty to the Japanese emperor, which emphasized the duty of military service. The colonial *koseki* system was originally created to prepare imperial subjects for military conscription, and the state vowed to reward those who served their terms of conscription. In the final stages of the Asia-Pacific War, Japan introduced conscription in the colonies of Korea and Taiwan, promising but ultimately failing to grant full civil and political rights in exchange for their service.<sup>53</sup>

Beginning with the collapse of the Japanese Empire to the consolidation of American hegemony in the early 1950s, this book explores the close interaction between migration and border controls in the remaking of Northeast Asia. Tracing the movement of Koreans and Okinawans to and from Japan—as well as within Japan and their respective homelands—most clearly reveals the social, economic, and political transformations that were taking place on a regional scale. For this reason, five comparative chapters will examine major subjects such as liberation, repatriation, resettlement, migrant smuggling, and illegal immigration and how they affected each occupied territory. The book begins in Chapter 1 by examining how Korean and Okinawan communities regrouped and formed ethnic organizations that protected their rights and interests in postimperial Japan. The comparative framework demonstrates my argument that “liberation” was experienced differently among these and other newly segregated minorities. The chapter then delineates the remarkable process of how these ethnic organizations facilitated an orderly return of their compatriots at a time when the Japanese government neglected their basic needs. Turning to SCAP’s mass repatriation program, Chapter 2 compares both the process and the outcome of official efforts to return Koreans and Okinawans from occupied Japan, exploring what “repatriation”

really meant for each group of migrants. Such a focused analysis on SCAP's policies highlights my argument that repatriation emerged as the only guaranteed means for former colonial subjects such as Koreans to attain their liberation. In contrast, although American authorities designated "Ryukyuan" as "non-Japanese," thereby encouraging them to repatriate, Okinawans who remained in Japan continued to be treated as Japanese citizens.

Following up on the story of repatriation from occupied Japan, Chapter 3 compares the process of resettlement and reintegration in US-occupied Korea and the Ryukyus. Repatriation and resettlement necessitated the establishment of institutional mechanisms for controlling the movement of people who crossed newly drawn external borders as well as internal administrative boundaries that the occupiers erected in each territory. The chapter explores the extent to which these population movements drove military government officials to create new migration regimes, paying close attention to how they affected the legal status of Koreans and Ryukyuan. It also reveals each occupation administration's failure to implement an official resettlement program, which resulted in dangerously large numbers of repatriates becoming welfare cases. The troubled process of resettlement and reintegration led to increasing numbers of repatriates heading back to Japan, joined by smugglers, refugees, and activists—a subject that is examined in Chapter 4. The immediate causes of this unexpected emigration from Korea and the Ryukyus lay in their poor living conditions and, by extension, the unstable socio-economic conditions, which contributed to the rampant smuggling trade in the region. Comparing the unstable political conditions in each territory also demonstrates the remarkable similarity of growing resistance to direct US military rule in Korea and the Ryukyus, driving many people to seek refuge in occupied Japan.

Finally, Chapter 5 of the book explores the extent to which migrant smuggling, unauthorized immigration, and the appearance of refugees helped generate exclusionary migration and nationality laws during the waning months of the occupation in Japan. Local authorities arrested, interrogated, and deported various groups of people from neighboring territories who entered occupied Japan without authorization, thus transforming these imperial subjects into illegal immigrants. However, based largely on US strategic policies in the region, SCAP took differing approaches towards the legal status of Korean and Okinawan residents in Japan. With the onset of the regional Cold War, deep-seated Japanese attitudes of discrimination against Koreans merged with occupation authorities' suspicion of Korean involvement in communist subversion. This convergence of interests led SCAP to empower the government in 1951 to deport not only illegal immigrants but also Korean residents suspected of engaging in subversive activities.



The chapter also examines the enactment of the so-called passport system that symbolized the legal anomaly of the US-occupied Ryukyus, which were a part of neither the United States nor Japan.

The story of migrations and border controls in the remaking of Northeast Asia between the fall of the Japanese Empire and the rise of American hegemony is part of a larger international history. The repatriation of an estimated 2.5 million Asians from Japan is comparable to the estimated 8 million Europeans repatriated from Germany after World War II, as the Allies categorized both groups as “displaced persons” in need of assistance. Returning these displaced Asians also mirrored the Japanese returning from their defeated empire, an exchange common to other postcolonial migrations, such as those that followed in the wake of wars of independence in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Algeria.

Some aspects of the Northeast Asian case were distinctive. For example, Holland and France permitted former colonial subjects who supported the imperialists in these wars to enter their metropolitan societies, while Koreans and Taiwanese attempting to cross into Japan were deported for illegal entry, regardless of whether they were considered collaborators or not.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the British Nationality Law of 1948 granted citizenship rights to colonial and former colonial subjects, but the Japanese Nationality Law of 1950 did just the opposite, making it extremely difficult for them to remain in Japan. Finally, the American effort to repatriate and deport Okinawans, disregarding the fact that they were Japanese nationals, is an anomalous case derived from US military concerns. These distinctive characteristics were the products of specific historical and geopolitical circumstances of the US military occupations in Northeast Asia in which migration and nationality laws were framed. The Conclusion further explores the historical significance of such comparisons, and ends by examining both the expansion and the curtailment of American hegemony beyond the period of postwar occupations.

## *Liberation and Segregation in Occupied Japan*

Imperial Japan's crushing defeat in World War II simultaneously spelled the end for its sprawling empire, a sobering fact immediately recognized by an estimated 2.5 million Asian migrants in Japan. While Japanese throughout the country collectively mourned their loss in war, many of these migrants celebrated their liberation. Among them, Koreans constituted the largest and most visible migrant community in Japan at the end of the war. The range of Korean reactions to Emperor Hirohito's surrender announcement was as diverse as their backgrounds, but a more pressing concern quickly consumed them all: Should they depart the defeated empire and return to their liberated homeland? The second largest migrant community in Japan was the Okinawans, who, unlike Koreans and Taiwanese, were not colonial subjects, even if many had suffered discrimination for not being "fully Japanese." The Battle of Okinawa resulted in the administrative separation of Okinawa from Japan and the imposition of direct US military rule in the former Japanese prefecture, leaving the fate of Okinawans in the Japanese mainland in limbo. The territorial dismantling of the Japanese Empire in the wake of war thus forced Okinawan and Korean migrants in Japan, along with other groups, to confront the fateful decision of whether to return to their respective homelands.

Before Allied occupation officials took over the reins of migration and border controls, Japanese authorities began resettling their defeated empire by demobilizing and repatriating military servicemen in the imperial armed forces. This first wave of repatriation involved not only Japanese servicemen in various parts of the Asia-Pacific region, but also colonial subjects who were affected by the demobilization order. Unit commanders of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy gathered demobilized Korean and Taiwanese military servicemen in Japan, including civilian employees, transporting them to nearby ports of departure. Following government orders, Japanese corporations also released imported laborers from Korea and China, except for those in the coal mining industries, who were compelled to remain at work. Japanese authorities thus began the physical segregation of migrant groups, shipping off limited categories of military and labor

conscripts, while neglecting the needs of far larger numbers of migrants stranded in Japan. Increasing numbers of Korean men and women took matters into their own hands, and with the assistance of newly established Korean organizations, crossed the Korea Strait in what quickly became a mass exodus. One such organization, the League of Koreans in Japan, emerged as a powerful institutional force that helped facilitate a more orderly return of compatriots, while providing support for those who remained in Japan. Following this example was the League of Okinawans, which utilized its expanding organizational influence to secure better provisions for fellow islanders in Japan who eagerly awaited return passage to their home islands. By claiming to represent the needs and interests of their respective migrant communities, these influential organizations contributed to the process of ethnic segregation that unfolded in postimperial Japan.

The dissolution of the Japanese Empire that began at the end of the war unleashed massive waves of return migration, causing palpable social change throughout Northeast Asia. In Japan, individual migrants and their families relied on preexisting kinship bonds as well as emerging ethnic organizations, though the set of challenges they faced varied, not least on whether they were liberated colonial subjects or not. What did “liberation” actually mean in metropolitan Japan, and how did migrants and Japanese authorities each grapple with this critical issue in the immediate aftermath of war and empire? To what extent did this struggle over the meaning of liberation affect the segregation of migrant communities from postimperial Japanese society? This chapter explores these questions by comparing the experiences of Korean and Okinawan migrants, noting both their commonalities and differences, while stressing the close ties between the major organizations that represented them. Over a million Koreans managed to return to their liberated homeland by the end of 1945, even as Okinawans remained stranded in Japan. For different migrant populations in the Japanese mainland, the process of resettling Northeast Asia would be neither uniform nor immediate.

## **Embracing Liberation**

Not everyone in Japan embraced defeat in the wake of World War II, despite the insightful metaphor employed by historian John Dower; in fact, many instead embraced liberation. Those who celebrated the Japanese surrender were among the 2.2 million Koreans and 35,000 Taiwanese in Japan, whose respective homelands were liberated from colonial rule, fulfilling the terms of the Cairo Declaration. While the 56,000 Chinese in Japan were not liberated colonial subjects, those forcibly brought to Japan as laborers during the war also welcomed their emancipation. The estimated 200,000 Okinawans were neither colonial subjects nor

conscript laborers, and consequently few shared this sense of liberation.<sup>1</sup> Since their home islands no longer constituted Japanese territory, however, Okinawans in Japan found that they faced a set of challenges in common with former colonial subjects. These challenges were rooted in disconcerting uncertainties surrounding their legal status, access to basic welfare, and the maintenance of livelihood—critical factors that would determine whether to remain in Japan or return home. Distressed by the resulting sense of insecurity, many migrants felt ambivalent about the sudden collapse of the Japanese Empire, even while others celebrated the occasion. Regardless of such differences, individual migrants, their families, and their respective communities all grappled with the meaning of liberation and how it affected their lives in Japan.

Understanding who embraced liberation in Japan, and what that really meant, should begin by looking at the case of Koreans since they were by far the most conspicuous migrant community in the wake of war and empire. Until recently, the historiography of Korean residents in Japan routinely depicted August 15, 1945, as a universal experience of overwhelming joy at liberation (*haebang* in Korean). According to this narrative, Koreans throughout Japan, in unison with their fellow countrymen and women in Korea, wholeheartedly embraced liberation, cheering “*mansei*” (hooray), as they had done during the Independence Movement of 1919.<sup>2</sup> The genuine sense of release, freedom, and emancipation from thirty-five years of colonial rule undoubtedly evoked powerful and emotional responses for a majority of Koreans in Japan. Numerous firsthand accounts, in fact, bear witness to this sense of euphoria, including scenes of Korean men and women spontaneously changing into traditional clothing, playing folk music, and waving the Korean flag.<sup>3</sup> Korean men, women, and children who resided in Japan, however, were a diverse group, and their response to liberation was anything but monolithic. Many were long-term residents with children who had been born and raised in Japan, while others were married to Japanese spouses. Still others had actively or passively cooperated with Japanese authorities in promoting the assimilation of Koreans as loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor. Such groups of Koreans inevitably felt ambivalent about waving the Korean flag in the midst of a Japanese society that was suffering from a crushing defeat in war.

Koreans in Japan who most welcomed liberation and their newfound freedom were those forcibly mobilized into labor and military service in support of the Japanese war effort. Eighty to ninety percent of all working-age Korean adults in Japan at the end of the war were laborers, among whom an estimated 320,000 men had been conscripted to work in coal mines and munitions factories around the country. One such conscript laborer, Kim Deukjung, never forgot his fateful moment of emancipation. As he explained vividly in an official interview nearly a

half century later, Kim prayed that he would be released after witnessing a US military aircraft dropping canisters onto the Kamioka mining plant in Gifu Prefecture, where he was employed. Containing not explosives but precious food rations, the canisters were intended for American POWs, some of whom shared their windfall with Kim and his Korean coworkers. Heartened by this unmistakable sign that Japan had lost the war, the Koreans refused to go back into the mines, demanding instead to be returned home immediately, just as would other Korean miners throughout Japan. Kim recalled that his Japanese employers reluctantly agreed, shortly after the American POWs were freed.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, thousands of Korean laborers like Kim flooded into Shimonoseki and Hakata, the two Japanese ports closest to the Korean peninsula, initiating what would become a mass exodus of Korean returnees. These conscript laborers, along with tens of thousands of young Korean men and students who had been conscripted into military service and who began returning to Japan to be demobilized, were the first to flock to the Japanese ports. They were soon joined by throngs of other short-term laborers and their family members, as well as teenage girls released from their contracted work in Japanese factories. For these Koreans, there was no question that liberation meant returning to a Korea freed from Japanese colonial rule.

Korean residents in Japan who never relinquished their adherence to ethnic nationalism also responded to August 15 as a welcome opportunity to return to their liberated homeland. These Koreans had survived the wartime Japanese campaign of “imperial assimilation” (*kōminka*), which threatened to eradicate their ethnic identity, even if the struggle left many in a state of psychological exhaustion. For instance, despite his long involvement with the underground socialist movement in Osaka since 1930, Chang Jeongsu recalled how he felt emotionally numb at the news of liberation. According to his autobiographical account, Chang did not at first understand the highly formalized words that the emperor used, admitting he “wasn’t interested in anything the emperor had to say.” Even after he finally realized that Japan had surrendered, Chang still remained at a loss before he began to ponder the somber and distressing—yet practical—question of how to go on supporting his wife and daughter.

Without a clear answer, he slowly began preparing to return to Korea when a close friend and passionate fellow activist stopped Chang, berating him: “Don’t you know there are over two million of our comrades still in Japan? Have you thought about what might happen if we go ahead of them, disregarding their needs? We will have to be the very last ones to leave!” Chang was thus convinced to join other influential Korean activists in the Osaka community who formed

one of the first ethnic organizations in postwar Japan, calling upon fellow Koreans to help each other return safely to their liberated homeland.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, many other Koreans rooted in Japan hesitated, uncertain whether to return to Korea or remain in Japan. Among migrant families throughout the world, the experiences that shape the perspectives of the first generation are inexorably different from those of the subsequent generations who grow up in their adopted homelands. The Korean residents of Japan were no exception, especially with regard to their views on liberation. Many second-generation Koreans, especially schoolchildren who had been indoctrinated in the wartime Japanese education system, did not share their parents' enthusiasm for returning to a liberated Korea, a country they barely knew. The experience of Hong Yeopyo—whose parents came from Jeju Island and who was born in Wakayama—exemplifies this generation gap. Upon hearing the news that Korea had been liberated, Hong recalled that his father joined his Korean coworkers, and they began “drinking fermented wine, singing and dancing, and making a great big fuss.” Hong himself, who was fifteen years old at the time, was aware that something extraordinary had taken place, since his father and those around him were so overwhelmed with joy. “The *Issei* [first generation immigrants] were like that,” according to Hong, “knowing that they could finally return to their country.”<sup>6</sup> Hong and his sibling were expected to follow their parents back, no matter how they felt.

Numerous other long-term Korean residents in Japan appear to have been less inclined to rush back to liberated Korea, although for different reasons. Members of the Korean royal family as well as Korean assemblymen elected to public office, not to mention their upper-middle-class Korean constituents, wished to protect their status, privilege, and wealth by remaining in Japan. Many of these Koreans had laid down roots in Japan, through marriage and landownership, and were reluctant to part with their adopted homeland.<sup>7</sup> For other resident Koreans who had actively cooperated with Japanese authorities, especially those who had worked for the *Kyōwakai* (Harmonization Association) and *Kōseikai* (Self-Improvement Association)—the wartime organizations for controlling Koreans in Japan—August 15 represented less Korea's liberation than Japan's defeat. Many such Koreans were stunned and dismayed by the Japanese government's surrender; nervous and anxious, they did not know what was going to happen to them. Hardly any of them left firsthand accounts of their mixed feelings, out of fear that they might be attacked as “collaborators,” though some of their voices were captured by Japanese police records from this period.

For example, a secret police investigation into the intentions of *Kōseikai* members after Korea's liberation revealed that one leader of a branch office desired



naturalization: “I want to live out the rest of my life in Japan as a Japanese, together with my comrades of *naichi* [inner territory].”<sup>8</sup> Another police investigation into Korean behavior quoted a similar sentiment: “I would like to cooperate [with Japanese people] for as long as possible and remain in Japan, which is an inseparable part [of my life].” At the same time, however, another part of this Korean wanted to return to his homeland: “It is [my] human nature that desires to have a taste of the new Korea again able to become independent.”<sup>9</sup> Many other Korean men and women in Japan must have shared this deep sense of ambivalence.

Former colonial subjects were not the only migrants in Japan whose lives were greatly altered by the sudden demise of the Japanese Empire. Okinawans in Japan also witnessed their homeland sundered from the defeated empire, and their wartime and immediate postwar experiences invariably shaped their views on the end of war and empire. The experience of Arakaki Seiichi—who was employed at a munitions factory in Osaka until it was destroyed by US air raids in June 1945—exemplifies the desperation of resident Okinawans in limbo after the postwar separation of Okinawa. Searching in vain for gainful employment, Arakaki became involved in the black markets that were mushrooming in Osaka, since the continuing American military blockade of Okinawa meant he could not yet return home. Like many Okinawans and others in Japan after the war, Arakaki sold whatever food he could find on the black market in order to survive. For example, he rushed to the neighboring city of Amagasaki when he heard that horses disposed of by the Imperial Japanese Army were being illegally butchered for food.

Arakaki recalled that Okinawans and Koreans worked as a team, butchering horses by the riverbanks and keeping the intestines for themselves, while selling the meat to black market retailers. Rubbing butter into this horsemeat, Arakaki sold it as beef in front of the Osaka train station, complaining he had to pay a fee to the Japanese *yakuza*, who were emerging as a force to contend with.<sup>10</sup> Okinawans, like their Korean and Taiwanese counterparts, regularly clashed with the *yakuza* over who controlled the black market in a given neighborhood. The fact that each migrant group in Japan bonded together to protect itself from Japanese attacks, including periodic raids by the police, reveals that discrimination against them was on the rise shortly after the war. As a result, young Okinawans such as Arakaki and his wife who were released from military or labor service began moving into existing Okinawan communities or formed new ones, like the one in Amagasaki, while they awaited the first opportunity to repatriate to their home islands.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated how the Battle of Okinawa and the resulting separation of Okinawa from Japan represented a significant rupture in the

history and identity of Okinawans. According to this view, most Okinawan men and women considered themselves a part of Japan before 1945, but the Japanese government's sacrifice of Okinawa during and after the war embittered Okinawans, a number of whom began to question their identity as Japanese.<sup>11</sup> This was certainly true of Kuwae Chōkō, who proudly served in the Japanese Imperial Guard, protecting the emperor and the imperial family before being deployed to southern China and Indochina. Upon hearing the emperor's surrender address at a temple in Saitama Prefecture, he tearfully expressed his great sorrow to the thirty-seven servicemen under his command, reminding them to behave with dignity in the honorable name of the Imperial Guard. Within months, however, Kuwae had grown increasingly critical of Japan, calling upon fellow Okinawans to form a united front in demanding compensation from the government to rebuild their home island from its total devastation.<sup>12</sup> Kuwae represented many Okinawans who were so dismayed by the emperor's apparent willingness to jettison Okinawa that his appeal to "endure the unendurable" defeat failed to resonate with them.

Other Okinawans were even more explicit in reasserting their identity, welcoming Okinawa's newly granted freedom from enforced Japanese assimilation. One such Okinawan was Miyazato Eiki, a scholar of Okinawan studies who was embittered by the so-called dialect debate (*hōgen ronsō*) of 1940, which had resulted in the suppression of Okinawan language and culture. When his close friend from Okinawa rushed over with news of the Japanese capitulation, Miyazato smiled broadly and responded, "*umussanyaa*," an Okinawan expression that can be translated as "amazing" or "fantastic." At the very moment when most Japanese were in a state of shock and despair, Miyazato was exhilarated because, in his words, "Okinawa had been liberated." At the same time, Miyazato had warned other Okinawans to remain quiet and avoid any expressions of overt emotional reaction during the emperor's radio announcement. He was apparently worried that they might shout out a chorus of *banzais*, a spontaneous expression of joy that was certain to offend the Japanese community in the suburb of Kumamoto to which they had evacuated. According to Miyazato, hardly any Okinawan evacuees in Kumamoto were disappointed by Japan's defeat. Instead, their primary concern was when they would be able to return to Okinawa.<sup>13</sup>

Discrimination against Okinawans in Japan drove many to seek refuge in their home islands as soon as the US military blockade could be lifted. The deep-seated resentment against Japanese, who often treated them as second-class citizens, was especially palpable among Okinawans who were incarcerated for their involvement in leftist movements during the 1920s and 1930s. For example, Yamashiro Zenkō had spent nearly three years in prison before renouncing communism and being released on parole. As a result, he felt no sympathy for Japanese at the



moment of their humiliating defeat. Later in life, Yamashiro attributed this insensitivity to the personal and historical injustices visited upon Okinawans like himself: “The poison that Japan spread throughout Okinawa, from [the period of] Shimazu rule over the Ryukyu Kingdom through the Meiji, Taisho, and Showa periods, set Okinawans against Japan.”<sup>14</sup> Motivated by the need to redress such grievances, Yamashiro would soon join Kuwae, Miyazato, and other Okinawans in forming an organization that committed itself to assisting Okinawans in Japan until they could return to rebuild their homeland.

The end of the war and the empire elicited a far more complicated response among Okinawan elites in Japan, not unlike their Korean and Taiwanese counterparts. In general, however, such Okinawans loathed any comparisons with colonial subjects and thus rejected entertaining any consideration that they had been liberated. As Japanese nationals, they dwelled on Japan’s defeat, even if they may have been deeply concerned over the uncertain implications of Okinawa’s separation from Japan. Shō Masako, the fifth daughter of the last king of the Ryukyu Kingdom, rebuked her husband a few days after the emperor’s surrender announcement, blaming him and people like him for Japan’s defeat, “because they had been weak-willed and imprudent.” Such harsh criticism proved too much for her husband, Kanna Kenwa, a former lieutenant commander in the Imperial Japanese Navy and five-term member of parliament from Okinawa, who retorted that women should know when to keep their mouths shut. Too proud to back down, Shō berated her husband again.<sup>15</sup>

Okinawan men and women so closely associated with the Japanese government were generally reluctant to return to Okinawa. They agreed that Okinawans should be encouraged to remain in Japan and continue to live as Japanese nationals, instead of rushing back to Okinawa, which faced an uncertain future under US military rule.<sup>16</sup>

What the end of the war and empire meant for individual migrants in Japan was ultimately a personal matter, defined largely by a combination of their wartime and postwar experiences. Colonial subjects had every reason to embrace liberation, and many did so, both openly and in private. Koreans such as Kim Deukjung, Chang Jeongsu, and Hong Yeopyo were quick to understand the monumental significance of liberation, but had no way of knowing what would follow. Hampered by the unclear implications of their home island’s separation from Japan, Okinawans were still less certain of their fate in Japan. Some, like Miyazato Eiki, explicitly embraced defeat as liberation, while others including Kuwae Chōkō and Yamashiro Zenkō critically pondered the “disappearance of Okinawa Prefecture.”<sup>17</sup> However, even those initially uncertain how to respond to the emperor’s surrender announcement were soon affected by the words and deeds of

family members, fellow migrant communities, and the larger Japanese society. Not only did the meaning of defeat and liberation thus continue to evolve, but it was also shaped in part by Japanese and American policies towards these respective migrant groups in Japan.

### **Selective Deportation**

Faced with the chaotic aftermath of a brutal war, the imperial Japanese government was initially too preoccupied to give any consideration to how the end of its empire might affect various migrant groups in Japan. Japanese authorities in various regions immediately experienced difficulties maintaining control over them, especially those conscript soldiers and laborers who had endured harsh conditions of wartime exploitation. For example, the police chief of Niigata Prefecture sent a report to the Home Ministry just five days after Japan's defeat, describing the tense situation at factories employing conscripted Korean laborers. The report stated that all Koreans who had been relocated to Japan for labor, without exception, wanted to return immediately to Korea, and were becoming hostile in pressing this demand on Japanese managers at their factories:

These managers view the [continued] employment of such Koreans as troublesome. Furthermore, from a security standpoint, for those large numbers of unemployed Koreans to be left abandoned in groups for a long period of time, prejudice and suspicion between Japanese and Koreans that creates antagonistic feelings could easily spark unforeseen consequences. For this reason, we believe that appropriate measures should be taken as soon as ships become available to return those Koreans who desire to do so immediately.<sup>18</sup>

This statement makes clear that some factories continued to use conscripted Korean laborers, even though munitions factories that supported the war industry had come to a halt with Japan's defeat.<sup>19</sup> More important, many Japanese managers were awaiting the government's swift implementation of measures relating to the treatment of migrant laborers who had been released. The local police, too, viewed the presence of unemployed colonial migrants as a destabilizing force. The urgent, aggressive demands of these erstwhile colonial subjects thus tested the government's ability to exert its authority over them, forcing Japanese authorities to confront the problem of how to deal with liberation in the imperial metropole.

Responding to such reports from regional authorities, the central government decided to enact a number of ad hoc measures. On August 21, 1945, the Home

Ministry ordered conscript laborers to be released from their contracts, which served as a preliminary step for dealing with Asian laborers in the wake of the war. On the following day, the Ministry of Health and Welfare issued another order to prefectural governors to “gradually repatriate group-imported laborers [*shūdan inyū rōdōsha*] from Korea and China, taking into consideration their transportation and other such measures.”<sup>20</sup> Although this measure signaled the beginning of the central government’s repatriation policy, its vague wording left regional governors to interpret for themselves exactly how to carry out this pressing task. Japan’s shipping capacity was severely impaired by the war, posing the biggest obstacle for transporting large numbers of people.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the lack of coordination between the central government and prefectural bureaucracies precluded the implementation of an organized process that would have returned Koreans and Chinese from Japan efficiently and in a timely fashion.

Worse, uncoordinated and hasty efforts by regional authorities resulted in tragic accidents. For example, on August 22, 1945, three Japanese ships transporting repatriates from Sakhalin to Hokkaido were torpedoed by Soviet submarines, killing an estimated 1,700 people. This incident served as a tragic reminder of very real dangers that remained in the coastal waters surrounding Japan after the war.<sup>22</sup> Just two days later, on August 24, the imperial navy’s transport ship *Ukishima Maru* exploded and sank off the coast of Maizuru, Kyoto Prefecture, killing 524 Koreans and leaving over 1,000 missing. Days before this incident, Japanese navy officials in Aomori Prefecture had given permission for the *Ukishima Maru* to depart Taisō harbor with over 3,700 Korean military conscripts and their family members. Halfway through its journey to Busan, the *Ukishima Maru* struck one of thousands of underwater mines that the US military had laid around Japanese coastal waters.<sup>23</sup> Regional authorities in charge of dispatching the *Ukishima Maru* were aware that regular ferry services between Japanese and Korean ports had been suspended for months, in order to avoid these underwater mines. Their willingness to risk such a dangerous voyage reveals how determined they were to ship back these large numbers of Korean military conscripts in the wake of the war.

The *Ukishima Maru* incident appears to have convinced the central government of the grave consequences of inaction, as it responded to mounting requests for further instructions regarding repatriation from regional officials. On September 1 the Home Ministry sent to prefectural governors a secret order addressing “urgent measures for group-imported Korean laborers,” detailing the order and method by which conscript laborers were to be transported out of Japan. Specifically, the Ministry of Transportation was to determine the regional order of repatriation by coordinating its plan with the appropriate prefectures, the so-called

Control Associations (*Tōseikai*) of various industries that imported Korean conscript laborers to Japan, and the East Asia Travel Bureau. Once these arrangements were made, the private corporations that employed such Korean laborers were responsible for ensuring that they were transported back to Korea.<sup>24</sup> Based on subsequent arrangements set up between the Home Ministry and the Japanese Government-General in Korea, the same ships that repatriated Japanese soldiers from Korea would be used, on the return journey, to transport Korean conscripts out of Japan. On September 3, the commercial ferry that had operated between Japan and Korea since the early 1920s, the *Tokuju Maru*, anchored at Hakata harbor with demobilized Japanese soldiers aboard. The next morning, the *Tokuju Maru* departed for Busan, this time transporting 2,552 demobilized Korean soldiers and other former military employees.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, another commercial ferry, the *Kōan Maru*, was designated for the transport of Japanese and Korean returnees between Busan and Senzaki harbor. This marked the commencement of the Japanese state's postwar repatriation program, which was initially restricted to demobilized military servicemen and discharged conscript laborers. Despite this restriction, repatriating over 3 million demobilized servicemen alone was a colossal task, including many Koreans and Taiwanese who would be shipped to metropolitan Japan before returning to their respective homelands.

An examination of the Home Ministry's secret order of September 1 reveals the Japanese government's initial intentions in dealing with Korean conscript laborers and, by extension, the critical issue of their liberation. The order stipulated four main points: (1) group-imported Korean laborers were to be given priority in being transported out of Japan; (2) the corporations that brought these Koreans to Japan were to continue to employ them until their return to Korea; (3) unemployed laborers could be transferred as group labor to pressing projects for a limited period of time; and (4) detailed orders as to when ordinary Korean residents might be returned to Korea would be forthcoming at a later, appropriate time.<sup>26</sup>

The extent to which Japanese authorities implemented each of these four points merits further consideration. The first part of the Home Ministry's secret order detailed what it meant by giving priority to "group-imported Korean laborers," referring to the estimated 280,000 Korean conscripts working for private companies in Japan in 1945.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the document stated that "the order [of the planned transport] will begin with construction workers and end with coal miners." In addition, "seasoned laborers at coal mines who want to remain will be permitted to do so." The Home Ministry designated Korean construction workers as the first to be returned to the Korean peninsula because they had become useless

after the munitions factories that employed them were shut down. Korean coal miners, on the other hand, were strongly encouraged to stay until they were gradually replaced by Japanese laborers repatriating from overseas. Since coal was the basic source of energy fueling the surviving Japanese industries and transportation, the Japanese government needed to maintain its production by whatever means possible.

Although these were the direct orders of the Home Ministry to prefectural governments throughout Japan, the corporations that were responsible for these Koreans do not appear to have adhered to them strictly. Japanese corporations' level of compliance with this part of the government order reveals at best a mixed record. On the one hand, the Ministry of Health and Welfare reported that an estimated 154,000 Koreans were successfully repatriated to Korea by early October 1945.<sup>28</sup> Most of these were demobilized soldiers and unemployed laborers, groups of Koreans that Japanese companies saw no interest in retaining. On the other hand, the Japan Construction Industry Association reported that, as of the first day of October, 22,500 Korean conscript laborers and an additional 146,000 contract laborers were still employed in the construction industry throughout Japan.<sup>29</sup> Although the Home Ministry cautioned prefectural governments that such workers should not be forced to remain at their jobs, in reality, many private companies continued to retain them. This was particularly true of the far larger number of Korean coal miners, as Japanese mining companies were complicit in the government's plan to exploit them as long as possible.

The second part of the Home Ministry's secret order addressed measures to deal with Korean conscript laborers until they were repatriated. In order to retain Korean coal miners as long as possible, this part stipulated that the corporations had to pay them for their continued labor. Wages were to be calculated at the same rate as during the war. The conscript laborers were to be provided with pocket money, while the corporation withheld the remainder as savings for each individual's account. Such measures were, in fact, no different from the wartime system, in which corporations usually funneled the bulk of the wages owed to Korean workers into mandatory "patriotic savings accounts."<sup>30</sup> The Home Ministry document attempted to justify the continued application of such restrictive financial measures as inevitable, implying that Korea's separation from Japan meant that overseas bank transfers to Korea were no longer possible. In reality, however, the Japanese government continued to implement the wartime wages and savings system for conscript laborers in order to continue exploiting them until their return.

Japanese corporations that continued to employ Korean conscript laborers followed the government order to withhold their savings, but many private

companies never paid workers the wages owed to them. According to Kim Deuk-jung, the Mitsui Corporation's Kamioka mining company in Gifu Prefecture did not even pay for his transportation costs, much less his hard-earned wages. Instead, the Japanese employee who was supposed to accompany Kim and other Korean laborers by chartered train to Shimonoseki gave them two cups of rice. "We were told to cook the rice when we got hungry during our return journey."<sup>31</sup> The Mitsui employee then deserted them in the middle of the night.

Since the Korean miners at Kamioka had refused to work and held demonstrations for their immediate release, Kim concluded, the Mitsui Corporation got rid of them by incurring as little cost to the company as possible, even if it meant abandoning them. Furthermore, most corporations also refused to pay out the mandatory savings of conscript laborers. This was in violation of the Home Ministry's secret document, which stated, "Make certain [they] understand that savings will be delivered to each individual when they return to Korea in the near future." However, even this statement aimed at reassuring Korean laborers would later prove to have been disingenuous. The Japanese government failed to set up any monitoring mechanisms to ensure that private corporations paid out the mandatory savings, and ultimately refused to intervene once these conscript laborers were returned to Korea.

The third part of the Home Ministry's secret order detailed the treatment of Korean conscript laborers, specifically those who were unemployed, until they were returned to Korea. Regarding financial assets, it stated that those who were no longer employed at industrial factories were to be given a severance package of more than 60 percent of the standard daily pay rate, according to Japanese law at the time. Their food and lodgings were to be provided in the same way as during the war. Although such provisions may have seemed fair enough, the Home Ministry then stipulated that unemployed laborers could be transferred to provide group labor for the government of the prefecture where they resided. The group labor that they could be assigned to specifically included "clearing up the ruins of the war, the construction of new roads, or any other temporary projects deemed suitable." Like the detained Korean coal miners, Korean factory conscripts, even when they were transferred to new work projects, remained on the payroll of the corporations that had brought them to Japan originally. Thus, the Home Ministry ordered private companies to continue using these Koreans as conscript laborers, ignoring the fact that the war had just ended, liberating Korea.<sup>32</sup>

Just as the Korean coal miners never received their mandatory savings, most Korean factory and construction workers left Japan without collecting the severance package they were owed by their former employers. Japanese corporations were either unable or unwilling to provide materially for idled workers who had



become unprofitable. Disregarding the Home Ministry's order, corporations decided that it was to the financial benefit of the industry to dismiss Korean workers quickly without paying them their wages, much less providing severance. In September 1945, the Construction Industry Association began to resist Koreans' demands for their wages and mandatory savings. The Mining Industry Association soon joined in the effort, forming a united corporate front to block the Home Ministry's orders to pay out financial assets that were owed to the conscript laborers. At the same time, they lobbied for, and obtained, vast monetary compensation from the Japanese government for costs that companies incurred as a consequence of operating the Korean labor program.<sup>33</sup>

The last part of the Home Ministry's secret order briefly mentioned "ordinary Koreans" (*Ippan Senjin*), only to postpone making any arrangements for their return to Korea. Until such time, the document read, "they should be ordered to remain where they are and quietly engage in their [current] work." The vast majority of Koreans in Japan fell into this category of "ordinary Koreans," which included children, women, and men not engaged in manual labor. Since they could not be counted on for the heavy labor required to rebuild the public infrastructure and industrial sector in postwar Japan, the government was not concerned about what happened to them. As is clear from the details in this secret order, the Home Ministry's initial plan amounted to a continuation of the wartime labor system for controlling Korean laborers into the postwar period, thus attempting to contain or postpone their emancipation.

The Japanese government's implementation of these measures was primarily motivated by fear that liberated Korean laborers might create violent disturbances for their Japanese employers. In fact, in the weeks following Japan's surrender, a number of Japanese mining companies in the Hokkaido and Jōban regions did suffer violent disturbances, which involved Korean as well as Chinese conscript laborers.<sup>34</sup> From the perspective of the central government, getting rid of such troublesome laborers by shipping them out of the country as soon as possible was a necessary security measure. However, its policy of returning only those Koreans in Japan who had been conscripted into military or labor service amounted to a selective deportation. Unlike the later repatriation of other Korean residents, who had the choice either to return to Korea or to remain in Japan, Korean conscripts were deported only after their employers had exploited them for as long as possible, in some cases for months after liberation. Many issues remained unresolved, such as what to do about unpaid wages, mandatory savings for laborers, and veterans' pensions for demobilized soldiers. By deporting these former colonial subjects, the Japanese corporations and the government alike avoided taking responsibility for attempting to reach a "postcolonial" settlement over such issues.

## Okinawans as Japanese

Shortly after its defeat, the Japanese government was initially absorbed with the immediate task of repatriating overseas Japanese and deporting Korean and Chinese conscript laborers, leaving Okinawan migrants in limbo. Incoming reports, however, revealed the poor conditions that many Okinawans were facing in various parts of Japan. The first report that caught the attention of government officials was compiled by Nagaoka Chitarō, a member of the state-sponsored foundation created during the war called the Okinawa Council (Okinawa Kyōkai), presided over by Kanna Kenwa, Baron Ie Chōjo, and other prominent Okinawan men. Nagaoka had just finished investigating the living conditions of an estimated 60,000 Okinawans—mainly elderly women, mothers with their infants, and schoolchildren—who had been evacuated to Kyushu before the Battle of Okinawa. Many of these wartime evacuees faced great difficulties, as they were completely dependent upon official aid for months. Deeply concerned over the material and psychological well-being of these evacuees, Nagaoka submitted his findings to the Okinawa Council, which pressed the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Health and Welfare for assistance.<sup>35</sup> Council members were even more troubled by the administrative separation of the Ryukyu Islands from Japan, and how that might affect the status of Okinawans in Japan. Whether the US military had liberated the Ryukyus from Japanese rule remained unclear, as was the future political disposition of the southwestern islands, complicating the question of how to treat Okinawans in Japan.

In contrast to its harsh treatment of Korean conscript laborers, the Japanese government responded to the Okinawa Council's request by granting assistance, however scant it proved to be. In the wake of the war, it slashed the Council's subsidies down to one-tenth its previous sum and provided ¥100,000 in financial aid, falling far short of what was required to support the large number of Okinawan evacuees stranded in Kyushu. However, as far as government officials were concerned, Okinawans remained Japanese subjects, and therefore were encouraged to settle in mainland Japan, at least until the political disposition of Okinawa was determined.

To this end, the Home Ministry sent a memorandum to the Kyushu Region Government General on September 20, 1945, ordering that a prefectural office be set up to assist Okinawans and their family members in the region. As a result, the new Provisional Okinawa Prefectural Office was established within the Kyushu Region Government General based in Fukuoka.<sup>36</sup> The Japanese government was thus determined to continue carrying out the administrative work of Okinawa Prefecture, which it hoped would help prepare for the return of Okinawa to



Japan in the near future. But such expedient political considerations, based on the assumption that Okinawans remained Japanese citizens, not only belied the ambiguous status of Okinawans but also clashed with the aspiration of those who wished to return to their home islands.

Further reports showed that demobilized soldiers and workers released from labor service joined evacuees in Kyushu, many of whom were heading for Kagoshima, the closest port to Okinawa. These reports would compel the government to offer greater aid to Okinawans. In its detailed addendum, the Home Ministry's memorandum promised to appropriate local tax revenues to meet the administrative costs of the newly established Provisional Okinawa Prefectural Office in Fukuoka. It also instructed the Prefectural Office to coordinate with the Okinawa Council in helping Okinawans, offering national appropriations to support their activities when deemed necessary.<sup>37</sup>

Part of these budgetary appropriations were allocated to employ Okinawan officials at the Prefectural Office, many of whom had served in the former prefectural government before the US military invasion of Okinawa. These officials had led the Okinawan evacuees to Kyushu and remained with them to attend to their needs, thus possessing both the empathetic commitment and bureaucratic expertise required to work on behalf of the Prefectural Office. With a dedicated staff supported by the state, the Prefectural Office in Fukuoka established branch offices not only in Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima Prefectures in the Kyushu region but also in Tokyo and Osaka, in order to manage the administrative affairs of Okinawans throughout the country.

Among the official tasks assigned to the Provisional Prefectural Okinawa Office, the management of family registers is especially noteworthy. The Home Ministry's addendum to its memorandum on administrative matters stipulated that the Prefectural Office should instruct Okinawan evacuees to transfer their family registers to the prefectures where they took refuge. Furthermore, it advised that these evacuees be instructed to "assimilate to local customs as soon as possible," so that they could avoid discrimination and establish roots there.<sup>38</sup> Promoting the transfer of family registers was an important indicator of the government's treatment of Okinawans as Japanese imperial subjects, a right that was denied to former colonial subjects like Koreans and Taiwanese. The state-sponsored Okinawa Council also advocated adoptive residency and assimilation, a stance that was consistent with the nationalistic views of its elite members. In fact, upon hearing the emperor's surrender announcement, Baron Ie Chōjo is reported to have claimed that Okinawans must not return to their home islands under US military rule, but should "remain on the mainland [Japan] as imperial subjects."<sup>39</sup>

The Council thus cooperated with the Prefectural Office's efforts in encouraging Okinawans to transfer their family registers and settle in mainland Japan.

Even as it persuaded Okinawan war evacuees to remain in Kyushu, the Japanese government was slow to address the pressing problem of their deteriorating living conditions there.<sup>40</sup> During the war, evacuees had managed to subsist by combining prefectural aid with remittances sent from home. However, the American naval blockade of Okinawa had cut off their remittances, leaving them completely dependent upon local assistance for months before the war ended. Maintaining a life of subsistence became more difficult after Japan's defeat resulted in a sudden and large inflow of Japanese repatriates arriving in their hometowns and villages in these prefectures. Charged first with the administrative responsibility of assisting these Japanese returnees, prefectural officials could no longer provide adequate housing for Okinawan evacuees. Worse still, Japanese neighbors began to turn against them after groundless rumors spread that Okinawan "spying" had accounted for the military defeat in Okinawa.<sup>41</sup> One Okinawan woman who had been evacuated to Aso, Kumamoto Prefecture, later recalled how deeply offended she was by such false rumors, a shameful memory that she associated with her evacuation experience.<sup>42</sup> But the vicious rumors of Okinawan spying became so widespread that local authorities in parts of Kyushu ceased to distribute food rations to evacuees, driving many towards the black markets for their survival. Before long, such discriminatory behavior against Okinawan evacuees led to violent incidents in Kumamoto and Miyazaki Prefectures.<sup>43</sup>

The challenges faced by Okinawan evacuees in Kyushu were compounded by increasing numbers of Okinawan men, women, and children arriving in other areas of Japan shortly after the war. These Okinawan returnees were shipped to mainland Japan from various parts of the defeated empire in the Asia-Pacific region, since Okinawa remained off limits. Sociopolitical marginalization and economic depression in their home islands had driven tens of thousands of Okinawans to become labor migrants in Japanese colonies, mandated islands, and occupied territories. Many were joined by their family members.<sup>44</sup> The problem of Okinawans who were subsequently stranded in postwar Japan was exemplified by the arrival of destitute returnees from the Philippines. During the Battle of Mindanao, Japanese civilians—including women and children—had been forced to join Japanese soldiers in the thick jungles, where they spent months hiding out from the American onslaught, while their food and medical supplies dwindled. As a result, an alarming number died from starvation and disease upon surrender and even after repatriation to Japan.<sup>45</sup> Among the first repatriates from Davao to arrive at the port of Ujina in Hiroshima Prefecture, ten died of malaria during

the voyage, and five more died after their first night in Japan. Describing their wretched conditions as “living hell,” an official report determined that 60 percent of the 1,370 repatriates were found to be sick, many of them children suffering from malnutrition and diarrhea. The report also noted that only 201 were mainland Japanese (*naichijin*), while 1,165 were Okinawans (*Okinawa-kenjin*) who had nothing to wear and nowhere to go. Japanese officials thus continued to distinguish Okinawans from Japanese as they had before the war, even while calling them fellow compatriots.<sup>46</sup> In reality, these Okinawans had become refugees, cut off from their home islands, which the American occupiers had separated from mainland Japan.

The Japanese government at first failed to respond to the urgent needs of Okinawan returnees from the Philippines, even as the rising mortality rate in Ujina was matched in Kagoshima and Uraga. In early November 1945 gravely ill returnees from Davao to Kagoshima—mostly Okinawans suffering from malaria and starvation—were sent to one of three compounds, including the Kirishima Naval Hospital, for medical treatment. Despite the efforts of doctors and nurses who took care of them, 264 of these returnees died in November and 121 more in December.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, corpses of Okinawan returnees from Davao were piling up in the general affairs office of the Uraga Repatriation Center in Kanagawa Prefecture, as the crematorium could not keep up with the number of deaths there. By late November, as many as 110 boxes wrapped in white cloth with cremated remains of the dead were lined up on office desks.<sup>48</sup>

Unwilling to directly intervene on behalf of these destitute Okinawans, Japanese officials delegated this task to the Provisional Okinawa Prefectural Office in Fukuoka. By this time, however, the financial and human resources of the Prefectural Office were stretched beyond their limits. An Okinawan employee of the Fukuoka office recalled that despite their tireless efforts to accommodate poor Okinawan returnees, their staff simply could not save the lives of many who did not survive the bitterly cold winter of 1945–1946:

Many returnees from warm places like Micronesia and the Philippines came to the Prefectural Office since they could not return to Okinawa at the time. . . . Children who couldn't stand the cold died almost every day. . . . They kept dying day after day so that we didn't even [have the time to] ask a Buddhist monk to give them a proper funeral . . . We put the corpses in *sōmen* noodle boxes and transported them by car to the crematorium. . . . Then on the way back we would bring back the bones of those who were cremated the day before. That was a very difficult undertaking for us.<sup>49</sup>



Map 1. Repatriation centers in Japan, Korea, and the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1946

Even while the appalling conditions of Okinawans in Ujina, Kagoshima, and Uruga continued to deteriorate, Japanese officials were not moved to request American occupation authorities for assistance. Instead, holding to government policy towards war evacuees in the Kyushu region, they relied on prefectural authorities to help these returnees settle into neighboring communities. The Home

Ministry's memorandum on administrative matters concerning Okinawa had stipulated that "measures for assisting repatriates should be handled and executed by the prefectures that have received them."<sup>50</sup> Although the word "repatriates" (*hikiagemin*) in this memorandum originally referred to Okinawan evacuees in Kyushu, it was now applied to Okinawan returnees to other parts of Japan. Officials in Kanagawa Prefecture were, therefore, expected to assist Okinawan returnees from the Philippines and Micronesia in relocating from the port of Uraga to various residential neighborhoods. Local districts in Kanagawa Prefecture initially resisted plans for accepting destitute Okinawan returnees, but neighboring prefectures with preexisting Okinawan communities began to accept them. As a result, between January and July 1946, over 6,300 Okinawan returnees from the Philippines, Micronesia, and elsewhere were relocated among seven prefectures in and around Kanagawa Prefecture.<sup>51</sup>

Contrary to the wishes of an overwhelming majority who wanted nothing more than to return to their home islands, the Japanese government did not initially allow the repatriation of Okinawan evacuees and returnees in Japan to Okinawa. Preventing Okinawan repatriation was consistent with American policy, which maintained a naval blockade of Okinawa until US military authorities there were ready to accommodate repatriates to the war-torn island. Furthermore, from the perspective of the Japanese government, repatriation primarily meant returning Japanese nationals to mainland Japan. Insisting that Okinawans remained Japanese nationals, the government encouraged them to adopt residency in Japanese prefectures instead of returning to Okinawa under US military administration. Japanese officials thus clearly distinguished Okinawans from former colonial subjects such as Koreans and Taiwanese, who were strongly encouraged to leave Japan and return to their liberated homelands. Okinawans in Japan who eagerly awaited return passage to their home islands thus were disappointed, and disillusioned, by the Japanese government.

### **Regulating the Mass Exodus**

While Okinawans remained stranded in Japan, many Koreans who embraced liberation in Japan headed for their homeland freed from colonial rule. As soon as the two commercial ferries—the *Kōan Maru* and the *Tokuju Maru*—began departing Korean military servicemen and conscript laborers in early September 1945, other Koreans flooded into the ports of Sensaki and Hakata. By the end of the month, an estimated 20,000 Koreans had crowded into Sensaki and nearby Shimonoseki, and an additional 10,000 into Hakata, all clamoring for berths on any available boat that might take them back to Korea.<sup>52</sup> The floodgates of their

return migration burst open when many of these Koreans, fed up with the substandard level of assistance from Japanese authorities, departed on their own, often aboard small fishing vessels.

During the first months after the war, the Japanese government, especially the prefectural authorities in the region, struggled to regulate the spontaneous exodus of hundreds of thousands of Koreans and their family members. The initial instinct of government officials was to utilize the *Kyōwakai* and the *Kōseikai*, thus continuing to depend upon the imperial state apparatus for controlling Koreans in Japan. Out of practical necessity, however, these officials also came to rely upon emerging Korean organizations, which provided a more effective means of assisting compatriots who were determined to return to their liberated homeland. Such pragmatic cooperation between former colonial authorities and their subjects, each side participating for its own reasons, contributed to the process of physically segregating Korean returnees in the wake of war and empire.

The sudden convergence of large numbers of resident Koreans created severe congestion and instability in Sensaki, Shimonoseki, and Hakata. Many were short-term residents without strong roots in Japan—mainly free laborers and other single men who had recently been released from their jobs.<sup>53</sup> Despite their eagerness to return to liberated Korea, Japanese authorities at the time restricted the use of available shipping to the deportation of conscript Koreans, such as Kim Deukjung. Decades later, Kim recalled that one could hardly walk around Shimonoseki without stepping over Koreans who were sprawled across the port of embarkation.<sup>54</sup> As a result, the ever-increasing number of non-conscript Koreans congregating in regional ports remained stranded for prolonged periods of time. Most such Koreans had no acquaintances to rely on in these port cities and had to find their own accommodations, often in public parks, in and around train stations, and in abandoned factory warehouses. Daily necessities such as food, clothing, medicine, and cash to buy these items quickly ran out, causing a number to fall sick and die in these congested areas. Desperate to acquire rationed supplies that were often denied them, some resorted to theft, while the emergence of Korean black markets near the ports triggered intermittent conflict with the Japanese police.<sup>55</sup>

Frustrated by Japanese authorities who ignored their plight, while deporting only those who had been conscripted into labor and military service, large numbers of Koreans stranded in the ports of exit took matters into their own hands. Shunning the congestion of Shimonoseki, Sensaki, and Hakata, they made their way to smaller, quieter ports in nearby coastal areas, where they chartered or purchased fishing craft of various sizes to take them back to Korea. In fact, this spontaneous movement was a continuation of a return migration that began in



late 1944, as tens of thousands of Koreans escaped from the intensifying American air raids over Japan. After the war, a civil affairs advisor named Edward W. Wagner later wrote that Koreans paid for berths on numerous small vessels that rapidly materialized to cope with the lively demand: “Larger ships ordinarily operating on the Korea-Japan run, and others which happened to be in adjacent waters at the time, carried Japanese one way and Koreans the other.”<sup>56</sup> From September through October 1945, both Japanese and Koreans who returned by such means far outnumbered those who returned by officially designated repatriation ships, reflecting the slow and inadequate assistance provided by the Japanese government.<sup>57</sup>

In September 1945, the central government in Tokyo passed a series of concrete measures, which revealed its persistent focus on deporting Korean conscripts while ignoring other Koreans. On September 12, the Japanese government’s Railway Transportation Agency ordered the regional transportation offices in Shimonoseki and Hakata to stop ordinary passengers from boarding ferries that were bound for Busan.<sup>58</sup> Three days later, the Marine Transportation Agency dispatched two more ships to be used for transporting Korean conscript laborers and former military personnel.<sup>59</sup> Then, on September 20, the Home Ministry ordered the establishment of a Repatriates Office (*Hikiagemin Jimusho*) in every prefecture to assist incoming Japanese repatriates as well as outgoing former colonial subjects.<sup>60</sup> Although the Repatriates Office would go on to serve a critical role in coordinating between the central and regional governments, at this stage it only handled Koreans with “outstanding cases,” an oblique reference to those who had been forced into military or labor service.

When the Japanese government finally turned its attention to the ever-increasing flow of ordinary Koreans into the regional ports, it decided to rely on its imperial state apparatus for controlling Koreans in Japan. On September 28, 1945, the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Health and Welfare jointly issued an order to prefectural governors and police chiefs to implement urgent measures on behalf of Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan.<sup>61</sup> The government order specifically called on the *Kōseikai* at the prefectural and local levels to provide Koreans with unemployment relief, employment opportunities, and counseling for everyday life issues.

The *Kōseikai* and its predecessor, the *Kyōwakai*, had originally been established during the war for precisely this purpose: to micromanage the daily lives of Korean men and women in Japan. The wartime government had obliged all resident Koreans to join the *Kyōwakai*, and had required them to carry membership passbooks as a means of identifying ethnic Koreans.<sup>62</sup> The *Kyōwakai* had been under the direct authority of the Special Higher Police, which had used these membership passbooks to closely monitor the activities of Koreans in Japan.



The Kōseikai, upon replacing the Kyōwakai, also became the principal agency that issued official documents necessary for travel between Korea and Japan. The government order of September 28, therefore, assigned the Kōseikai the task of gathering Koreans who desired to return home and organizing their train transportation to the regional ports. Even after imperial Japan was defeated, the Kōseikai was expected to handle various issues involving Koreans, including their return migration. The government thus relied on the Kōseikai to continue to play an influential role in the lives of resident Koreans for as long as it could, in the midst of the chaos that characterized the immediate postwar period. This memorandum did not actually signal the commencement of an official, organized effort to return ordinary Koreans. Instead, it promised only to send further instructions in due course, reflecting the great disarray of the postwar Japanese state.

Another important feature of the emergency measures issued on September 28 was the central government's call for the regional authorities to cooperate with resident Koreans who were forming their own welfare organizations. According to the memorandum, the Kōseikai would remain the central institution for dealing with Koreans flooding into the ports, while recruiting assistance from these new Korean organizations. This is noteworthy for at least two reasons: first, the government ministries in Tokyo were well aware of the growing number of Korean-run organizations mushrooming throughout Japan since early September; second, the ministries quickly recognized the utility of such Korean organizations, especially after the liberation of Korea and the consequently diminishing authority of the Kōseikai. Without any further instructions, however, the prefectural authorities had to cultivate a working relationship with these new organizations on a trial-and-error basis.

The poor level of assistance provided by Japanese prefectural officials after the war's end gave rise to the spontaneous emergence of the first welfare organizations managed and operated entirely by resident Koreans. At Hakata harbor, for example, officials from Fukuoka Prefecture's Social Welfare Department (*minseika*)<sup>63</sup> decided to resolve the chaotic conditions of overcrowding by removing Koreans to nearby horse stables while they awaited repatriation. The chief of the Social Welfare Department, Shiroto Teizō, apparently found this to be an unobjectionable solution. During a roundtable meeting held in 1947 to record the early history of repatriation operations in Hakata, attended by various officials and newspaper reporters, Shiroto frankly recalled: "We couldn't find any living quarters to accommodate Koreans in the ruins of war, so we thought of the stables at the Japan Horse Racing Association."<sup>64</sup> However, this was a dubious explanation, especially since Japanese repatriates in the city were accommodated in temples and school buildings that had escaped damage in the war.

Such physical segregation of Korean returnees from Japanese repatriates clearly reflected their unequal treatment. According to the central government's directive, Social Welfare Department officials were supposed to work together with the *Kōseikai* in addressing problems at the congested ports. Although this duty included the distribution of rationed food and other relief supplies, officials at Fukuoka Prefecture did not always fulfill their responsibilities in this regard. One official who attended the roundtable meeting with Shiroto recalled that at least thirty to forty Korean returnees, sometimes even as many as eighty, would crowd into his department every day, requesting rationed goods until they were repatriated. He was irritated by such Korean demands, including those who claimed that "we were made to dig for coal during the war and forced to participate in the war effort. It is inexcusable enough that we have not been paid at all to this day after making us suffer so much. At least give us some [rations]." Instead of acquiescing to such requests, he gave them evasive responses:

Although we may be rebuked for admitting this today . . . we dodged their requests by saying, "such matters are handled by the Social Department [*shakaika*] so you have to go there," or "the Social Welfare Department is in charge of this so we don't know anything about it." In this way, we gave them the run-around by putting the responsibility on other departments.<sup>65</sup>

Such dishonest behavior apparently had no repercussions, as long as it did not amount to a willful and verifiable refusal to provide rationed goods for Korean returnees, which might be reported to occupation authorities.

Before American military government teams arrived on the scene, Koreans and their family members in places like Hakata and Shimonoseki more often than not had to fend for themselves while they awaited repatriation. In Hakata, long-term residents formed an organization called the Relief Association for Repatriating Korean Compatriots (*Chōsenjin Kikoku Dōhō Kyūgokai*).<sup>66</sup> Besides providing aid to Korean returnees and arranging for their accommodations, the Relief Association organized a fifteen-member "self-governing unit" (*jichitai*) to help protect their Korean compatriots. The official history of the Fukuoka prefectural police disdainfully notes that this unit later promoted itself as the "Korean police" to US military authorities. According to this historical account, the unit members "strongly believed that . . . since Korea was [now] an independent country, they could act as if they did not have to be regulated by police in the defeated Japanese nation."<sup>67</sup>

Although the prefectural police evidently had trouble conceding the fact that Korea had just been liberated, neither did they attempt to shut down the operations

of newly formed ethnic organizations that were not directly under their control. This reflected their tacit acknowledgment that problems resulting from ever-larger numbers of Koreans stranded in Hakata had to be addressed immediately, no matter who was involved. Korean organizations like the Relief Association that were formed for the explicit purpose of assisting compatriots to reach their liberated homeland, independent of Japanese authority, thus contributed to further segregating Koreans in Japan.

In Shimonoseki and Sensaki, where the largest number of Korean returnees had gathered, a number of new Korean organizations worked alongside Japanese authorities. For example, Koreans and Japanese affiliated with the *Kōseikai* in Yamaguchi Prefecture jointly set up the Shimonoseki Korean Repatriates Relief Association (Shimonoseki Chōsenjin Kikokusha Kyūgokai).<sup>68</sup> This Relief Association assisted officials from Yamaguchi Prefecture's Social Welfare Department in finding accommodations for Korean returnees arriving in Shimonoseki and in caring for them while they awaited repatriation. The Relief Association also established a branch office in Sensaki, where about thirty regular clerks and fifty young assistants distributed food, supervised health-related issues, and secured berths aboard repatriation ships.<sup>69</sup> The organizational skills of this branch office were very effective: The official number of Koreans who were transported out of Sensaki harbor through the end of November 1945 is recorded as 204,697, far exceeding the number of those later repatriated.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime, yet another organization in Shimonoseki sold tickets to the large number of Koreans who repatriated aboard "stowaway boats."<sup>71</sup>

Korean men and women throughout Japan formed a diverse group of volunteer organizations that initially cooperated with the regional branches of the *Kōseikai* to alleviate the massive rush of return migration. Between August and November 1945, these embryonic Korean organizations assisted roughly a half million Koreans to return to Korea in what has been described as a "spontaneous mass exodus," mostly aboard small boats.<sup>72</sup> This mass exodus surpassed the slightly more than 400,000 Koreans whom Japanese authorities repatriated from designated regional ports during the same period. The Japanese government quickly recognized the effectiveness of these organizations and soon ordered prefectural governors and Social Welfare Department officials to utilize their help in repatriating Koreans through official channels. In this way, Koreans affiliated with the *Kōseikai*, together with social activists of various backgrounds, joined hands to establish a range of relief organizations, which soon united to form the first centralized institution of resident Koreans in postwar Japan. This was the *Zai Nippon Chōsenjin Renmei*, or the League of Korean Residents in Japan, which made the safe return of Korean compatriots one of its top priorities.

The mass exodus of Koreans thus not only gave rise to ethnic organizations but also resulted in physical, not to mention ethnic, segregation in postimperial Japan.

### **Ethnic Organizations and Segregation**

Before occupation authorities became actively involved in repatriation operations, the League of Koreans had already emerged as the most influential organizational actor in regulating the mass exodus of Koreans back to their liberated homeland. As the central organization representing resident Koreans throughout Japan, it eclipsed the Kyōwakai-Kōseikai system. The growing influence of the League signaled the beginning of ethnic segregation: a sociopolitical process by which liberated colonial subjects proactively segregated themselves from metropolitan society on the basis of their ethnicity. In other words, the League's leadership was driven by a strong sense of ethnic nationalism, unleashed and emboldened by their embrace of liberation, which led to their self-segregation.

As many Okinawans in Japan grew impatient with the government's lack of initiative in returning them to their home islands, emerging Okinawan organizations also advocated repatriation. The League of Okinawans, in particular, was instrumental in spearheading this effort, closely following the successful example set by the League of Koreans. The rapid rise to prominence of these leading organizations pushed forward the process of ethnic segregation that accompanied the dissolution of empire in metropolitan Japan. At the same time, the progressive political views that characterized their leadership also signaled growing rifts within the respective Korean and Okinawan communities, rifts that would deepen over time.

While resident Koreans began forming organizations to support returnees in the port cities, a variety of self-governing organizations emerged in such cities as Tokyo and Osaka. Those spearheading such organizations ranged from rightist Koreans, with close ties to the Kyōwakai and Kōseikai, to former activists on the left, who now renewed their support for socialism or communism. In Tokyo, leaders of the rightist group formed an association of like-minded individuals as early as August 20, 1945, while the leftist group formed another association two days later.<sup>73</sup> By the end of the month, seven such Korean associations had been organized in Tokyo.

In the meantime, on August 28, two Korean associations in Osaka merged into one that included Chang Jeongsu among its founding members. Since their original goal had been to include as many Koreans as possible, the association included activists like Chang who were involved in the prewar socialist movement, as well as leaders of the Kyōwakai in Osaka. Some of these Koreans from the Kyōwakai

apparently reported on the activities of this organization to Japanese authorities. As a result, the Special Higher Police—which was still operating before the unit was dissolved by a SCAP directive on October 4, 1945—attempted to bring pressure to bear on its members, warning them “Koreans are not [permitted] to raise their flag.” Korean leftists like Chang, hardened by years of colonial repression, simply ignored such acts of police intimidation after liberation.<sup>74</sup> Leftist leaders of the Korean community in Japan thus quickly shed their enforced identification as imperial subjects, replacing it with their ethnic identity as Koreans, regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds.

Resident Koreans began forming these nascent associations to resolve, on their own, various problems that they faced, since it was clear that Japanese authorities were failing to provide adequate support for former colonial subjects. One such problem that caught their immediate attention was how to protect themselves from physical assaults, which posed a very real threat for the Korean minority who had just been liberated in Japan. Japanese expressions of violent sentiment against Koreans were reported in the immediate aftermath of war. For example, a police report from Yamaguchi Prefecture quoted such public statements as “Japan lost the war because of you Koreans; [now] go back to Korea immediately” and “all Koreans must be killed.”<sup>75</sup> In fact, just two days after the war ended, a Japanese military officer did kill a Korean conscript laborer for desertion in Kuwana, Mie Prefecture. Shortly afterwards, Japanese policemen shot to death three Koreans who had rushed to welcome the arrival of US military forces in Chōshi, Chiba Prefecture.<sup>76</sup>

News of such violent incidents spread quickly, frightening Koreans throughout Japan. On the one hand, it conjured painful memories of the massacre of ethnic Koreans following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, driving many to escape from Japan instead of facing the possibility of mob violence against them in 1945.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, it also demonstrated dramatically the dangers of remaining a dispersed minority of liberated colonial subjects. New Korean associations therefore called upon their compatriots to come together as a community, and began formulating self-policing mechanisms for protecting one another. Chang Jeongsu and other leaders of the association in Osaka discussed many ideas, including the possibility of Koreans in the Kansai region moving to the Kyushu region, in order to occupy the coal mines there and take over their industrial management.<sup>78</sup> Although such ideas never moved beyond the realm of wishful imagination, Koreans in Osaka managed to form an ethnic enclave in the neighborhood of Ikuno, a safe haven for the large community of Korean families who came to live there. Korean organizations came to play a central role in such ethnic enclaves that were formed in various parts of Japan, their self-segregation initially driven by the practical need to protect themselves.

Within a month after Japan's surrender, the leadership of emerging Korean associations in Tokyo and Osaka called on others to form a centralized organization for Korean residents in Japan. No such Korean-run organization had been established since the 1920s, and those that had existed had been outlawed or incorporated into the Japanese-controlled Kyōwakai-Kōseikai system. On September 10, 1945, the seven new associations in Tokyo welcomed sixty representatives from the Osaka associations and other associations throughout Japan. This meeting resulted in the formation of a preparatory committee for establishing the League of Koreans.<sup>79</sup> By design, the committee was composed of both conservative and progressive Koreans, representing the two dominant factions. At this early stage, the committee members set aside political and ideological differences to form a social organization that would protect Korean returnees, as well as those who intended to continue residing in Japan. This common objective is reflected in the committee's "declaration," which read, in part: "In close consultation with the appropriate authorities, we will maintain our friendship with the Japanese and provide stability for our fellow Korean residents, while also facilitating [safe passage for] fellow countrymen returning to Korea."<sup>80</sup> In other words, the committee appealed for unity among Koreans and cooperation with Japanese, thus expressing an earnest aspiration for mutual respect in the new, postcolonial era.

The preparatory committee for the League of Koreans quickly began institutionalizing a national network of regional offices, which would accelerate the ethnic segregation of Koreans in Japan. On September 15, 1945, the committee established its central headquarters in Tokyo, while prefectural headquarters were founded in nine prefectures where large numbers of Koreans resided.<sup>81</sup> When the inaugural convention for the official establishment of the League was held in Tokyo between October 15 and 16, 1945, as many as 5,000 representatives from all over Japan attended. By the end of the year, the number of networks operating under the umbrella organization of the League extended to thirty-five prefectural headquarters and 223 branch offices throughout Japan.<sup>82</sup>

The rapid buildup of the League's organizational strength relied in part on the existing network of the Kyōwakai and Kōseikai, with which many of its founding members were closely associated. More importantly, it reflected the widespread allegiance the League earned from increasing numbers of Koreans, who trusted the ethnic organization to provide for their material and psychological needs. For example, one of the League's top priorities from early 1946 became the creation of ethnic Korean schools. According to one account, their establishment was a "spontaneous but deeply felt response to the intense psychological assault Japan had waged on the Korean national identity during the colonial period."<sup>83</sup> The high demand for Korean children to gain or reclaim their cultural heritage, starting



with language education, resulted in the League supporting ethnic schools even in remote parts of Japan. Many such schools, like the one in the small town in Niigata Prefecture where Hong Yeopyo lived, started off by renting space in small residential buildings that served as classrooms. Initially, volunteers were called upon to teach children how to speak basic Korean, including Hong, who was only a teenager himself, though the League eventually set up its own teacher-training program and curriculum on a range of subjects.<sup>84</sup> By October 1946, the League was operating 525 elementary and four middle schools, with a combined teaching staff of over 1,000 and total enrollment of more than 43,000 students.<sup>85</sup> This self-governing ethnic school system thus fulfilled the aspirations of those who embraced liberation, while also serving as another important measure of the ethnic segregation of resident Koreans in Japan.

Building on its growing organizational strength, the League of Koreans also began exerting its newfound influence upon the Japanese government, especially in regard to repatriating Koreans. On November 15, 1945, occupation authorities eliminated the *Kyōwakai* and *Kōseikai* as part of their effort to weaken the policing powers of the Home Ministry. This left the League in a position to deal directly with the government on the regulation of Koreans. The League immediately entered negotiations with the Transportation and Welfare Ministries and succeeded in taking charge of all practical matters relating to Korean returnees. This included authorization for issuing official repatriation certificates (*kikan shōmeisho*), which entitled returnees to free passage home at government expense. Resident Koreans desiring to return to Korea safely and free of charge thus had to apply for a repatriation certificate through the League, which recorded the name and personal information of the individual before issuing the certificate. The individual and his or her family members were then required to produce this certificate in order to board designated trains taking them to the ports and ships taking them across the sea. In the meantime, the League submitted lists of these returnees to the Ministry of Transportation, which made arrangements for the specially chartered trains and ships. The League also prevailed on the Ministry of Health and Welfare to ensure that Koreans awaiting repatriation at the ports were properly fed and accommodated by monitoring their treatment through their liaison offices.<sup>86</sup> Far from ignoring the influence of the League, the Japanese government recognized the utility of working through its large and growing organizational network.

The rise of the League of Koreans was accompanied by the formation of other self-governing organizations representing Taiwanese, Chinese, and Okinawans. Each group spurred on the process of ethnic segregation in postimperial Japan. Among them, the most pressing concern for the grassroots organizations that



resident Okinawans established was to aid the estimated 110,000 Okinawans evacuees and refugees who remained stranded in Japan.<sup>87</sup> In late August 1945, one of the first organizations for Okinawans in Japan was formed in Amagasaki, Hyōgo Prefecture, to care for teenage girls from Okinawa who had served in the Women's Labor Service Corps. Initially calling itself a "prefectural association" (*kenjinkai*), Okinawan residents in Amagasaki negotiated with the local Sumitomo munitions factory to allow these Okinawan girls to stay on in the company dormitory until they could repatriate.<sup>88</sup> In the following months, the prefectural association expanded its activities to secure housing and employment for hundreds of thousands of demobilized Okinawan soldiers and laborers who were flooding into Amagasaki. Meanwhile, on October 3, prominent Okinawan leaders in the neighboring city of Osaka formed the Kansai regional branch of the Okinawa Council. Most of its founding members were editors, contributors, and sponsors of the *Osaka kyūyō shinpō*, a newsletter in circulation between 1937 and 1941, which had led a movement to improve the lives of Okinawan migrants in the region.<sup>89</sup> Although they represented a higher social class of resident Okinawans closely tied to the state-sponsored Council, they also began providing material assistance to nonresident Okinawans stranded in Japan.

Following in the footsteps of the newly ascendant League of Koreans, many leaders of nascent Okinawan associations began advocating the creation of a new and centralized organization for Okinawan residents in Japan. In particular, those espousing a strong sense of Okinawan identity aimed to replace the "pro-Japanese" Okinawa Council, just as the League of Koreans was beginning to expel members who were closely associated with the Kyōwakai and Kōseikai. These Okinawans were no longer able to ignore the fact that the Council was the postwar offspring of the Patriotic Okinawa Council, led by nationalistic Okinawans who had pledged their support for the Japanese war effort. Furthermore, the Council had closely toed the government line of restraining Okinawans from returning to their home islands, much to the chagrin of Nagaoka Chitarō, who broke ranks with his pro-government colleagues. Nagaoka was joined by Yamashiro Zenkō, who clashed with the Council's president, Baron Ie Chōjo. Having inspected the actual conditions of Okinawan refugees in Uruga, "who had nothing but the clothes on their backs," Yamashiro confronted Ie, arguing that all these compatriots would "die of starvation unless the Council withdrew its remaining funds worth 70,000 yen and spend it immediately on the provision of foods."<sup>90</sup>

Eventually, a freight car full of sweet potatoes was eventually delivered to Uruga, but this was not enough to prevent Yamashiro, Nagaoka, and others who nonetheless departed the Council to form a rival organization more responsive to the needs of Okinawan refugees. When the Okinawajin Renmei, or the League

of Okinawans, was established in Tokyo on November 11, 1945, the founding members explicitly called attention to the general neglect and, in some cases, ill treatment of Okinawans who were stranded in Japan. Identifying repatriation as the solution to this problem, the League began advocating the immediate return of Okinawan refugees to their homes while calling on resident Okinawans to provide aid for them. At the same time, the League and its regional branches formed their own security forces (*hoantai*) to help protect Okinawans, just as other ethnic organizations such as the League of Koreans were doing.<sup>91</sup>

The League of Okinawans immediately initiated a grassroots movement to assist fellow islanders in Japan, pressuring the Japanese government to respond to their needs. The early activities of the League concentrated on relief efforts for Okinawan refugees awaiting repatriation. On December 9, 1945, for example, the League held a rally to raise awareness and provide assistance to Okinawan repatriates at a conference hall in Kanda, Tokyo. Over one thousand Okinawans packed into the hall, where they listened intently to reports on the condition of Okinawan repatriates from Davao, Philippines, the war evacuees in the Kyushu region, and the situation in war-torn Okinawa. As a result of a fundraising campaign for fellow Okinawan repatriates from Davao who remained stranded in Uraga, the organizers were able to collect ¥2,300 and eighty-eight tickets for commuter trains in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Then for a week starting on December 16, members of the League hit the streets of Ginza, Ueno, and Shinjuku in Tokyo to gather donations for Okinawan schoolchildren stranded in Kyushu. In this way, the League was able to collect ¥12,000, which it used to send mandarin oranges and rice cakes as part of the New Year's celebration for the children in Kyushu.<sup>92</sup>

Beyond fundraising efforts, League members occasionally resorted to more confrontational tactics to demand aid from Japanese authorities. For example, Kuwae Chōkō had become vice director of the League's Saitama prefectural branch. In that capacity, he requested aid for Okinawan repatriates, including the provision of medicines for those who were sick and suffering from malnutrition. But when their repeated requests failed to elicit an official response, Kuwae and other League members pressed their case against prefectural officials, forcing their way into a confrontational meeting with the governor of Saitama Prefecture. The governor, who had himself recently repatriated from Manchuria, expressed sympathy for the plight of Okinawan repatriates and promised to meet their needs.<sup>93</sup>

The identity politics of the League of Okinawans was one of the most noteworthy characteristics of this organization. The founders of the organization consciously adopted the Japanese word *Okinawajin* to describe themselves, *jin* literally meaning "person" or "people," therefore identifying themselves as

Okinawans. They avoided using suffixes like *kenjin* or *kenmin*, meaning a person or people from a particular Japanese prefecture, which were conventional ways of referring to “people from Okinawa Prefecture.” The League’s self-identification as *Okinawajin* was significant because it suggested that Okinawans were ethnically different from mainland Japanese.

At the same time, their assertion of Okinawan identity was also an expression of grave discontent many leaders of the League felt towards Japan. Kuwae Chōkō expressed pride in his ancestral Ryukyu Kingdom and bitterly criticized Japan, blaming the government for the historical injustices visited upon the people of the Ryukyus in a petition he prepared for the League; “The Kingdom was annexed by Japan, and in the late war, [Okinawa] is said to have been completely reduced to ashes. The Japanese government is responsible for that.” He then argued that Okinawans should form a united front in demanding compensation from the government that could be used for rebuilding Okinawa.<sup>94</sup> Miyazato Eiki, who had become the executive chief of the League’s Kyushu regional headquarters, was even more explicit: “The history of Okinawa was a history of oppression, and [Japan] sacrificed Okinawa in this war. But we are liberated, and from now on, *Uchinaanchu* (“people of Okinawa”) will begin anew as *Uchinaanchu*.” Miyazato also composed a message to congratulate the civil administration in Okinawa after its inauguration in April 1946. To emphasize his emancipatory sentiment, the message was written in Okinawan, or *Uchinaaguchi*, which Japanese authorities had suppressed before the war.<sup>95</sup> Miyazato thus captured the League’s spirit of celebrating the distinctive identity of Okinawans in the midst of the ethnic segregation that became deeply rooted in postimperial Japan.

## Conclusion

Resettling the realm of Japan’s dismembered empire meant physically segregating imperial Japanese subjects from liberated colonial subjects, as they prepared to return to their respective homelands. Unwilling to acknowledge that it had lost not only the war but also its empire, the Japanese government initially attempted to maintain the status quo on policies towards colonial migrants in Japan. The Home Ministry’s secret order of September 1, 1945, enabled Japanese corporations to continue exploiting Korean conscript laborers in coal mines for as long as possible. When their services were no longer required, many of the corporations deported these Koreans without reimbursing them for their wages, mandatory savings, and pensions.<sup>96</sup> Government policies began to shift only when confronted by the stark reality that the imperial state apparatus of the *Kōseikai* and *Kyōwakai* was steadily waning in its ability to exert authority over the lives of Koreans in

Japan. Japanese authorities were thus forced to cooperate with members of the League of Koreans, which supplanted the Kōseikai-Kyōwakai system, as they jointly facilitated the return migration of Koreans.

Ethnic segregation soon characterized postimperial Japan, belying decades of official propaganda stressing the common ancestry between Japanese, Koreans, and Ryukyans and, by extension, multiethnic cohesion in the Japanese Empire.<sup>97</sup> Migrant communities led this trend, regrouping and forming ethnic organizations that protected their interests, making up for the absence of Japanese assistance in the wake of war and empire. Individual migrants and their families also sought social and economic support in newly emerging ethnic enclaves, which were often linked to the burgeoning black markets in many of the bombed-out Japanese cities. Black markets had emerged in Japan during the war, but they became segregated along ethnic lines in the postwar period. Numerous firsthand accounts of those who were involved in the illicit business, such as Arakaki Seiichi's memoir, depict a deep sense of comradeship and cooperation within migrant communities. At the same time, they also frequently point out the palpable tension and conflict with their Japanese rivals. The local media periodically publicized incidents of Okinawan, Korean, and Taiwanese migrants clashing with the Japanese *yakuza* over who controlled the black markets. More frequent were reports of Japanese police arresting those migrant minorities who were suspected of engaging in unlawful economic activities. Very often sensationalized, such reports further fueled simmering inter-ethnic animosities that were on the rise after 1945, thus reinforcing the segregation of migrant minorities who were jettisoned by metropolitan Japan.

The end of empire thus generated a process of ethnic homogenization in Japan through segregation, propelled by the massive movements of people in and out of the country. Not only did Koreans, Okinawans, Taiwanese, and others depart from Japan, but a far larger number of Japanese also returned to their defeated island nation. As this spontaneous return migration made Japan more homogeneous, it helped revive a discourse of homogeneity that mirrored the ethnic sorting that was carried out on the ground.<sup>98</sup> By separating and reidentifying themselves in relation to Japanese society, these migrants inadvertently laid the basis for postwar Japan's myth of ethnic homogeneity.

While the dissolution of the Japanese Empire served as the immediate impetus for ethnic segregation, the meaning of liberation differed among the newly segregated migrant minorities and evolved over time. Those who embraced liberation were mainly colonial subjects who had been coerced or compelled to migrate to the imperial metropole during the war. Their emancipation meant they were finally free to depart from Japan, and many did not hesitate to do so, initiating

a spontaneous mass exodus of half a million Koreans, in addition to the 400,000 deported by Japanese authorities, within months after the war. In the face of continuing discrimination by the Japanese state and society, returning to Korea was the most straightforward means for these Korean men and women to secure liberation from Japanese colonial rule. At the same time, the League of Koreans was beginning to engage in a prolonged struggle to ensure that those who remained in Japan would be officially recognized as liberated nationals. Meanwhile, most Okinawan migrants in Japan were initially disinclined to be associated with liberated colonial subjects, much less embrace liberation. However, the prolonged territorial separation of their home islands from Japan, compounded by their increasing segregation from Japanese society, soon motivated the founders of the League of Okinawans to represent themselves as distinctive from mainland Japanese. The resurgence of a strong sense of Okinawan identity would serve as a major driving force for the League to begin openly critiquing the government, demanding attention to the plight of Okinawans stranded in Japan. The growing influence of these ethnic organizations in determining the fate of migrants in Japan, not to mention the unregulated mass exodus, soon forced Allied occupation authorities to take over the process of resettling the former Japanese empire.

## *Repatriation as a “Privilege” for Non-Japanese*

While Japanese authorities remained largely unsure of how to respond to their defeat in war and the consequent loss of empire, the Allied authorities who settled into their new role as victorious occupiers in Japan were less equivocal. Only with regard to one of the most pressing issues in the early phase of occupying Japan—how to deal with the large number of migrants on the move—had the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) failed to issue concrete policies.

The only information available to newly deployed occupation forces was the civil affairs guide, “Aliens in Japan,” which the OSS had prepared less than two months before the Japanese surrender. Drafted by intelligence officers in the Research and Analysis Branch of the OSS, the authors relied upon a combination of interviews and Japanese-language publications as their sources of information.<sup>1</sup> The guide traced the history of migration among various ethnic communities in Japan, describing their living conditions and levels of assimilation into Japanese society. It also highlighted the widespread problem of Japanese discrimination against Koreans, who accounted for nearly 95 percent of the estimated 2 million “non-Japanese persons” in Japan at the end of the war. Based on these findings, the guide recommended that these “aliens” in Japan be offered the choice between repatriating to their respective homelands or remaining in Japan, depending on their circumstances and preferences. For those in “urgent need of liberation, protection, or segregation from the Japanese,” the guide strongly urged repatriation as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup>

While some military government teams in Japan faithfully adhered to these basic recommendations, others did not, creating friction not only with colonial migrants but also their respective representatives, including the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). Competing jurisdictions and interests between the two US-led occupations in Japan and Korea involved, among other issues, the critical question of whether Koreans in Japan were to be treated as liberated peoples or not.

Meanwhile, the plight of Okinawan migrants stranded in occupied Japan was exacerbated by interservice rivalry between the US Army in Japan and the US



Navy in Okinawa. Navy officials heading the United States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands (USMGR) rebuffed SCAP's repeated attempts to return Okinawans from Japan, insisting on additional time and resources necessary to prepare for their resettlement. General Douglas MacArthur's promise that these Okinawans would soon be allowed to repatriate, along with all other "non-Japanese" migrants in Japan, did little to comfort them.

The notion that Okinawans were not fully Japanese derived from wartime US policy, based on several important studies prepared in advance of the invasion and occupation of the island. For example, in June 1944, the OSS published the results of its ethnographic study of Okinawans, based largely on several months of research that was conducted on the immigrant Okinawan community in Hawaii. Describing Okinawans as a Japanese minority group, the study detailed the extent to which they suffered discrimination for their distinctive language, culture, and traditional practices. Frequently highlighting the social schism between Okinawans and ethnic Japanese, it suggested the US military take advantage of these divisive differences in psychological warfare and in the occupation of Okinawa.<sup>3</sup> The OSS was followed by the US Navy, which in November produced a civil affairs handbook on the Ryukyus, consciously resurrecting the historical name of the archipelago. The handbook reminded the reader that Japan had annexed and renamed the islands Okinawa Prefecture in 1879, stripping the Ryukyu Kingdom of its sovereignty.<sup>4</sup> Taken together, these sources appeared to support an American policy for liberating "Ryukyuan" to justify the separation of the Ryukyus. After Japan's surrender, however, the legal status of Ryukyuan remained ambiguous, contributing to an acute sense of uncertainty, anxiety, and vulnerability among Okinawans in Japan.

Whatever policy goals were set in Washington, American occupiers in Japan could accomplish little without local support. From the commencement of the occupation through the end of 1946, SCAP relied on a range of actors to help regulate the massive outflow of Koreans, Okinawans, and other migrant minorities. Occupation officials began by delegating to Japanese authorities the task of maintaining control over the congested ports, adopting a cooperative working relationship that would strengthen over time. This in turn involved an indirect and tenuous relationship between American authorities and the leading ethnic organizations that represented Koreans and Okinawans in Japan. For progressive activists affiliated with the League of Koreans, taking charge of repatriation was an important first step towards establishing political autonomy in postimperial Japan. But the growing influence of the League drove weary Japanese officials to plead with SCAP to check the League's self-designated authority. Occupation authorities complied. For its own purposes, SCAP was more sympathetic towards the



League of Okinawans, whose repeated criticisms of the government’s neglect of Okinawans desiring repatriation could be interpreted as its support for the separation of the Ryukyus from Japan.

The liberation and segregation of migrant minorities were already underway when occupation authorities took over the reins of migration controls in Japan. How did the implementation of official repatriation regulations affect these processes? And what did repatriation really mean for different migrant groups, all of which SCAP categorized simply as “non-Japanese”?

This chapter focuses on SCAP’s repatriation program, comparing the process and outcome of official efforts to return Koreans and Okinawans to their respective homelands. It also scrutinizes the complex and often contested relationships among migrant minorities, defeated Japanese, and occupying Americans, along with the evolving dynamics of their triangular interactions. Leading ethnic organizations, the central and regional governments of Japan, SCAP, and military government authorities in Korea and the Ryukyus—each for its own reasons—sought to establish control over Korean and Okinawan repatriates. While these parties initially cooperated with one another in support of repatriation, they soon began to clash over conflicting means, priorities, and—above all—motivations for administering these non-Japanese migrants. Examining their willingness and ability to join this collaborative effort sheds light on the successes and shortcomings of SCAP’s repatriation program, as well as the extent of American authority, in this first phase of resettling occupied Japan.

### **Appealing to the Occupiers**

Occupation authorities first learned about various issues relating to migrant minority groups in occupied Japan through a range of reports filed by Japanese authorities. Some of the earliest memorandums sent from the Japanese Foreign Ministry’s newly created Central Liaison Office (CLO) to SCAP reported on Chinese and Korean conscript laborers, whose labor strikes led to outbreaks of violence. In addition, SCAP’s General Staff Section Two (G-2), in charge of intelligence operations in occupied Japan, was informed of the formation of various new ethnic organizations since the end of the war. At the same time, leaders of the League of Koreans met with officers of SCAP’s General Staff Section Three (G-3), designated the Repatriation Branch, to request official permission for transporting their compatriots back to Korea. The League of Okinawans also petitioned General MacArthur to begin shipping fellow islanders to the Ryukyus as soon as possible.

SCAP did not initially understand the underlying motivations of these direct appeals to occupation authorities, much less the internal politics of each

organization and their evolving relationship with Japanese authorities. It was not until early November 1945 that officers in SCAP's Government Section (GS) began to comprehend, for example, that the League of Koreans' attempt to take charge of returning compatriots was driven by at least three closely interrelated motivations: (1) to fill the power vacuum in occupied Japan by replacing the imperial state apparatus of the *Kyōwakai* and *Kōseikai*; (2) to establish institutional links with postcolonial Korea, thereby gaining legitimacy as the leading Korean organization in Japan; and (3) to secure political autonomy and self-determination for Korean residents in Japan. Petitions from the League of Okinawans, which were received in early December, informed GS officers on how this organization differed from its Korean counterpart in advocating repatriation, the reestablishment of various links between Japan and the Ryukyus, and the pursuit of self-determination. The growing influence of the Leagues challenged Japanese authority, putting occupation officials in the complex and challenging role of mediating between the defeated imperial state and its erstwhile subjects.

Koreans were the first among nascent ethnic organizations in occupied Japan to seek official recognition, as the preparatory committee for the League of Koreans attempted to establish direct contacts with Japanese and occupation authorities. On October 2, 1945, Cho Duseong and two other representatives from the committee met with Prime Minister Higashikuni, requesting government assistance for the large number of Koreans remaining in Japan in the aftermath of war.<sup>5</sup> A few days later, they also visited occupation authorities at SCAP's G-3 Section, submitting an official request relating to the activities of the League. Specifically, the committee requested that Koreans be granted the right to possess and regulate their own ships, and to operate a ferry service between Japan and Korea. Furthermore, to provide for and protect the interests of Korean returnees, the committee expressed its aspiration that the League would soon establish a central office in Seoul and branch offices in Busan and Shimonoseki.<sup>6</sup> The actions of these men represented their ambition to gain recognition as the official representatives of Koreans in occupied Japan.

Beyond assisting returnees, the League of Koreans functioned as a social organization, as indicated by one of its most prominent members, Kim Cheon-hae, who said that its primary purpose was "to make Japan a decent place for Koreans to live."<sup>7</sup> But many of its leaders, including Kim, had been communist and socialist activists since the 1920s and soon pushed for a more liberal political agenda. For the progressive faction within the League, the real goal of the organization was to ensure the liberation of Koreans in Japan, who would contribute towards the democratization of Japan as well as Korea. Closely following political developments in Korea, this process began with a self-cleansing purge of

“pro-Japanese” conservatives, as the League expelled members who belonged to the Kyōwakai and Kōseikai for their support of the Japanese war effort and colonial oppression. Those expelled were joined by other Koreans who formed two rightist organizations in November 1945 and January 1946. Neither organization threatened the predominant position of the League, as noted by a former occupation official, though they “carried on a bitter and open rivalry with it.”<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, leftist members of the League of Koreans such as Kim Duyong embraced SCAP’s twin goals of demilitarizing and democratizing Japan, fully expecting that this would entail a total emancipation of former colonial subjects in Japan. Their faith in the American occupation troops as an “army of liberation” appeared to be validated on October 10, 1945, when SCAP released Kim Cheonhae and other communist leaders from Fuchū Prison, where they had been incarcerated for years as political prisoners. Kim promptly joined the League and lent his support for the publication of *Minjung sinmun* (People’s Newspaper), printed in Korean, which became an influential forum for Kim Duyong and others to espouse their increasingly leftist political views.<sup>9</sup> Kim Cheonhae also joined former Fuchū inmates Tokuda Kyūichi and Shiga Yoshio in rebuilding the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). Strengthened by its alliance with the JCP, the League embarked on its twin goals of defending the rights of liberated Koreans in Japan and contributing to the establishment of an independent nation in Korea.<sup>10</sup>

In a forceful reaction against the Japanese government’s policy of deporting Korean conscript laborers, the League of Koreans confronted companies that exploited them under harsh wartime conditions. This constituted the earliest attempt to seek compensation for forced labor in postwar Japan, initiating what would amount to a series of civil and legal battles to reach a settlement that has continued well into the twenty-first century. From October 1945, those Korean conscript laborers still forced to continue working under the wartime colonial system began rising up in collective action, refusing to work and demanding their immediate return to Korea. At the Jōban coal mines in Ibaragi and Fukushima Prefectures, where about 3,500 to 4,000 Korean conscript laborers began rioting, the Japanese company consulted the League on how best to handle them. On October 19, Kim Duyong, assisted by JCP member Imamura Hideo, journeyed to Jōban to negotiate not only releasing and returning these Korean conscripts, but also terms of compensating them for their forced servitude.<sup>11</sup> While contentious negotiations ensued, a similar incident followed in November 1945, when the League began demanding death and disability payments for Korean laborers at the Ashio copper mine in Tochigi Prefecture.<sup>12</sup> In both instances, American occupation forces had to be called in to contain the turbulence and to mediate a compromise, resulting in the repatriation of the Korean laborers without compensating them.

The executive members of the League of Koreans attempted to ingratiate themselves with the “army of liberation,” but its confrontational approach towards Japanese mining corporations did not help win American sympathy. The preparatory committee for the League had consciously chosen as its chairman Cho Duseong, a Korean Christian minister born in the United States, to establish good offices with SCAP. Fluent in English, Cho spoke to American officers at SCAP’s G-3 Section, humbly requesting that their organization be authorized to play a leading role in helping Koreans return to their liberated homeland. Then, on October 17, the formally inaugurated League of Koreans selected Yun Geun as its chairman on the grounds that he was the director of the Korean YMCA in Tokyo, a Christian organization that Americans would approve of.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, SCAP’s Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) had begun investigating the personal backgrounds of the League’s executive members, noting the fact that some of them advocated communism.<sup>14</sup> When the League intervened on behalf of Korean conscript laborers at the Jōban and Ashio mines, American occupation authorities interpreted their actions as communist-inspired labor activism. Worse still, they feared such labor disputes threatened to impede Japanese coal production, at a time when significant shortages of critical energy supplies would have devastating consequences for the Japanese economy already shattered by the war. As a result, SCAP initially supported the Japanese government’s effort to retain Korean miners in maintaining the production of coal,<sup>15</sup> and thus was disinclined to recognize the League’s involvement as a legitimate struggle against colonial injustice.

On the other hand, SCAP responded positively to the proactive efforts of the League of Koreans in assisting Korean returnees, sharing the commonly held view that repatriation was a top priority in the wake of war and empire. When the preparatory committee for the League first requested the G-3 Section’s approval in establishing liaison offices in Korea, the stated purpose was to lend their organizational assistance to repatriating Koreans from Japan. The League’s commitment to Korean repatriation won SCAP’s support, as the G-3 Section issued special travel permits for League representatives who were dispatched to the US zone of occupation in southern Korea on November 8, 1945. Chang Jeongsu, who was chosen among the eight representatives of the League, could hardly believe that they were treated to a first-class cabin aboard the repatriation ship, *Kōan Maru*, in contrast to all other Koreans, who were crowded into the lower hull of the ship, recalling that “it was such a respectable-looking cabin for an ordinary person [like myself]. . . . I would not be able to stay in such a place again until the day I die.”<sup>16</sup> Such special treatment demonstrated the benefits of appealing to the American occupiers, who initially welcomed the League’s promise to facilitate the repatriation of Koreans.

Following the League of Koreans, progressive leaders drove the early political agenda of the League of Okinawans. Matsumoto San’eki, an Okinawan member of the JCP, was motivated to establish the League in large part by the grave discontent many Okinawans felt towards the conservative, government-backed Okinawa Council. In Matsumoto’s eyes, the Council’s leaders were nothing short of “war criminals” and were therefore no longer qualified to represent Okinawans in the new era of postwar democracy.<sup>17</sup> Instead, Matsumoto wanted to form a new Okinawan organization to be headed by progressive leaders who could gain the confidence of Okinawans in Japan and the respect of the occupation authorities. He thus broached the subject with Iha Fuyū, one of the most famous Okinawan intellectuals, known as the “father of Okinawan studies,” who agreed to serve as the chairman of the League. Other founding members included Higa Shunchō, another prominent scholar and former editor of the influential socialist magazine *Kaizō*, which was inaugurated in 1919 but was shut down by Japanese authorities during the war. Higa’s close friend Nagaoka Chitarō, also a former correspondent for *Kaizō*, parted ways with the Council to join the League. The pair then launched the publication of *Jiyū Okinawa* (Free Okinawa), the League’s official newsletter, which helped revive the progressive impulses of leftist Okinawans who were politically active before the war. Matsumoto himself declined to serve as an executive member, in order to prevent his leftist politics from causing any misgivings among prospective members of the League, but became an advisor instead.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, liberal intellectuals initially represented the League’s leadership.

Finding common cause between Okinawan and Korean activists in Japan was an effective strategy employed by the Japanese Communist Party, which had close personal and institutional links with both groups. Tokuda Kyūichi was a prominent Okinawan communist who emerged from Fuchū Prison to become the JCP’s secretary-general. In cooperation with Matsumoto San’eki, Tokuda actively brokered a strong relationship with progressive members of the League of Okinawans. He was also closely allied with Korean members of the JCP, many of whom were actively involved in the League of Koreans during the early postwar years in Japan. The League of Koreans had served as an institutional model for the League of Okinawans, and the two organizations continued to support one another.<sup>19</sup> On November 22, 1946, for example, the headquarters of the League of Okinawans invited representatives from the League of Koreans to a meeting to discuss common problems faced by both organizations. Nagaoka Chitarō, who presided over this meeting, had earlier published his views in *Jiyū Okinawa* concerning the future political disposition of Okinawa, evidently taking his cue from the political situation in US-occupied Korea. Nagaoka envisioned a “high level of autonomy” and economic rehabilitation for the future of Okinawa under American

trusteeship, followed by complete self-determination according to the free will of Okinawans. Such an optimistic vision was based on his analysis of the trusteeship policy that the Allies were pursuing in Korea at the time.<sup>20</sup>

Taking their cue from the League of Koreans, the League of Okinawans and its associated organizations also sent a series of petitions to SCAP, calling for assistance that Japanese authorities failed to provide. For example, on November 11, 1945, at the inaugural convention of the League of Okinawans in Tokyo, the founding members decided to draft a petition for a set of relief measures for Okinawans in Japan who were awaiting repatriation.<sup>21</sup> On November 22, Iha Fuyū, the chairman of the League, signed his name to this petition, which was delivered to General Headquarters, SCAP. The newly formed regional chapter of the League of Okinawans in Kansai also sent its own petitions to SCAP and the Japanese government, as described in the inaugural issue of *Jiyū Okinawa*.<sup>22</sup> Miyazato Eiki and others who had just attended the inaugural convention of the League in Tokyo strongly urged their counterparts in Kyushu to follow suit, resulting in yet another petition that was sent to General MacArthur on December 1.<sup>23</sup> Though the petitions differed slightly in tone and content, the common theme centered on their request for aid and repatriation for destitute Okinawan evacuees and overseas repatriates in Japan.

The petition the headquarters of the League of Okinawans delivered to SCAP is noteworthy for several reasons. The most prominent feature is the way the founders of the League identified themselves. The opening remarks of the petition in English began with the League's declaration that it was the representative body of "democratically inclined Okinawans who are residing in Japan." The original text that accompanied the English petition used the Japanese word *Okinawajin* (Okinawans) to describe themselves, suggesting that they were ethnically different from mainland Japanese. At the same time, the League did not totally disassociate itself from Japan, either. This feeling of being Japanese, but not quite Japanese, was a part of the complex identity of Okinawans, as reflected in the petition:

Of the entire Japanese racial stock it was the people of Okinawa who were victimized [*sic*] most and were reduced to the most miserable circumstances as the result of the war. In spite [*sic*] of this, however, the Japanese Government is extremely indifferent to the difficulties suffered by the Okinawans. And, we feel that we can no longer rely on the good offices of the Japanese Government for the solution of the problems confronting us.<sup>24</sup>

This part of the petition also reveals the highly critical attitude of the League towards the Japanese government, blaming it for various problems that Okinawans



faced in the aftermath of war. These problems specifically referred to the government's neglect of both Okinawan evacuees in the Kyushu region and overseas repatriates in different parts of Japan. The petition indicated that government officials should have been combating false rumors of Okinawan sabotage and espionage during the Battle of Okinawa, which was leading Japanese villagers to mistreat Okinawan evacuees in Kyushu. This problem was further aggravated by the arrival of 2,000 women and children from Davao, the petition continued, and "not a few of them have died and many are suffering from disease" because neither clothing nor bedding was being supplied to them.

As sociologist Tomiyama Ichirō has pointed out, these petitions that Okinawans sent to General MacArthur demonstrate that they recognized SCAP as the new power structure in postimperial Japan, one that could benefit them.<sup>25</sup> For this reason, the League of Okinawans bypassed the Japanese government and delivered its petition directly to SCAP. Representing the most pressing concerns for Okinawans in Japan at the time, the petition specifically sought MacArthur's assistance in three areas: (1) repatriation to Okinawa of all those aged persons, women, and children who were stranded in Japan; (2) facilitation in exchange of communications, remittance of money, and the sending of relief goods between Okinawans in Japan proper, Okinawa, Micronesia, and Hawaii; and (3) dispatch of ten Okinawans residing in Japan to Okinawa for the purpose of inquiring about the safety and whereabouts of family members.<sup>26</sup> All three requests called for the free movement of people, goods, and information between Japan and Okinawa. Recognizing SCAP as the commanding authority over the occupations of Japan and Okinawa, the League was thus appealing for special recognition in their attempt to bridge the distance between the two sides.

SCAP responded to the petition from the League of Okinawans in a directive to the Japanese government on January 2, 1946, entitled "Repatriation of Okinawans." But contrary to what is suggested by the title of this directive, SCAP denied the request for repatriation, maintaining that Okinawa Island remained closed "as a matter of military necessity." This in fact meant that USMGR in Okinawa was refusing to accept repatriates from Japan, and that the feasibility of returning Okinawans was still under investigation.

While SCAP also rejected the other requests, it did acknowledge the dire conditions of Okinawans in Japan: "The general picture is that of a sub-marginal standard of living which may result in numerous deaths during the coming months." Consequently, SCAP ordered the Japanese government to provide "adequate food, shelter, medical care, bedding and clothing for destitute Ryukyuan refugees" in Japan.<sup>27</sup> Okinawan residents in mainland Japan welcomed this emergency relief order, even if most were distraught at the complete lack of access to



their home islands since the end of the war. On occasion, they were known to have used this SCAP directive to remind Japanese officials of their duty to provide better treatment to Okinawans.<sup>28</sup> Appealing directly to occupation authorities thus proved beneficial to a certain extent for the League of Okinawans, as it did for the League of Koreans, at least in the initial few months after the fall of the Japanese Empire.

### **Occupation Forces Take Charge**

The recommendations outlined in the OSS civil affairs guide, “Aliens in Japan,” would have been welcomed by those minority groups who appealed for assistance from the newly deployed occupation forces. In particular, the prediction that Koreans “may be in urgent need of liberation, protection, or segregation from the Japanese” not only proved to be accurate, but also suggested the obligation to respond to such needs. The guide proposed specific measures for occupation authorities to implement, such as the establishment of a displaced persons division to assist aliens in need of protection, with a repatriation section under its authority. Furthermore, it suggested that this repatriation section could acquire precise data on the number and location of aliens in Japan by registering them, thus enabling occupation forces to arrange their repatriation.<sup>29</sup> These measures were intended to facilitate the repatriation of displaced persons, consistent with other civil affairs guides and handbooks prepared for American occupation forces in Europe and Asia.

As the preamble cautioned, however, the recommendations in this civil affairs guide had to be “critically examined in light of current United States policy.” In other words, civil affairs officers in Japan could formulate and execute plans for specific tasks, as long as they complied with basic occupation policies outlined by the US government. Therefore, the fulfillment of OSS’ recommendations to protect Koreans in Japan while assisting others to repatriate depended on two main factors: the formulation of official US occupation policy towards Koreans in Japan and its adaptation into concrete administrative measures, and the willingness or ability of occupation and Japanese authorities to cooperate in faithfully executing those policy measures, including cooperation with the League of Koreans in Japan. The joint implementation of these early regulations reveals how each side approached repatriation and, in turn, how this affected the liberation and segregation of Koreans in occupied Japan.

The “U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan” that SWNCC, Washington’s top policymaking committee, issued to General Douglas MacArthur in late August 1945, and which was made public a month later, made no mention of “aliens.” The SWNCC directive was a basic policy document that described the objectives

of the occupation in broad terms, to be followed by a more detailed version in November.<sup>30</sup> The absence of policy guidance, compounded by the phased process of assuming administrative control over Japan, explains why the newly deployed occupiers initially overlooked the issue of how to treat various groups of migrants.

The US Navy began occupying central Japanese ports and naval installations on August 27, 1945, but the Allied occupation of Japan did not officially commence until the signing of the Instrument of Surrender aboard the USS *Missouri* on September 2. One month later, on October 2, General MacArthur formally established the General Headquarters (GHQ) for the occupation, which administered SCAP’s indirect rule through the existing Japanese government. Meanwhile, by June 1946, the US Army Forces in the Pacific (AFPAC)—consisting primarily of the Eighth Army—set up military government units to supervise the implementation of SCAP programs at the prefectural level.<sup>31</sup> SCAP thus began to orchestrate the occupation, but it did not initially include any agencies or advisors specifically assigned to define or to implement policy towards “aliens” in Japan, much less colonial subjects. According to the terms of surrender, the control and regulation of all peoples residing in occupied Japan was solely the responsibility of General MacArthur, who presided over both SCAP and AFPAC. For his part, MacArthur’s immediate concern was to secure the release of Allied prisoners of war and to provide for their welfare until they could be returned home.<sup>32</sup> The repatriation of migrant minority groups was, therefore, a low priority.

The “Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive,” which the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) issued to SCAP in November 1945, was the first official document that addressed occupation policy towards “aliens” in Japan. A preliminary draft was delivered to SCAP in mid-September, so GHQ would have been familiar with the general categorization of foreigners into “prisoners of war, United Nations nationals, neutrals, and other persons.” The JCS took another six weeks to hammer out details for this updated version of the SWNCC’s Initial Post-Surrender Policy, including the treatment of each category of foreigners. The final, official version—which remained a top-secret document for three years—clarified that “other persons” referred to colonial subjects, but it also revealed lingering uncertainty over how exactly to treat them in occupied Japan. The directive stated, specifically:

You will treat Formosan-Chinese and Koreans as liberated peoples in so far as military security permits. They are not included in the term “Japanese” as used in this directive but they have been Japanese subjects and may be treated by you, in case of necessity, as enemy nationals. They may be repatriated, if they so desire, under such regulations as you may establish.<sup>33</sup>

On the one hand, the JCS document directed occupation authorities to treat Taiwanese and Koreans as “liberated peoples,” thus officially acknowledging their liberation from colonial rule, a fact that Japanese officials were still reluctant to accept. On the other hand, it also noted that they were Japanese subjects and therefore may be treated as “enemy nationals.” This highly ambiguous—if not contradictory—policy towards Koreans and Taiwanese, who were described as both “liberated peoples” and “enemy nationals,” gave SCAP broad discretionary authority to determine their treatment according to varying circumstances. Such official ambiguity was manifest in the occupiers’ mixed treatment of former colonial subjects, ranging from sympathetic assistance to scornful irritation, during the early months of the occupation. At the same time, the JCS directive also authorized SCAP to establish specific regulations for repatriating them, as it deemed necessary.

Before the establishment of such regulations, SCAP first learned from American occupation troops who arrived on the scene in early October 1945 that tens of thousands of Koreans were pouring into ports closest to the Korean peninsula. Japanese authorities had failed to inform SCAP of the miserable conditions endured by these Koreans, but some officers in the US Marine Corps took prompt measures to rectify the situation. On October 10, for example, the 5th Marine Division’s 28th Marine Regiment that occupied Fukuoka Prefecture inspected the substandard accommodations of those Korean returnees who were stranded in Hakata. Many of them were still being housed in horse stables. A lieutenant of the 28th Marine Regiment who led the inspection surveyed the piers in Hakata harbor, proposing that the municipal warehouses would be more suitable for accommodating the Koreans and their family members. The chief of Fukuoka Prefecture’s Social Welfare Department, Shioto Teizō, strongly disagreed. Shioto argued, ironically, that the warehouses were not designed to house people, promising instead that the stables would be renovated in the near future. Facing down such official resistance, battle-hardened Marine Corps officers newly deployed in enemy territory did not hesitate to exert their authority as victorious occupiers; the American lieutenant ordered Shioto to appropriate all the warehouses on the piers and to properly furnish them for accommodation within two days. He also directed prefectural officials to provide food rations to Korean returnees equal to those being distributed at the time to Japanese repatriates, including hardtack bread and cigarettes. Addressing an estimated 15,000 Koreans who were transferred out of the stables, he requested their cooperation in following repatriation procedures that were slowly getting underway.<sup>34</sup> Such proactive measures on behalf of Koreans fulfilled the OSS’ recommendation to meet the “urgent need of



Figure 1. Korean family inside warehouse serving as temporary shelter at Hakata Harbor, while they await repatriation to their liberated homeland, October 19, 1945. Reproduced courtesy of the US National Archives (111-SC-290863).

liberation, protection, or segregation from the Japanese,” even before receiving the JCS directive to treat them as “liberated peoples.”

In other parts of Japan, US Eighth Army troops were less forthcoming in assisting Koreans who wanted to return to Korea. In order to maintain Japanese coal production at a high level, the Eighth Army carried out SCAP’s initial policy of keeping Korean conscript miners on the job until Japanese repatriates could replace them.<sup>35</sup> On October 18, 1945, for example, occupation authorities from the Eighth Army’s 105th Infantry Division based in Fukushima Prefecture entered the Jōban mines, where they explained to the Korean miners there that industrial actions would violate SCAP’s orders. On October 29, they also interrupted a public speech by Kim Duyong and Imamura Hideo of the Communist Party, explaining to the large crowd that the issue of war responsibility they spoke of should not distract them from producing as much coal as possible.<sup>36</sup> However, the continuation of strikes and riots by Koreans in Jōban and other mines in Hokkaido

and elsewhere forced the Eighth Army to change course, and the miners were returned to Korea by the end of the year.<sup>37</sup> Reminiscent of the earlier order by the Japanese government, occupation authorities promised to release and return Korean miners to Korea, but urged them to remain at work until arrangements could be made for their repatriation. Facing imminent energy shortages in the aftermath of war, American occupiers in Japan thus prioritized economic stability over humanitarian concerns.

SCAP was still not very closely involved in the repatriation of Koreans, delegating the task to the Japanese government, following the administrative mechanism of indirect rule that had been adopted for the occupation of Japan. Although General MacArthur had authorized the Japanese Ministry of Transportation to use available ships for repatriating Koreans, SCAP had not yet formulated its own repatriation regulations. This began to change, however, as soon as SCAP's G-3 Section learned the extent of problems caused by the severe congestion of Korean returnees stranded in Hakata and Senzaki. The G-3 Section prevailed upon MacArthur to address these problems by preparing for a more systematic repatriation effort. SCAP responded by setting up a Korean Division within the Government Section, which began consulting USAMGIK's Foreign Affairs Section on how to devise coordinated plans for handling larger numbers of repatriates more efficiently. Then, on October 12, 1945, SCAP directed the Japanese government to establish official reception centers in designated ports to process incoming Japanese nationals and "foreign nationals returning to Korea, China, and Formosa."<sup>38</sup> On the same day, it also instructed the government on import and export controls, which limited Japanese repatriates as well as Korean and Chinese repatriates from taking with them currency of more than ¥1,000 per person.<sup>39</sup> Another directive eight days later required the government to supply the G-3 Section with a schedule for the repatriation of Koreans and a separate report on a set of services to be rendered as part of repatriation procedures.<sup>40</sup> These measures represent SCAP's earliest attempts to exercise control over repatriates by forcing Japanese officials to follow a set of procedural requirements at designated repatriation centers regarding customs inspection, quarantine, food and medical supplies, and transportation.

General MacArthur's headquarters continued to rely heavily on formal directives, dubbed SCAPINs, ordering the Japanese government to faithfully execute more concrete measures to repatriate migrant minorities. For example, a detailed memorandum entitled "Repatriation of Non-Japanese from Japan" (SCAPIN 224) was issued on November 1, 1945, revealing SCAP's initial approach towards repatriating so-called non-Japanese. SCAPIN 224 was primarily a planned course of urgent action, to be "placed in effect without delay," in order to prevent "unnecessary suffering" by returnees who remained stranded in Japan. According to this



directive to the Japanese government, four repatriation centers at regional ports were to be used to process non-Japanese departing Japan. Senzaki, Hakata, and Kure were officially designated as the repatriation centers for processing outgoing ethnic Koreans, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare was assigned overall responsibility for operating these centers.<sup>41</sup> Through the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Transportation had to offer free passage home to Koreans, broken up into groups by staging ground: first in the Moji-Shimonoseki-Hakata area, next in the Kobe-Osaka area, and finally in the remainder of Japan. The Ministry of Health and Welfare would also be responsible for furnishing all repatriates with one day's supply of precooked rice before departure, in addition to a sufficient amount of dry rice for the voyage and another day's supply upon their arrival. Priority for repatriation was given first to demobilized soldiers, next to former conscript laborers, and only then to all other Koreans, essentially conforming to the designated order already implemented by the Japanese government. What distinguished this memorandum from existing government policy is the priority allotted to Korean and Chinese coal miners in northern Honshu, who were to be evacuated at a target rate of 1,000 per day. Underlying this particular provision was the belated recognition that the continuing strikes by Korean and Chinese miners could be resolved only by immediately repatriating them.

Overall, the detailed regulations of SCAPIN 224 amounted to humanitarian measures that American authorities insisted on guaranteeing non-Japanese in their repatriation. They also conformed with the OSS' recommendation to ensure their liberation and segregation from Japanese whenever deemed necessary, unlike the Japanese government's deportation program.

Available accounts show that Japanese authorities faithfully executed SCAP's newly established repatriation regulations. Cooperating with occupation authorities was in their interest, as it required a joint effort employing all available resources to address continuing problems resulting from the congested ports. During the early months of the occupation, this joint effort also included newly emergent ethnic organizations. SCAPIN 224 was issued in the same month that the *Kōseikai* was dissolved, leaving Japanese officials no choice but to rely on the ascendant League of Koreans to maintain order and solicit cooperation from Korean migrants. By the end of the month, the government proposed that the League be entrusted with its “autonomous management” of Korean returnees, acknowledging that “in reality,” the ethnic organization “can be expected to be more effective” than the *Kōseikai*.<sup>42</sup> This “autonomous management” initially referred to the League's provision of accommodations for returnees stranded in the ports, but later expanded to the handling of official repatriation certificates, which returnees had to produce when boarding homeward-bound ships at their designated time.



SCAP was generally supportive of the League of Koreans—and the Japanese government’s delegation of various tasks to the organization—in the execution of repatriation regulations. Shortly after announcing SCAPIN 224, the G-3 Section issued special travel permits for League representatives, including Chang Jeongsu, in approval of their mission to establish liaison offices in Korea that would facilitate the repatriation of Koreans from Japan. At the same time, however, occupation authorities became concerned with reports that the League was involved in the unregulated return of large numbers of Koreans aboard small, privately chartered boats. For example, intelligence units in Shimonoseki reported that a considerable volume of unauthorized ships, ranging in size from ten to twenty tons, were ferrying an average of two hundred Koreans back to the peninsula each week. An owner of one of the ships told authorities that he expected to pay ¥2,000 to the League for rounding up Korean passengers, each of whom paid him an average of ¥100 in turn. The head of the League’s branch office in Shimonoseki reluctantly acknowledged that he worked closely with many such people, but insisted that the fare varied according to the passenger’s ability to pay, and, furthermore, many destitute Koreans were transported free of charge.<sup>43</sup> For hundreds of thousands of such Koreans, liberation meant returning to their homeland by whatever means possible, and the League was assisting compatriots in their return migration. For occupation authorities, however, this constituted “unauthorized repatriation,” suggesting that only officially sanctioned movements of people constituted repatriation.

SCAP viewed unauthorized repatriation as problematic, primarily because Koreans aboard private vessels could, and did, circumvent baggage and monetary restrictions placed on those who repatriated through official channels. The compulsion of American officers to rein in the League of Koreans and owners of ships who profited from this uncontrolled movement quickly turned into an alarming situation, with the emergence of pirates at sea who preyed on them. After a series of reports of such incidents, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* carried an article on Korean pirates who “robbed and murdered hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of Koreans” on their way to their homeland. In one incident, the article explained how three armed, masked men appeared on a black market ship as soon as it was out of sight of land, held up the captain, and systematically robbed the 250 passengers before pushing them into the sea.<sup>44</sup> SCAP took such incidents seriously, bulking up the coast guard between Japan and Korea, and on November 8, 1945, instructed the Japanese government to crack down on unauthorized repatriations.<sup>45</sup> By December the total volume of unauthorized repatriations declined rapidly, though this problem was soon replaced by unauthorized immigration *into* occupied Japan.

## Reopening the Ryukyu Islands

Nine months after the American invasion and naval blockade of Okinawa, the border with Japan was reopened to allow the first wave of returnees back into their home islands. On January 5, 1946, SCAP issued a directive to the Japanese government, "Repatriation to Ryukyus" (SCAPIN 558), outlining details for this course of planned action. According to this directive, "Ryukyuan now in Japan who desire to return to their homes in the Ryukyu Islands, except Okinawa, will be repatriated to their homes without delay."<sup>46</sup> Okinawa here referred to the main island group in the Ryukyu archipelago, including Okinawa Island, which remained off limits.<sup>47</sup> Although Okinawans from the main island group were disappointed that their long-awaited return was postponed, "Ryukyuan" began repatriating to the other major island groups of Ishigaki and Miyako, as well as Amami. Repatriation to these island groups reflected the expansion of the US Navy's command in the Ryukyus far beyond Okinawa. In particular, the Navy's occupation of the Amami Islands, which were not part of Okinawa Prefecture but belonged to Kagoshima Prefecture, resulted in a significant increase in the number of people who wanted to repatriate to the newly redesignated Ryukyus. This had serious repercussions for the segregation of Okinawans and Amamians in Japan, who were suddenly recast as Ryukyuan. It also plainly revealed SCAP's stance that Ryukyuan should be encouraged to repatriate because they were not really Japanese.

The American position that Ryukyuan were not Japanese, a view that emanated from the OSS' ethnographic study and the US Navy's civil affairs handbook, was aimed at justifying the separation of the Ryukyus under US military rule. This was reflected in SCAP's early policy, which provided that Ryukyuan should be repatriated or permitted to remain in Japan proper, as they preferred. In the first memorandum on the subject, SCAPIN 224, Ryukyuan were included among other "non-Japanese" such as Koreans, Formosans, and Chinese, who were eligible for repatriation to their respective homelands.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, Admiral Chester Nimitz and USMGR in Okinawa made it clear that the repatriation of Ryukyuan was undesirable, due to the continuing unstable economic and social conditions on the islands ravaged by war.<sup>49</sup> On December 22, 1945, the SWNCC in Washington stipulated that no repatriates could be sent to the Ryukyus from Japan until USMGR was prepared to receive them.<sup>50</sup> In fact, USMGR continued to refuse repatriation until July 1946, since it was barely able to supply sufficient food and shelter to a majority of the civilian population in war-ravaged Okinawa Island in its current state. Okinawa thus remained off limits, but the other island groups in the Ryukyus were considered ready to receive repatriates.

SCAPIN 558 signaled the official commencement of repatriation from Japan to the Ryukyu Islands. According to this directive, the regional repatriation centers at Uraga and Kagoshima were designated as the two ports of exit for Ryukyuanans returning to the Ishigaki, Miyako, and Amami Islands.<sup>51</sup> Based on the preliminary plans set forth by SCAP, the Ministry of Health and Welfare drafted more detailed guidelines for this repatriation program. It cabled copies to all Japanese officials who would be involved. The guidelines stipulated that those who desired to return to their home islands should apply for a repatriation certificate—like those issued to other groups of non-Japanese—at any one of the seven Okinawa prefectural offices or the local government office of the prefecture they were in. These repatriation certificates officially confirmed the holder's identification and guaranteed certain benefits associated with repatriation. One such benefit was that repatriates with certificates were given special priority in obtaining railroad transportation to the port of embarkation, with the cost of the train fare incurred by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. In addition, repatriates were entitled to food rations provided by the regional repatriation centers before their departure and an additional amount provided once aboard their repatriation ships.<sup>52</sup>

The island groups named in SCAPIN 558 revealed the US military's efforts to establish an expanded command in the Ryukyu Islands, even as precise administrative boundaries had not yet been spelled out after the war. The immediate impetus for clarifying the postwar boundary between Japan and the Ryukyus actually came from the Japanese government. After the cessation of warfare, Japanese vessels were still prohibited from entering certain peripheral areas, including the island groups between Kagoshima Prefecture and Okinawa. In preparation for the first postwar general election for the lower house of the National Diet, Japanese officials sought to clarify SCAP's understanding of its territorial limits. On October 29, 1945, the government sent to SCAP an official request for assistance in facilitating the execution of elections in the "islets in Oshima-gun, of Kagoshima Prefecture." Oshima-gun referred to the Amami Islands, including the large island of Amami Oshima, which were a part of Kagoshima Prefecture. Local authorities from Kagoshima Prefecture requested permission to enter Amami Oshima in order to transport election materials such as ballot boxes, rosters, and the like.<sup>53</sup> SCAP forwarded the request to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which began to deliberate on the possibility of expanding US military command in the Ryukyus beyond Okinawa.

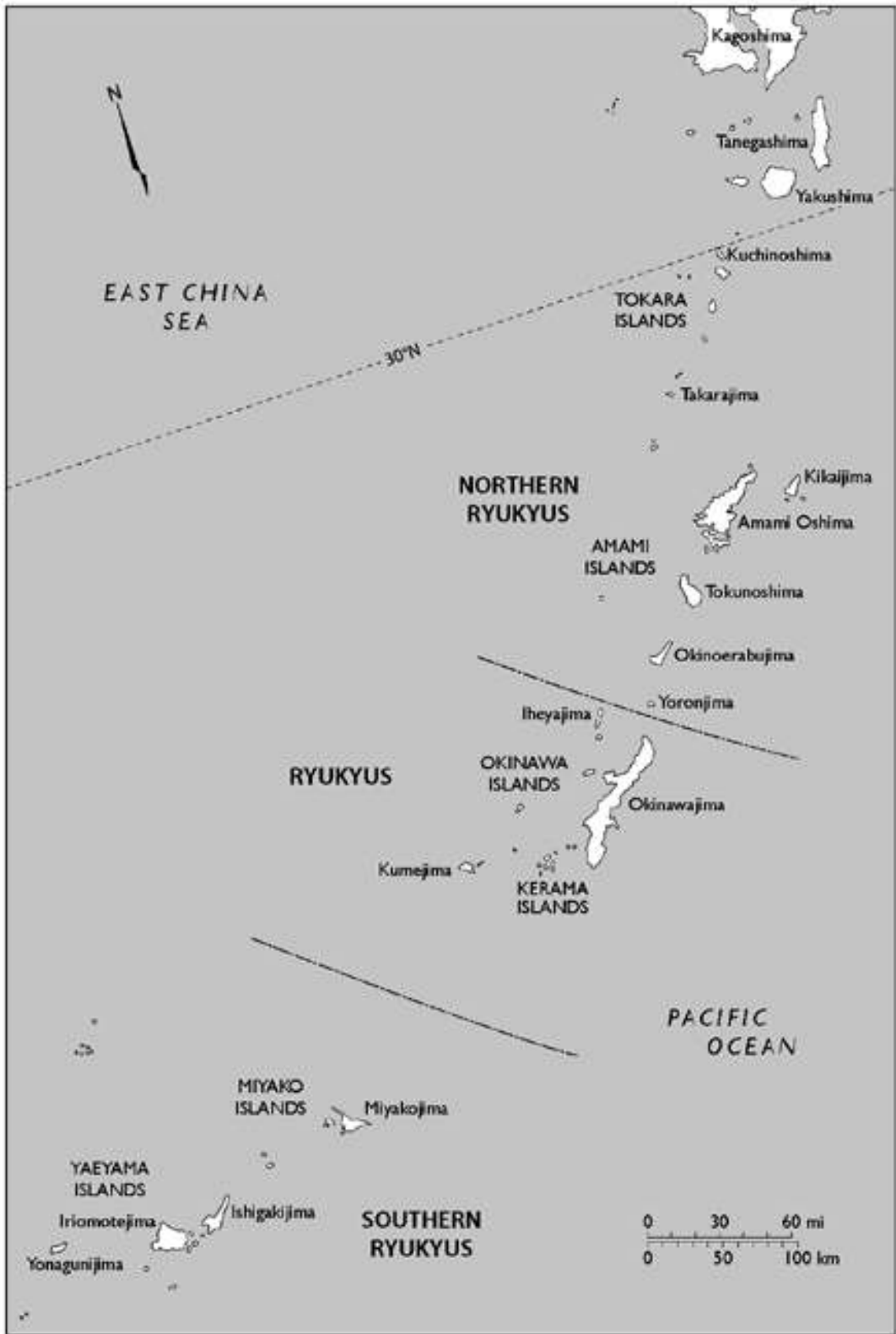
The practical need to determine which islands to the south of Kagoshima would be included in the upcoming national elections induced US authorities to recommend 30° north latitude as the territorial demarcation line between Japan and the Ryukyus. In late November 1945, the US Navy's commander in Okinawa

dispatched a survey team to the Amami Islands to determine the feasibility of establishing a military government there. The resulting investigative report made a strong case against incorporating these islands into the Ryukyus, based on its findings that they constituted an integral part of Kagoshima Prefecture. In the Amami Islands, the report stated, “all roads lead to Kagoshima,” and “to divorce them would be roughly tantamount to divorcing the Florida Keys from Florida.” Furthermore, it noted that the Amami Islands had been directly administered by the Satsuma clan since the early seventeenth century. Therefore, it continued, Amamians strongly identified with Japan and felt they had little in common with Okinawa.<sup>54</sup>

Dismissing such critical findings, by late December, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided to expand the US military command in the Ryukyus. A major factor in this decision was the US Navy’s interest in gaining control over Koniya Bay in the Oshima Straits, where the former Japanese Navy had set up a deep-water base as a safe retreat in battle and bad weather. The JCS therefore decided that US military interests dictated the expansion of the Ryukyus, and on January 29, 1946, SCAP officially separated the Amami Islands from Japan and included them as part of the Northern Ryukyus.<sup>55</sup>

Since the 1920s, tens of thousands of Amamians had joined Okinawans as low-wage, migrant laborers in the Kansai and Kanto regions.<sup>56</sup> Between 1944 and 1945, thousands more evacuated to mainland Kagoshima. Most of these Amamians in Japan were shocked to learn that their home islands had been abruptly separated from Kagoshima Prefecture, and they were uncertain how to respond to their newly assigned status as Ryukyuan. Others reacted pragmatically, by establishing organizations to support fellow islanders and, in the process, found themselves the latest group of minority migrants who became segregated from Japanese society after the war.

One such person recalled that “since Koreans had formed the League of Koreans and Okinawans the League of Okinawans, we had to form our own [Amami] League.”<sup>57</sup> Amamians who espoused such views had clearly been impressed with the influential role that the Leagues of Koreans and Okinawans were playing in their respective migrant communities. Emulating their example meant identifying themselves first and foremost as Amamians and, by implication, segregating themselves from Japanese. Bearing this in mind, in February 1946 the more proactive islanders established the headquarters of the Amami Renmei, or Amami League, in Amagasaki City, Hyōgo Prefecture. Hirayama Fukuzō, the president of the newly formed League, called for assistance to the estimated 50,000 Amamians residing in the Kansai region, and expressed his hope to expand his organizational activities throughout Japan. The League promptly established a



Map 2. Ryukyu Islands under US military occupation, 1946

consumer union to benefit Amamian residents in mainland Japan, while pledging to mediate with authorities on behalf of those who wished to repatriate. Hiramaya and the head of the League’s consumer union signed their names to a petition for aid, which was submitted to General MacArthur’s headquarters.<sup>58</sup> This petition was likely modeled after the one the League of Okinawans had earlier sent to SCAP. By early March, the Amami League began actively assisting Amami repatriates who were heading en masse to either Uraga or Kagoshima, and provided relief supplies to other repatriates who were stranded in the Kansai region.

Okinawan and Amamian organizations in Japan pursued similar activities to aid repatriates. When the first repatriates were permitted to return to the outer Ryukyu Islands of Miyako and Yaeyama, the League of Okinawans and their branch offices helped organize their transportation to the ports of Uraga and Kagoshima.<sup>59</sup> Both the Okinawan and Amami Leagues helped the returnees obtain repatriation certificates at the nearest Okinawa prefectural office or the local government office. Such assistance afforded these organizations priority in purchasing boarding passes on public transportation and in obtaining provisions of food. SCAPIN 558 guaranteed such benefits to repatriates bound for the Ryukyus. The Amami League, for example, was able to procure herring, potatoes, and kelp, among other things from Hokkaido Prefecture. It distributed these coveted food supplies to its members and to repatriates.<sup>60</sup> These organizations thus proved their practical utility, winning resources and services for displaced persons from American authorities—a phenomenon evident in other parts of Asia and Europe occupied by US military forces.<sup>61</sup>

Over 13,600 Okinawans and Amamians became the first to repatriate from Japan to the Ryukyu Islands from January through March 1946, when SCAP suspended repatriation after an outbreak of smallpox.<sup>62</sup> Those who remained in Japan continued to search for ways to better support each other. In April, they established yet another organization, the Nansei Shotō Renmei, or the Nansei Islands League. The namesake of the organization—the Nansei Islands—was the administrative unit more commonly used in Japanese to refer to the Ryukyu Islands. The Nansei Islands League was intended as a mutual aid organization for Amamians, as well as for Okinawans, living in Japan. The main impetus for the alliance between Amamians and Okinawans can be understood as a practical response to SCAP’s repatriation policy, which lumped these groups together as Ryukyuan. At a more basic level, it was also an expression of solidarity among Amamians and Okinawans, who found themselves in the similar predicament of being cut off from their home islands after the war.

However, the Nansei Islands League’s effort to consolidate various Amamian and Okinawan organizations caused serious internal rifts. In May 1946, at the



third standing committee meeting of the League of Okinawans in Kansai, representatives from Osaka Prefecture agreed that the name of their organization be changed to the Nansei Islands League.<sup>63</sup> In response, representatives from Hyōgo Prefecture denounced the proposed name change by the Osaka delegates, insisting that they were Okinawans (*Okinawajin*), not Amami or Nansei Islanders.<sup>64</sup> This problem of the organizational name change reflected the ambivalent feelings many Okinawans held towards the Amamians, as well as their collective identity crisis in defining themselves in relation to Japanese society. The bitter feuds over identity continued to pit Okinawans against Amamians, notwithstanding the American effort to unite them as Ryukyans and segregate them from Japanese.

### **SCAP's Mass Repatriation Program**

After SCAPIN 224 detailed plans governing the repatriation of all non-Japanese to their respective homelands, four subsequent developments altered the course of repatriation for Koreans in Japan. The first was an interservice conference that SCAP convened in mid-January 1946, aimed at addressing various problems that resulted in an overall decline of Koreans leaving Japan. The conference resulted in a SCAP directive issued the following month, which required all non-Japanese to register their intention for repatriation, essentially forcing a decision on the matter. This registration requirement served as the basis for SCAP's controlled mass repatriation program, beginning in April, which explicitly segregated non-Japanese in order to strongly urge them to repatriate. Then between May and June, occupation and Japanese authorities jointly implemented a series of measures that curtailed the growing influence of the League of Koreans in executing the repatriation program. These actions reflected the ways in which attitudes of American occupiers toward the Korean minority had hardened during this period. As a result, for Koreans who remained in Japan, the meaning of "repatriation" also began to harden.

The SWNCC in Washington endeavored to clarify US policy towards former colonial subjects, beyond the general principles outlined in the JCS' "Basic Directive" to SCAP. Members of the SWNCC's Subcommittee for the Far East, led by Japan hands at the State Department, had for months deliberated on the issue of how to treat Asians who had been displaced by the war to Japan. Their final findings and recommendations were adopted by the SWNCC on December 5, 1945. The resulting policy document, "Displaced Persons in Japan" (SWNCC 205/1), was delivered to SCAP a few days later.

The newly formulated policy was based in part on earlier directives and guides. For example, it reiterated the "Basic Directive" and its ambiguous policy that

Koreans and Taiwanese could be treated as “liberated peoples” or “enemy nationals,” depending on circumstantial necessity. But it went one step further by stipulating that their voluntary repatriation was to be encouraged, while also noting that SCAP had the right to direct their repatriation, again, “in case of necessity.” Such stipulations raised, but did not answer, the consequent question of how to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary repatriation—a critical distinction that impinged upon the very meaning of repatriation.

At the same time, SWNCC 205/1 also renewed some of the OSS’ recommendations made in the civil affairs guide, “Aliens in Japan.” For example, it stipulated that Koreans and Taiwanese be protected from Japanese animosity towards them. Specifically, SCAP was to direct the Japanese government to take appropriate measures guaranteeing their protection, safety, and welfare, until they were repatriated to their respective homelands. To prepare for their repatriation, the policy directive also stipulated that their nationality, home address, and place of domicile be ascertained.<sup>65</sup> Unlike the OSS guide, however, no mention was made of the possibility that many of these migrants in Japan would decide not to repatriate. Consequently, the challenging problem of how those who remained might be integrated into Japanese society was not even considered. Instead, the SWNCC granted SCAP discretionary powers to both encourage and enforce the repatriation of former colonial subjects, based on new repatriation regulations to be determined by SCAP.

The SWNCC’s directive on the treatment of “displaced persons,” coupled with the steady decrease in the number of Koreans departing from Japan, forced SCAP to respond by convening a conference to address these issues. Starting on January 15, 1946, occupation authorities from SCAP, USAMGIK, the US Eighth Army, and XXIV Corps attended the interservice conference that was held in Tokyo. The conference lasted three days, resulting in an overall agreement to expedite repatriation by providing US naval ships, such as Liberty Ships and recommissioned tank landing ships (LSTs), that could be used to transport repatriates.<sup>66</sup>

However, one of the representatives of USAMGIK who attended the official meetings was highly critical of how American occupation forces treated Koreans in Japan. Captain Robert L. Beyer, chief of USAMGIK’s Displaced Persons Office, was troubled by his discoveries during visits to the headquarters of SCAP and the Eighth Army, as well as to the regional ports of Hakata and Sasebo. Upon returning to Seoul, Beyer filed a scathing report, explaining how he found that US officers having anything to do with repatriation were “either prejudiced against Koreans or were indifferent to Korean problems.” He lamented that little or no thought was given to how such prejudiced attitudes towards Korean repatriates might have a negative impact on the American occupation of Korea. Beyer was able to

suggest to many of these officers involved in Korean repatriation “the desirability of a helpful [and] constructive approach toward Korean affairs in Japan,” but also noted that “much more should be done to get the importance of [this] idea across.”<sup>67</sup>

In another report, Captain Beyer indicated how Japanese negligence in Korean repatriation accounted for what American occupation authorities called the “Korean problem” in Japan. As Beyer noted, subordinate commanders of the Eighth Army appeared not to exert direct control over Japanese officials, whose carelessness towards Koreans resulted in lax repatriation operations. Since these Japanese officials were responsible for implementing repatriation procedures, various problems facing Korean repatriates throughout Japan rarely received the direct attention of American officers. Beyer observed a tendency on the part of some of these officers at operating levels to treat Korean problems as “unnecessary annoyances” that were passed over to local Japanese government agencies to handle. At higher military levels in Japan, his impression was that Koreans were a “headache,” an attitude that seemed widespread among the military personnel he met. No policy or instructions to lower military echelons suggested sympathetic treatment of Koreans. As a corrective measure, in a statement reminiscent of the JCS and SWNCC directives to SCAP, Beyer recommended that “all officers and men in Japan should be instructed to treat Koreans there as liberated people and in a generous spirit.”<sup>68</sup>

Captain Beyer’s disparaging observations of both Japanese and American authorities involved in repatriating Koreans were confirmed by other contemporaries who visited occupied Japan. Edward Wagner, who served in USAMGIK’s Japanese Affairs Section, was particularly critical of misconduct by the Japanese government. In the execution of Korean repatriation, Wagner pointed out how the government “repeatedly violated the spirit, and often the letter, of the instructions of SCAP.” For example, Japanese officials failed to inform Koreans fully of official repatriation regulations, frequently provided inadequate supplies to repatriates, and even seized personal belongings that they were entitled to take with them.<sup>69</sup> Such discriminatory treatment of Koreans was evidently tolerated by Eighth Army officers in Japan, who were forging a working relationship with these Japanese officials. As a result, many of these officers showed scant interest in—much less sympathy towards—former colonial subjects who were widely expected to leave Japan, notwithstanding Captain Beyer’s reminder to treat them as “liberated people.”

These critical reports filed by Captain Beyer indicate how prejudice and indifference towards Koreans in Japan translated into an American policy of strongly encouraging them to leave, even without providing material incentives to do so.

As Beyer correctly pointed out, the strictly enforced limitations on the amount of money and property that Korean repatriates were permitted to take home resulted in decreasing rates of those departing Japan.<sup>70</sup> Regardless, SCAP’s Economic and Scientific Section (ESS) continued to enforce customs regulations, which prohibited all repatriates from carrying home more than ¥1,000 in currency, to rein in inflation. According to one estimate, this sum of money could buy the equivalent of twenty packs of cigarettes at the time, and was barely enough to support one’s family for a week in southern Korea, which was ridden by inflation.<sup>71</sup> Many repatriates, in fact, became welfare cases upon returning to Korea. One of Beyer’s reports advised the adoption of more lenient customs regulations, permitting Korean repatriates to carry home up to ¥10,000 in currency, in addition to 150 to 300 pounds of personal effects.<sup>72</sup> Such recommendations were strongly endorsed by the commander of the US Armed Forces in Korea, General John Hodge, who requested General MacArthur to improve the treatment of Koreans in Japan.

General MacArthur responded to General Hodge’s memorandum, though he did not directly address Captain Beyer’s recommendations, promising instead to devise plans for expediting the repatriation of Koreans in Japan. Shortly afterwards, on February 17, 1946, SCAP ordered the Japanese government to register all Koreans along with Taiwanese, Chinese, and Ryukyans in Japan within a month, in order to determine their intentions regarding repatriation. Following SWNCC 205/1, this official registration was to record personal information including name, age, sex, occupation, place of residence in Japan, and statement of desire concerning repatriation, as well as a destination in their homeland if they desired repatriation. To avoid any misgivings or misunderstandings, SCAP required Japanese officials to inform these migrant groups that (1) they were to be registered for the purpose of determining their desire for repatriation; (2) failure to register would be grounds for forfeiture of repatriation privileges; (3) those registering as desirous of repatriation would be required to do so in accordance with instructions issued by the Japanese government, or else forfeit their repatriation privileges; and (4) those registering as desirous of remaining in Japan forfeit their repatriation privileges.<sup>73</sup>

The execution of this registration marked a critical point of transition from the earlier period of voluntary repatriation to the commencement of SCAP’s controlled mass repatriation program.<sup>74</sup> The SCAP directive clearly compelled non-Japanese to register, repeatedly and explicitly designating repatriation as a “privilege,” which could be revoked if they did not comply with the order. Occupation authorities designed this repatriation registration as a tool for executing what might be called a “de-Japanization” policy: segregating erstwhile Asian subjects from Japanese society and thereby persuading them to return to their

respective homelands. By March 18, close to 647,000 Koreans had registered, of whom 513,900 expressed their desire to repatriate, thus providing the first set of basic records regarding Koreans in Japan since the end of the war.<sup>75</sup> Based on these records, SCAP followed up by issuing a related directive to the Japanese government, outlining a schedule for clearing from Japan all those who registered their desire for repatriation. According to this detailed directive, 3,000 Koreans were scheduled to be shipped out each day from the port of Hakata, and another 1,000 from Senzaki between April 15 and September 30.<sup>76</sup>

At about the same time that SCAP began implementing its controlled mass repatriation program for registered Koreans, occupation authorities were embroiled in a growing conflict between the League of Koreans and the Japanese government. By this time, SCAP was familiar with the League's earlier involvement in unauthorized repatriation and its repeated attempts to induce Japanese corporations to pay due compensation for conscripted Korean laborers and coal miners before they repatriated. The most immediate problem for Allied forces involved in the mass repatriation program was that the League controlled so much of its operations. Japanese officials complained this was because the League exploited its "autonomous management" of Korean returnees, which the government had initially granted the ethnic organization. For example, since November 1945 the League had prevailed upon the central government to let it handle the job of selecting who would fill the daily quotas of shipping spaces for special trains designated for repatriation. As Edward Wagner has pointed out, this gave the League extraordinary power, since it could delay the repatriation of its supporters while designating its opponents to be sent out of Japan.<sup>77</sup> The League had also secured significant financial strength, as it was able to induce many repatriates to leave their bank and postal savings books in its custody, since they could not take more than ¥1,000 with them.<sup>78</sup> The League thus took advantage of the postwar and post-colonial flux in occupied Japan to expand its organizational authority, even while rendering invaluable services in the repatriation of Korean compatriots. In the eyes of occupation authorities, the main problem was that the League functioned as if it was a quasi-consulate for Koreans in Japan.

The question of who or what institutional body SCAP officially recognized as representing Koreans in Japan—repatriates and domiciled residents alike—was an important issue addressed by Captain Beyer in his report. Although the League of Koreans continually sought legitimacy as the sole representative of Koreans in Japan, thereby ignoring the two rightist organizations, Beyer was convinced that a liaison office of USAMGIK could best serve that role. According to Beyer, SCAP's Korean Division was a staff agency concerned primarily with Korean affairs in Korea *as they affected* SCAP, not with Korean affairs in Japan. He further noted



that since Koreans in Japan had gained their new status as liberated people, they should no longer have been “compelled to deal only with the Japanese government without recourse to an interested American military authority.”<sup>79</sup> Beyer clearly felt that it was in USAMGIK’s interest to handle Korean affairs in Japan to ensure that they were treated appropriately. As a result of the repatriation conference, in February 1946, SCAP permitted USAMGIK to establish liaison teams in Senzaki and Hakata, where American officials and their Korean assistants performed consular functions in supervising repatriation procedures. In response to Beyer’s recommendations, four more liaison teams were established in April. These included the Tokyo Liaison Office, which served as a base for communications, not only between SCAP and USAMGIK, but also between occupation authorities and the Korean community in Japan.<sup>80</sup>

With the establishment of USAMGIK’s liaison offices in Japan, SCAP and Japanese authorities worked closely with one another to effectively exclude the League of Koreans from involvement in repatriation. This collaborative effort at exclusion began when the Tokyo Liaison Office took charge of processing Korean applications for repatriation, a responsibility that the League had by then been performing for nearly half a year. The Japanese government then complained that the League continued to direct the repatriation program, prompting SCAP to remind the Korean organization that the Ministry of Health and Welfare was responsible for planning and implementing the repatriation of Koreans. According to SCAP, this responsibility “will not be delegated wholly or in part to any of the various Korean associations or societies.”<sup>81</sup> On May 28, 1946, the ministry’s Repatriation Bureau relayed this directive to every prefectural government, ordering them to bar the League from registering Koreans for repatriation.<sup>82</sup> Then on June 21, the Home Ministry issued another order from SCAP, instructing regional police to take strong measures against those who interfered with the transportation of Korean repatriates back to their homeland.<sup>83</sup> Such actions effectively terminated the assistance that the League had provided returning compatriots since the end of the war, thus diminishing its organizational influence over Korean repatriates.

With strong backing from Japanese officials, occupation authorities succeeded in excluding the League of Koreans from executing repatriation regulations, but they ultimately failed to expedite the mass repatriation program. The increasing gap between the large numbers of Koreans who registered their desire to repatriate, and the small proportion that actually departed Japan, revealed another gap: a perception gap between American occupiers and these former colonial subjects regarding the underlying meaning of repatriation. The gap first came to light in a formal meeting between occupation authorities and leaders of Korean organizations on March 6, 1946, in which both sides discussed the repatriation issue.



The occupiers began by explaining the purpose of the ongoing registration and relevant procedures of the mass repatriation program. The Korean leaders bluntly responded that SCAP's customs restrictions were causing compatriots to postpone plans for returning to their homeland. The Korean leaders then requested, but did not receive, a clear answer as to whether they would be allowed to choose for themselves when to repatriate. Soon it became clear that they would have no such choice.<sup>84</sup> As a result, the League of Koreans grew increasingly dismayed by SCAP's enforcement of repatriation, and its branch offices began to protest against its methods. An editorial article in the Osaka-based *Daejung sinmun*, which supported the League, condemned SCAP for unilaterally scheduling specific dates and designating ports for repatriation, without even consulting the wishes of Koreans involved. The article argued that this suggested the repatriation program was compulsory, characterizing it as a thinly veiled attempt at deportation:

The scheduled repatriation is an enforced deportation. . . . The stipulation that those who do not [depart Japan] will lose their privilege of repatriation is a malicious means of compelling us to return to Korea. . . . We believe in the promotion of repatriation based on our free will, and the immediate repeal of all forms of restrictions, are just demands.<sup>85</sup>

Such opinions clearly capture the defiance of many Koreans against SCAP's threat that repatriation was a "privilege" that could be revoked, belying official US policy that the decision to repatriate or not was based on the free will of "displaced persons."

Even after the controlled mass repatriation program reached its scheduled conclusion by the end of December 1946, close to 600,000 Koreans still remained in Japan. SCAP initially instructed the Japanese government that, henceforth, only those Koreans who originally registered their desire to repatriate, but who for reasons beyond their control had been unable to do so, would be eligible for repatriation.<sup>86</sup> Such individuals would first be required to apply for and obtain approval from the supreme commander for their exit. In subsequent months, however, when only a mere fraction of registered Koreans bothered to apply for repatriation, SCAP began liberally granting approval even to those Koreans who had technically lost their eligibility. In addition, in March, and again in June, American and Soviet authorities jointly organized the repatriation of Koreans in Japan to northern Korea, although very few actually left.<sup>87</sup> Based on SCAP's implementation of individual repatriation in 1947, over 16,000 Koreans returned, primarily to southern Korea, through June 1950, when the outbreak of the Korean War forced its termination.<sup>88</sup> This figure included large numbers of Koreans who were deported

Table 1. Number of non-Japanese repatriated from Japan in three phases

		<i>Phases</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Voluntary Repatriation</i> (September 1945– March 17, 1946)	<i>Controlled Repatriation</i> (March 18, 1946– December 31, 1946)	<i>Individual Repatriation</i> (January 18, 1947– June 25, 1950)	
<i>Repatriates</i>	Koreans	914,352	84,113	16,076	1,014,541
	Ryukyuan	13,675	134,717	31,624	180,016
	Chinese	41,110	2,440	186	43,736
	Taiwanese	18,462	3,615	2,329	24,406

*Notes:* The figure of Korean repatriates represents those who were processed through official repatriation centers in Japan, but does not include an estimated 400,000–525,000 more “unauthorized repatriates” who departed by their own means through December 1945.

*Sources:* Kōseishō Engokiyoku, ed., *Hikiage to engo 30-nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 1978), pp. 151–152. Figures for the last phase of individual repatriation are from GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 44.

to Korea, either for illegally entering Japan or because of their criminal records, an important subject that is examined in Chapter 5.

### Registering “Ryukyuan” for Repatriation

The outbreak of smallpox among repatriates triggered another suspension of maritime traffic between Japan and the Ryukyu Islands on March 18, 1946, delaying the repatriation of “Ryukyuan.” Even after the epidemic was subdued in April, repeated efforts by SCAP in Japan to resume repatriation were blocked by USMGR in Okinawa.<sup>89</sup> Disregarding the Navy’s pleas, SCAP officials looked forward to the first opportunity to send off large numbers of Ryukyuan remaining in Japan, and they proceeded with plans to repatriate them in the near future. As noted above, on February 17, SCAP had directed the Japanese government to register Koreans, Taiwanese, Chinese, and Ryukyuan, thereby ascertaining the number of those who desired repatriation. By March 18, over 141,000 out of nearly 201,000 Ryukyuan had registered their desire to repatriate, including Amamians whose home islands had only recently been incorporated into the Ryukyus.<sup>90</sup> This registration of Ryukyuan signaled their inclusion in SCAP’s de-Japanization policy, explicitly differentiating them from Japanese. By de-Japanizing Okinawans and Amamians in Japan, SCAP thus treated them as semicolonial subjects, strongly encouraging them to repatriate while ostensibly granting them the right to remain in Japan.<sup>91</sup>

Petitions for special treatment, directed by the League of Okinawans and its associated organizations to General MacArthur, helped to induce SCAP to de-Japanize Okinawans. These petitions were all extremely critical of the Japanese government for its indifference towards Okinawans. In addition, the League's explanation for why nearly 30 percent of Okinawans had to emigrate from their native islands confirmed the occupation view of modern Okinawan history. As described in the League's petition, foreign trade was the "chief source of finance to the Luchu [Ryukyu] Kingdom for several centuries prior to the Meiji Restoration." However, with the subsequent penetration of Japanese administrative control over the Ryukyus, Kagoshima and Osaka capitalists monopolized foreign trade, driving Okinawans to economic misery and hardship. By the early twentieth century, as the petition persuasively explained, the emigration of Okinawans became "the only means of relieving their distressing situation."<sup>92</sup> Since the petition went on to request the repatriation of Okinawans in Japan, it seemed to endorse their de-Japanization.

One of the problems with SCAP's de-Japanization policy was that it failed to elicit a corresponding "Ryukyuanization" of identity among Okinawans and Amamiyans in Japan. Few Okinawans and fewer Amamiyans readily referred to themselves as Ryukyuan, suspicious of US motives for emphasizing their ethnic distinctiveness while remaining muted about the future political disposition of the Ryukyus. At a deeper, psychological level, their reluctance to identify themselves as Ryukyuan was rooted in the painful memory of persistent discrimination; mainland Japanese often called them *Ryūkyūjin*, an anachronistic term with pejorative connotations of backwardness and inferiority. Many Okinawans and Amamiyans were therefore troubled that American authorities designated them as Ryukyuan, though a majority still complied with the repatriation registration.

Others were more upset at Japanese authorities for registering them as "non-Japanese." Long-term residents of Japan insisted on an official explanation of when and how they had become non-Japanese, which implied that they were no different from former colonial subjects who were departing from Japan. One Okinawan resident in Tokyo sent a letter of protest that was printed in the newspaper *Asahi shinbun*, which demanded clarification on whether non-Japanese was a legal or ethnic term.<sup>93</sup> Still others sought a definition for the legal status of Ryukyuan, and the thorny issue of whether those who repatriated to the Ryukyus were still to be considered Japanese nationals. The Japanese government was not in a position to address such sensitive questions without explicit approval from the American occupiers. SCAP pointedly avoided them, maintaining only that Ryukyuan who did not register would lose their "privilege" of repatriation, just as it had warned other groups of non-Japanese.

By the time Ryukyuans were included in the registration of all non-Japanese, American and Japanese authorities alike had determined that their presence in Japan had become an economic and administrative burden. According to SCAP's official history of the occupation in Japan, they represented "not only a serious welfare problem but their continued care imposed an added strain upon an already extended budget."<sup>94</sup> This is precisely why SCAP was so anxious to repatriate Ryukyuans as soon as possible. The Japanese Ministry of Welfare concurred with this view, admitting that the repatriation of Okinawans would have "a great impact on the food ration and the maintenance of security in mainland Japan."<sup>95</sup> The financial cost of resettling Okinawans, followed by SCAP's directive to provide food, shelter, and medical care for "Ryukyuan refugees," was clearly taking a toll on the government's budgetary constraints. Furthermore, most Okinawan evacuees in the Kyushu region, not to mention large sections of Okinawan communities in the Kansai and Kanto regions, were forced to live off of the burgeoning black markets. The government thus decided to abandon its earlier policy of encouraging these evacuees and refugees to resettle in Japanese prefectures, and supported SCAP's policy of expelling them in order to ease economic and social burdens in occupied Japan.

Meanwhile, General MacArthur's command of the US Army Forces persisted in pressing Admiral John D. Price's command of the US Navy to resume repatriation to the Ryukyu Islands. USMGR continued to resist this pressure, insisting that it had to first procure sufficient shelter and food for residents in the Ryukyus. The inter-occupation deadlock was finally broken after the Navy decided against developing Okinawa into a naval base, as the anchorages in Nakagusuku Bay were found to have been "less desirable than originally thought."<sup>96</sup> The Army then relieved the Navy's administration of USMGR in Okinawa on July 1, 1946, thereby strengthening SCAP's influence over the entire Ryukyu archipelago. It also made it possible for SCAP to plan a Ryukyuan repatriation program closely integrated with economic assistance to the islands.<sup>97</sup> Within three weeks, MacArthur's headquarters summoned the new deputy commander for USMGR and his staff to attend a conference in Tokyo, where concrete details for the joint repatriation program were agreed upon. On July 24, SCAP issued a directive to the Japanese government to begin repatriating all Ryukyuans who had registered their desire to return to their respective island groups. This time, the main island group of Okinawa was to be included, thus reopening the naval blockade for the first time since US combat forces were deployed there during the war in April 1945.

The long-delayed repatriation to the Ryukyus resumed on August 15, 1946. All registered Ryukyuans in Japan were slated for departure by the end of the year, representing an accelerated version of SCAP's de-Japanization policy. According

to a detailed SCAP directive to the Japanese government (SCAPIN 1081), the goal was to begin repatriating Okinawans and Amamiyans at a rate of 5,400 individuals per week. The number was to increase to 9,000 per week by mid-October. SCAP also instructed Japanese officials to “backlog sufficient Ryukyuan in the appropriate reception centers” to ensure that repatriates be available at these prescribed rates. This time, four regional repatriation centers—Kagoshima, Kure, Nagoya, and Sasebo—were designated to handle outgoing repatriates. Residents of Kyushu were processed through Kagoshima and Sasebo; those in Hokkaido, Honshu, and Shikoku were moved out through Nagoya and Kure.<sup>98</sup> As in the first wave of repatriation from January through March, repatriation certificates had to be secured in advance by individuals who wished to receive the full provisions of services guaranteed by the Ministry of Welfare.

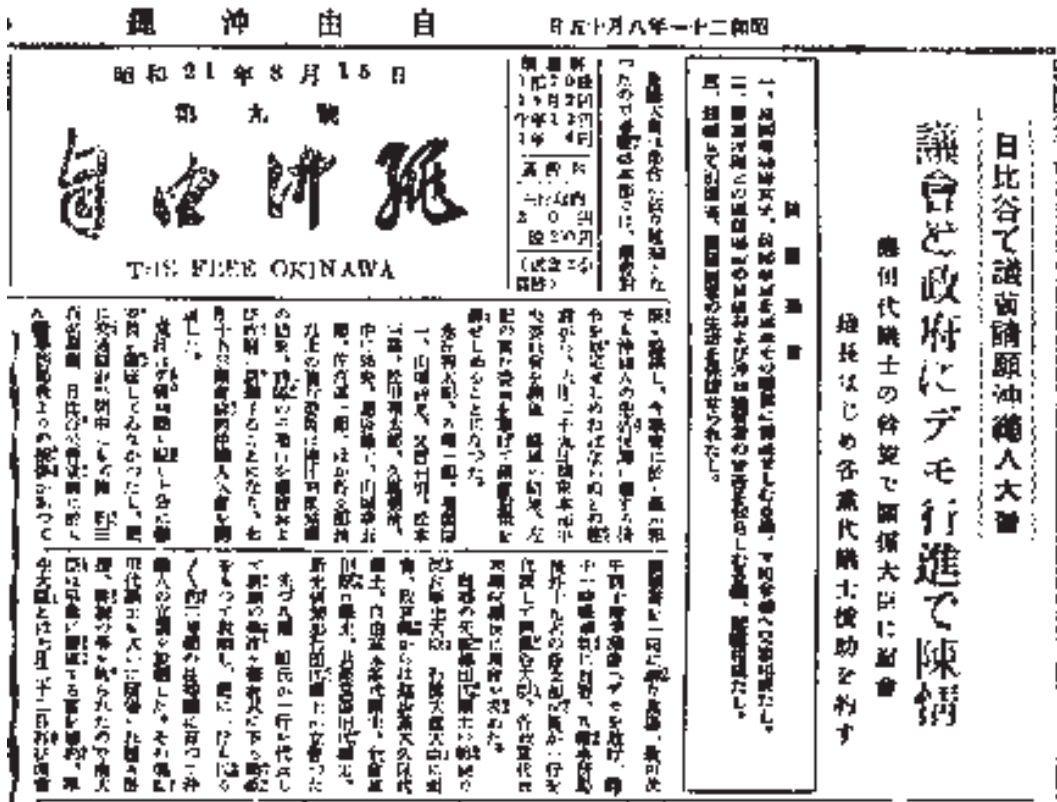


Figure 2. *Jiyū Okinawa* article, printed on the first anniversary of the Japanese surrender, just as the Ryukyuan repatriation program was about to commence. The article describes a public demonstration led by the League of Okinawans, which presented a petition to the Japanese government requesting assistance for Okinawans in Japan. Reprinted from *Jiyū Okinawa* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2000), p. 237.

The Ryukyuan repatriation program differed from SCAP's repatriation of Koreans in several respects. Timing was one key difference: USAMGIK in Korea began receiving repatriates in September 1945, but USMGR in Okinawa hampered repatriation from Japan for an entire year. The sheer volume of Korean repatriation accounted for another noteworthy difference, with ten times as many Koreans departing from Japan as the total number of Okinawans and Amamians combined. Geographical difference was another factor: unlike the Korean peninsula, with Busan and other ports of entry along the same coastline, repatriation to the Ryukyu archipelago required repatriation centers in the four main island groups of Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama. SCAP therefore directed Japanese officials to provide identification tags to each repatriate. These tags were to list personal information, including name, age, sex, family members, and island and village of origin. Intended to efficiently identify which island group repatriates were bound for, the tags also listed not only their occupation, but also their ability to speak English, thus preparing them for life in the Ryukyus under US military rule.<sup>99</sup>

Although they resisted being labeled as Ryukyuan, Okinawan and Amamian organizations supported the Ryukyuan repatriation program largely for humanitarian purposes. Even those that espoused leftist political views and openly criticized the Japanese government did not pose a significant threat, and thus were allowed to remain closely involved in official repatriation efforts. Careful to avoid suffering a fate similar to the League of Koreans, which by then had been excluded from the mass repatriation program, they actively cooperated with occupation and Japanese authorities in assisting repatriates in every respect. For example, the League of Okinawans successfully petitioned the Ministry of Welfare to supply a standard ¥400 from an emergency fund for repatriates and evacuees residing in every prefecture. The League's chapter in Hyogo Prefecture selected members from the youth corps in each prefectural branch office, organized a transport committee, and had them care for and escort repatriates to the designated ports of embarkation.<sup>100</sup> The Okinawan, Amami, and the Nansei Islands Leagues were instrumental in helping individuals obtain repatriation certificates, thus enabling them to receive provisions of food supplies and board trains bound for the regional ports.

The implementation of SCAP's Ryukyuan repatriation program was not without problems. Although overall figures showed an 80 to 90 percent completion rate of the repatriation schedule through the first month, Amamians stranded in Kagoshima began expressing great dissatisfaction with the slow pace of their return. According to SCAPIN 1081, 1,000 Okinawans and 600 Amamians were to



be shipped out of Kagoshima harbor every week. Considering that a majority of Amamian repatriates were one-time residents of Kagoshima Prefecture, at this rate registered Amamians would not have been able to be returned on schedule. In addition, islanders desiring repatriation to Amami Oshima flooded into Kagoshima City every month in increasing numbers, contributing to the worsening food and housing situation. Instability mounted as they held demonstrations and sent petitions to the city, prefecture, and repatriation center offices in order to speed up the repatriation schedule.<sup>101</sup> Aware of the congestion at Kagoshima, SCAP in October 1946 ordered another registration for all Okinawans and Amamians desiring repatriation, but did not implement its revised schedule of repatriating 2,200 Amamians every week from Kagoshima until November. By this time, the number of repatriates began dropping, as news of poor food and housing conditions in the Ryukyus convinced many to give up returning to their home islands.<sup>102</sup>

Close to 135,000 Ryukyans were repatriated from Japan between August and December 1946, the scheduled period for completion of the program (see Table 1). However, just as with the numerically more dominant Korean residents in Japan, SCAP aimed to send home Okinawans and Amamians who still remained in Japan. The Japanese government thus announced that those who had registered to repatriate but changed their minds, for whatever reason, were encouraged to take advantage of the free homeward-bound transportation. In general, occupation authorities granted permission to all those who belatedly decided to repatriate in order to relieve their burden on the Japanese economy. As a result, small numbers of Okinawans and Amamians continued to depart Japan from January 1947 until SCAP directed the government to notify them that travel by right of repatriation would be suspended in 1950.<sup>103</sup> By then, the total number of repatriates from Japan to the Ryukyus reached over 180,000.

## Conclusion

As the act of returning people to their country of origin, repatriation applied equally to Japanese migrants and colonial migrants, playing a critical role in the American-led effort to resettle the realm of Japan's lost empire. SCAP's repatriation of non-Japanese, however, conveyed differing connotations for each minority group in Japan, altering the processes of liberation and segregation that were already underway.

For occupation authorities in Japan, repatriating Koreans was the simplest and most convenient solution to various issues surrounding their treatment. One outstanding problem was the ambiguous status of Koreans in Japan after the liberation of their country. While the JCS in November 1945 stipulated that

Koreans and Taiwanese were to be treated as "liberated peoples," SCAP did not recognize those claiming to have the same rights and privileges accorded to Allied nationals.<sup>104</sup> Instead, American occupiers initially vacillated between sympathetic treatment of former colonial subjects and irritation at those who postponed or decided against repatriation.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government instituted a series of measures excluding these former colonial subjects from SCAP's democratic reforms, thereby discouraging them from remaining in Japan. In December, the government passed a new election law that disenfranchised Korean and Taiwanese residents, having approved earlier that year plans to grant full civil rights to all colonial subjects. This remarkable volte-face on voting rights was motivated by the fear that many Korean leftists and laborers would join Japanese communists in pressing for the abolition of the emperor system.<sup>105</sup> Three months later, Japanese legal experts modified and deleted parts of SCAP's constitutional proposals to provide equal protection of law for all nationals in Japan, including resident aliens. Thus restricting the legal scope of equality to Japanese nationals, the government denied former colonial subjects the set of civil rights that are guaranteed in Japan's postwar constitution.<sup>106</sup> It was in this context, in May 1946, that the Home Ministry prevailed upon SCAP to exclude the League of Koreans from any further involvement in repatriation operations.

When it became clear by the end of the year that close to 600,000 Koreans chose not to repatriate, SCAP decided to reverse their previous designated status as liberated people: on November 5 and 12, official press releases announced that those who refused repatriation to the Korean peninsula would retain their Japanese nationality for the duration of the occupation.<sup>107</sup> These announcements clearly contradicted SCAP's de-Japanization policy of registering non-Japanese and segregating them from Japanese society in order to encourage them to repatriate. By publicly declaring that they remained Japanese nationals, SCAP had determined that Koreans in Japan would no longer be treated as liberated people; henceforth, repatriation to Korea was the only way for them to attain liberation. This move sparked immediate protests from Koreans in Japan and at home as well as from USAMGIK officials, but SCAP insisted that it would ensure Koreans were still subject to Japanese criminal jurisdiction and compelled to pay Japanese taxes. By this time, SCAP concluded that the continued presence of a "restless, uprooted Korean minority in Japan," allegedly disdainful of law and authority, was a "serious obstacle to the success of the Occupation."<sup>108</sup> From that point on, American and Japanese authorities increasingly collaborated with one another in dealing what they called the "Korean problem."

Unlike Korean migrants in Japan, most Okinawans and Amamiyans considered themselves Japanese. Even those who espoused liberation were still bound

to be suspicious of SCAP's motives for treating them as non-Japanese, especially without any clarification on the political disposition of the Ryukyus. Regardless of how Okinawans and Amamians identified themselves, occupation authorities insisted on referring to them instead as Ryukyuans. SCAP's view that Ryukyuans were not fully Japanese was based on the OSS' ethnographic study and the US Navy's civil affairs handbook. These wartime reports emphasized how the Ryukyus were not historically a part of Japan, making a point of referencing the official compact between the United States and the Ryukyu Kingdom that Commodore Matthew Perry had signed in 1854.<sup>109</sup> Ninety years later, American policymakers consciously revived the name of the former kingdom, maintaining that Ryukyuans constituted a semicolonial underclass forcibly assimilated into becoming imperial Japanese subjects. This became the prevalent view among American occupation authorities after the war. For example, the official history of occupied Japan, compiled by SCAP's Civil Historical Section in 1951, describes how Ryukyuans possessed "nominal Japanese citizenship," as the Ryukyus were under a "nominal suzerainty" of Japan for over three hundred years.<sup>110</sup> The repatriation of all non-Japanese was ostensibly on a voluntary basis and for humanitarian purposes, but in reality SCAP encouraged Ryukyuans to depart from Japan and return to their home islands for a distinct reason: to serve as a justification for maintaining the division of the Ryukyus from Japan. The Leagues of Okinawans and Amamians would soon come to recognize that this was the real reason behind SCAP's de-Japanization of Okinawans and their segregation from Japanese.

The American-led effort to resettle the realm of the defeated Japanese Empire through repatriation revealed mixed results. SCAP did successfully address problems associated with severe congestion in the regional ports: In November 1945, it directed the Ministry of Health and Welfare to assume overall responsibility for the repatriation of all non-Japanese. This marked the beginning of an organized effort to repatriate civilian migrants, which constituted a much larger group than military and labor conscripts, who were already being deported by Japanese authorities. On the other hand, SCAP failed to anticipate that its newly instituted repatriation regulations—especially its customs restrictions—would backfire by slowing the departure of migrants from Japan. Instead of lifting the financial and baggage restrictions imposed on repatriates, as USAMGIK had recommended, SCAP attempted to expedite the process of returning all non-Japanese by designating appointed times and places for their departure. The resulting "mass repatriation program" accounted for less than one-tenth of Koreans who returned, a clear demonstration of the shortcomings of SCAP's policies. Meanwhile, the Ryukyuan repatriation program was considered to have been

more successful, as all those who desired to return were finally allowed to do so, more than a year after the Battle of Okinawa.

The extent of American authority in resettling occupied Japan was largely determined by the collaborative effort among occupation authorities, Japanese officials, and ethnic organizations involved in repatriation. The ultimate outcome of repatriation, however, was contingent upon the follow-up process of resettling returnees after their arrival in their respective homelands. The success of resettlement, in turn, depended upon the ability of American occupiers in Korea and the Ryukyu Islands to plan for and to implement sound policies in the power vacuum and chaos that ensued after the termination of Japanese rule.

## *Resettlement without Reintegration*

The first Korean repatriates from Japan set foot in their liberated homeland at Busan harbor in early September 1945, and shiploads of others also began disembarking at Mokpo and Gunsan in the following months. Together with those who chartered small boats ferrying into various other spots along the southern coastline of the Korean peninsula, the number of repatriates quickly approached 1.5 million within a half year after liberation.

Having safely completed their return journey, the immediate concern that faced all Korean repatriates was how to reintegrate into Korean society in the wake of thirty-five years of Japanese colonial rule. For those who were fortunate enough to have a home and family to return to, reintegration meant reuniting with family and friends they left behind. Kim Deukjung, who survived the ordeal of wartime conscript labor in a Japanese coal mine, was one of those fortunate repatriates. Abandoned by his Japanese supervisor in Kamioka, Kim managed to repatriate to Busan, fondly recalling a half century later that it was like stepping into his own backyard. When Kim made it back to his native village of Haemi in North Jeolla Province on September 9, his mother welcomed him home with an emotional embrace, ecstatic that her son had returned home alive from Japan.<sup>1</sup> Homeless, landless, or unemployed, many other repatriates were less fortunate. Although numerous repatriates thus faced social and economic hardships during their reintegration into Korean society, most nevertheless shared a common desire to contribute what they could towards rebuilding their postcolonial nation.

Nearly a year later, the first Okinawan repatriates from Japan harbored no illusions about the tremendous difficulties they faced in rebuilding their war-torn islands. Nevertheless, the daunting task that lay ahead did not stop them from celebrating the moment of their return home, and some captured this meaningful occasion in poetic expression: “Horses from the north stand against the northern wind; birds from the south build their nests on the southern branches.”<sup>2</sup> Thus quoting a verse from a classical Chinese poem, Miyazato Eiki asserted that he and other Okinawans had a particularly strong attachment to their home islands, the metaphorical “nests on the southern branches.” Only the hope of

returning to their beloved home islands, Miyazato explained, had sustained Okinawan evacuees to Kyushu during their nearly two years of privation and adversity. Miyazato, the president of the Kyushu chapter of the League of Okinawans, penned these words for a newspaper article in early August 1946, shortly after SCAP announced the commencement of the long-awaited repatriation to the Ryukyu Islands.<sup>3</sup> While rejoicing that their dream of returning home was about to be realized, he admonished his fellow Okinawan evacuees to be mindful of the Japanese proverb: “A bird does not defile the nest it is about to leave.” In other words, they should depart Japan without creating incidents, no matter how bitter their experiences, thus saving face for Okinawans.

Reintegrating Korean and Okinawan repatriates—from not only the Japanese archipelago, but also parts of its formerly expansive empire—was contingent upon American policies in US-occupied Korea and the Ryukyu Islands. Like SCAP in Japan, the military governments in Korea and the Ryukyus were formally committed to repatriation, following US policy aimed at matching peoples to territories where they purportedly belonged. However, the follow-up task of resettlement—which often took more time, care, and resources to administer than repatriation—was largely delegated to local authorities. In this way, military government headquarters in Korea and the Ryukyus relied on provincial and municipal officials to address various issues related to resettlement, including inadequate housing and social welfare facilities. These officials, in turn, were acutely dependent upon the US military, not only for material resources but also as the dominant source of governmental legitimacy in the wake of war and empire.

Herein lay the fundamental problem that affected all territories where direct US military rule replaced Japanese rule: American officials had to identify, select, and train local officials in brokering a cooperative relationship with the military government, an important endeavor that required careful attention. This process often involved a competition for legitimacy and resources, which were monopolized by the US military. A comparison of the record of each military government’s resettlement policy thus serves as an important means of assessing the exercise of American power in occupied Korea and the Ryukyus.

How exactly were repatriates from Japan resettled in southern Korea and the Ryukyu Islands, and to what extent were they able to reintegrate into each respective society that was being reshaped by US military rule? To answer these questions, we must bear in mind that the reintegration of repatriates was part of a larger process of resettling various peoples on the move in the wake of the Japanese Empire. Within southern Korea, those to be resettled were not only ethnic Korean repatriates from Japan, but also Korean repatriates from Manchuria and refugees from northern Korea. Likewise, resettlement in the Ryukyus began with survivors



of the Battle of Okinawa, and then encompassed repatriates from around the Asia-Pacific region, many of whom were relocated across the tightly regulated island groups of the archipelago. In sum, repatriation and resettlement necessitated the establishment of institutional mechanisms for controlling the movement of people across these internal and external borders of occupation. To what extent, then, did such population movements drive military government officials to create new border control regimes? Answering this question helps to reveal the process by which repatriation, resettlement, and border controls reshaped Korea and the Ryukyus under direct US military rule.

### **Korea between Old and New Occupiers**

Repatriates began streaming into southern Korea from the outset of the “space of liberation” (*haebang konggan*), between the end of Japanese colonial rule and the establishment of two separate states on the divided peninsula.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the indirect occupation of Japan, General John Hodge was preparing the US Army’s XXIV Corps to occupy and govern southern Korea directly, following US policy to create a stable and unified Korean state. But the Japanese colonial administration still exercised administrative authority, at least in the southern half of the peninsula, until the arrival of American forces. Even after the formal surrender ceremony at the Government-General Building in Seoul on September 9, 1945, many facets of Japanese authority remained in place, ensuring the safe evacuation of Japanese military servicemen and colonial officials from Korea. Meanwhile, Korean nationalists formed the Joseon Geonguk Junbi Wiwonhoe, or the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI), which aimed to establish itself as an interim government in postcolonial Korea. Working together with local self-governing organizations called the *inmin wiwonhoe*, or “People’s Committees,” which were formed throughout the country after liberation, the CPKI stepped in to offer assistance for compatriots returning to Korea. What happened to repatriates in postliberation Korea thus largely depended upon emerging Korean organizations and the extent of their willingness to cooperate with Japanese and American authorities. The incentive for such cooperation was, in turn, dependent upon the ability of these organizations to secure essential material resources—for repatriates and for themselves—from both the old and new occupiers of Korea.

Shortly after the war ended, the Japanese colonial administration began preparing to evacuate Japanese nationals from postliberation Korea. On August 27, the Government-General established a Liaison Office, modeled upon the Japanese government’s Central Liaison Office, to facilitate communication with Allied authorities in managing various issues relating to the termination of warfare. Like

its counterparts throughout Japan's former empire, the Seoul Liaison Office also coordinated its activities with the Central Liaison Office in Tokyo. The safe return of Japanese who suddenly found themselves "overseas" at the end of the war was one such activity. The Seoul Liaison Office set up a Welfare Section, composed of Government-General bureaucrats and headed by Shiraishi Kōchirō, former chief of the Agriculture and Commerce Bureau. Shiraishi assigned three main tasks to his newly assembled staff at the Welfare Section: "to prepare for the repatriation of Japanese and Koreans by gathering them for their transport and rations; to organize an association for remaining Japanese; and to protect the private and corporate property of the Japanese."<sup>5</sup> This stated mission signaled that the Government-General was willing to provide care and assistance to incoming Korean repatriates, not just outgoing Japanese repatriates.

The Welfare Section of the Government-General's Liaison Office faithfully attempted to execute its mission of overseeing the transportation of Japanese and Korean repatriates and the administration of refugee camps for these repatriates. The original plan called for the establishment of six Welfare Section offices in major cities throughout southern Korea, supported by another office in Shimono-seki, Japan, which were to provide public facilities for the temporary accommodation of homebound repatriates. Based on these plans, the Seoul office initially cared for Japanese and Korean returnees who fled from Soviet-occupied Manchuria and northern Korea by housing them in public schools, temples, and various other religious organizations in the city. Meanwhile, the Government-General's Transportation Bureau arranged trains for Korean returnees from Japan, sending them from Busan to Taegu, Taejon, and Seoul. In this way, between the establishment of the Government-General's Liaison Office and the arrival of US occupation forces late in September, some 93,400 Korean returnees were transported back to their former places of residence.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this successful early start to repatriation and resettlement, the liberation of Korea had curtailed the Government-General's executive authority, limiting the functions of the Liaison Office. The primary challenge for Japanese colonial authorities was to maintain order and stability in the midst of the highly charged atmosphere of Korean emancipation. According to one report, mid- to lower-level Korean railroad employees refused orders from the Transportation Bureau and, in some districts, drove away Japanese stationmasters, taking over railway operations. Many Koreans at the managerial level soon joined the takeover effort, no longer feeling compelled to submit to Japanese authority. Consequently, basic tasks such as supplying steam trains with water and coal were frequently neglected, causing significant delays in transporting repatriates to and from Busan.<sup>7</sup>

Ultimately, Japanese colonial authorities were ill prepared to handle such a large-scale movement of people between Korea and Japan, and had to rely on the goodwill of newly emergent organizations that were willing to offer assistance. A nongovernmental organization called the Nihonjin Sewakai (Japanese Aid Association), initially formed to provide protection for Japanese residents and their property in liberated Korea, soon began to cooperate with the Welfare Section in the repatriation process. But the Sewakai, by definition, was a Japanese organization devoted exclusively to assisting Japanese nationals—not the far larger number of Koreans repatriating to their homeland. Furthermore, the Government-General provided a combined ¥6.8 million to Sewakai branches to assist Japanese repatriates, while appropriating an unspecified portion of funds earmarked for war victims and labor associations to assist Korean repatriates.<sup>8</sup> Such unfair treatment, amid severe financial and material limitations resulting from years of warfare, contributed to the simmering hostility felt by many Koreans towards Japanese colonial officials. For example, Welfare Section chief Shiraishi was abducted by a vengeful Korean vigilante group, and his replacement was later physically attacked and hospitalized.<sup>9</sup> Such incidents also affirmed the prevailing mood among ethnic Japanese at the time that there was a limit to what the Government-General should, or could, do for Korean repatriates in the wake of liberation.

As defeated Japanese nationals focused on organizing a safe departure from Korea, liberated Koreans prepared to welcome their compatriots back to their homeland. Immediately after liberation, numerous organizations for assisting Korean repatriates sprang up in southern Korea, many affiliated with emerging political and social organizations. Established on August 15 by nationalist leader Yo Unhyeong (Lyuh Woon-hyung)—who agreed with the Government-General to help maintain order as the Japanese prepared to depart Korea—the CPKI was the earliest and most prominent of these. On August 17, the newly established Welfare Division of the CPKI began preparing necessary measures to receive Korean repatriates in response to Vice Chairman An Jaehong's call for immediate action.<sup>10</sup> The People's Committees that had mushroomed throughout the Korean peninsula also lent their support to repatriates. According to Bruce Cumings' authoritative study, these People's Committees served as self-governing organizations that took control of social, political, and economic decision making at the county and provincial levels, providing basic services in the absence of departing Japanese colonists.<sup>11</sup> The local committees were very often like microcosms of the central CPKI in terms of organizational structure; depending on the needs of a local region, they maintained sections dealing with repatriates and refugees, together with welfare relief.<sup>12</sup> This meant the People's Committees in the southern provinces of the peninsula assisted most of the repatriates from Japan,

including large numbers who returned aboard small fishing vessels, while the CPKI aimed to handle repatriates at the national level.

The CPKI not only assisted repatriates arriving in their liberated homeland, but also extended its support to overseas Koreans who were awaiting repatriation. For example, a CPKI official named Lee Sanghun made concerted efforts with the CPKI's Busan branch office to facilitate the mass movement of Koreans from Japan to Korea. On September 21, having received an exit permit from Japanese and American authorities, Lee dispatched to Japan twelve CPKI delegates who split up into five groups, with teams traveling to Shimonoseki, Osaka, Nagoya, Tokyo, and Hokkaido.<sup>13</sup> Upon returning to Korea, on November 21, he reported on the activities of these delegates in a speech at the first national conference of People's Committee representatives, which assembled in Seoul. Lee explained how the CPKI delegates arranged for the repatriation of an estimated 15,000 Koreans from Japan, assisted by its Busan office, which secured twenty-five boats that were mobilized for the operation. These boats operated independently from the much larger yet limited number of Japanese ferry boats that SCAP had officially commissioned for the purpose of repatriation. In addition, the delegates met with General MacArthur in Tokyo and requested SCAP's assistance in providing food for Korean repatriates, as well as special trains and ships for their transportation out of Japan. According to Lee, SCAP promised to fulfill these requests.<sup>14</sup> Thus, at a time when newly emergent Korean organizations in occupied Japan were helping to facilitate the mass exodus of returnees, these CPKI delegates rushed to join the effort, while claiming to represent the new government in Korea.

The early efforts of Korean leaders to lend their assistance to comrades repatriating to their liberated homeland reflected social views in southern Korea immediately after liberation. The *Maeil sinbo*, one of the leading newspapers at the time, portrayed overseas repatriates as direct victims of Japan's colonial and wartime policies, arguing that the provision of aid for these people was a national issue that everyone should be concerned about.<sup>15</sup> The newspaper also welcomed repatriates to contribute towards the establishment of a new nation,<sup>16</sup> a view no doubt shared by many repatriates. Such goodwill and intentions, however, were not enough for repatriates without the accompaniment of material aid. In reality, most relief organizations in Korea were in poor condition, often lacking the financial means to provide goods such as food, clothing, and shipping to assist repatriates.<sup>17</sup> Although these organizations demonstrated enthusiasm for assisting repatriates, many depended on private donations or, as was more often the case, sought assistance from the US Army.

Meanwhile, American officers newly deployed in southern Korea encountered widespread chaotic conditions resulting from the Japanese exodus, compounded

by increasing numbers of Koreans rushing back to their liberated homeland. Military government personnel were only vaguely aware of the scale and distribution of Korean migrants in various parts of the Japanese Empire, and therefore were unprepared to handle their repatriation and resettlement. Most of the civil affairs officers were, in fact, originally trained for the occupation of Japan, and had only begun preparing plans for the occupation of Korea after the Japanese surrender. One of these officers, Lieutenant William J. Gane, believed that many of them “did not have the slightest idea where Korea was located,” and thus, from the outset, “ignorance handicapped most of the men who were to govern Korea.”<sup>18</sup> This was not an exaggeration, as State Department officials were also poorly informed, ill-prepared, and without any guidance to suggest solutions for US policy towards postliberation Korea.<sup>19</sup> As General Hodge publicly declared on September 8, 1945—the day USAMGIK officially relieved the Japanese Government-General—the purpose of the American occupation was to enforce the terms of Japan’s surrender and to ensure an orderly administration of Korea. Given this paucity of concrete plans for occupying Korea, American officers were overwhelmed by the unexpectedly high volume of Korean and Japanese repatriates who had created chaotic conditions.

Primarily to restore public order, while also protecting the health and welfare of repatriates, US military authorities in southern Korea decided to assist the repatriation program initiated by the Government-General. On September 10, 1945, USAMGIK proposed tentative plans to supervise Japanese organizations that were already assisting Japanese repatriates. These plans also stressed the need for close coordination between the XXIV Corps in Korea and the Eighth Army in Japan, in order to provide care for Korean repatriates. Administering these plans for repatriation became the responsibility of USAMGIK’s Office of Foreign Affairs, which assigned Lieutenant Gane to investigate the conditions of displaced persons in Korea, Japan, and China. The resulting study by Lieutenant Gane served as the basis for a mass repatriation program capable of returning an estimated 5 million people to their respective homelands in the region.<sup>20</sup> The Office of Foreign Affairs subsequently established a Displaced Persons Division, which handled both inbound Korean repatriates and outbound aliens.

The American occupiers did not recognize the CPKI, nor the Korean People’s Republic that its leaders hastily proclaimed on September 6, 1945, reminding the Korean public instead that the US military government was the sole governing authority in southern Korea. On the other hand, USAMGIK’s Office of Foreign Affairs actively solicited the cooperation of Korean relief organizations, which had been in operation since before the arrival of American occupation forces in Korea. For example, Korean relief organizations in Busan eagerly offered their assistance to the 40th Infantry Division, which was initially assigned the task of processing

outgoing Japanese and incoming Koreans at the port. According to a detailed report compiled by the division, these relief organizations “instructed the refugees in train schedules, sold them tickets and informed them of possible accommodations and sources of food and clothing.”<sup>21</sup> The report also contains several photographs of Korean volunteers assisting US officers with various other duties, including currency exchange. Shortly after SCAP’s customs regulations were issued, on October 20, 1945, a currency exchange station was established at Pier No. 1 at Busan. As USAMGIK kept the colonial-era Bank of Chōsen in operation, Korean clerks collected the Japanese yen that repatriates brought in, exchanging them for the equivalent in Korean yen, which was renamed *won* after liberation.<sup>22</sup>

Lieutenant Gane, who became the chief of the newly established Displaced Persons Division, also acknowledged the utility of local organizations in processing incoming Korean repatriates. But a survey of these organizations convinced Lieutenant Gane that they had to be consolidated into one executive body, because they were working ineffectively and “contending with each other for prestige.”<sup>23</sup> What this actually meant was that many of the Korean relief organizations were engaged in a struggle over their share of relief funds that were promised first by the Government-General, then by USAMGIK. In response, Major Gordon B. Enders, chief of the Office of Foreign Affairs, invited thirteen Korean organizations to a meeting to discuss ways in which they could cooperate not only with one another but also with USAMGIK. On September 30, the thirteen organizations agreed to form the Central Committee of Korean Relief Societies, which was designed to serve as a coordinating agency for working together with USAMGIK.<sup>24</sup>

Although the Central Committee of Korean Relief Societies initially performed invaluable services for Korean returnees, it soon ran into conflict with USAMGIK. Based on a resolution adopted at its first conference, by mid-October 1945 the Central Committee had established billets and shelters to house returnees, organized community kitchens to distribute food and relief supplies, and formed first aid stations and hospitals in various parts of southern Korea.<sup>25</sup> Before long, however, several relief societies complained that Pak Seungjong, vice chairman of the Central Committee, was distributing money and food supplies at his personal discretion, instead of on an equitable basis of need. Pak acknowledged that the Central Committee had received five hundred bags of foodstuffs from the US military, but could not render an accounting of how the supplies were distributed, contributing to further mistrust. Shortly thereafter, an American official accused Chong Taehui, chairman of the Central Committee, of “mixing politics with welfare” when the latter allegedly tried to expand his relief organization for political gains over his rivals. On November 16, Chong was forced to resign after attempting to take control of the relief societies and rebuild them as a united political party for



himself, at a time when hundreds of new political organizations were competing for influence in postliberation Korea.<sup>26</sup> From that point on, USAMGIK assumed greater and more direct responsibility over repatriation activities.

At about the same time, liaison officers from the Displaced Persons Office began to point out problems with the 40th Infantry Division's handling of repatriation procedures in Busan. Several reports indicated the commanding general of the 40th Infantry Division felt his responsibility was limited to processing Korean returnees at Pier No. 1, not attending to their welfare and resettlement. This meant that once the returnees had been dusted with DDT, exchanged their Japanese yen for Korean won, and gathered their baggage, they were left to fend for themselves. As a result, Busan quickly became congested with Korean returnees who were living off local relief agencies and who could not afford the train fare to return to their homes.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 3. Korean repatriates from Japan disembarking at Busan Harbor in the fall of 1945. An American soldier from the 40th Infantry Division directs them to Pier No. 1 for processing before they are free to head home. Reproduced courtesy of the US National Archives (RG 332, Box 32).

USAMGIK's Displaced Persons Office attempted belatedly to intervene on behalf of these returnees from Japan, whose increasing numbers threatened to create serious health hazards and security problems. As a first step in eliminating the congestion in Busan, the Displaced Persons Office devised an effective plan whereby warehouses near Pier No. 1 could be used as a compound for temporary housing. Colonel Francis E. Gillette, the military governor of South Gyeongsang Province, eventually granted permission for this plan, and all Korean returnees—including those disembarking numerous small and unauthorized boats—were taken to this compound, where they remained until they boarded outbound trains. The plan also included an operation called “destination loading,” whereby Korean returnees were assigned a time when they could board a train that took them to a destination closest to their homes.<sup>28</sup> USAMGIK had requisitioned the Government-General's Transportation Bureau and directed newly promoted Korean employees to operate its rail services, thus restoring order and setting regularly scheduled railway transportation.<sup>29</sup> USAMGIK's Welfare Section finally began issuing tickets for these trains free of charge in early January 1946, but by this time the returnee population in Busan was becoming the source of burgeoning black markets and other socio-economic problems.

### **Okinawa in the “American Period”**

After much anticipation, repatriates began arriving in the Ryukyu Islands during a critical, transitional juncture from what Okinawans referred to as the “Japanese period” (*Yamato-yū*) to the “American period” (*Amerika-yū*) in their recent history. Dismantling the Japanese ruling structure in the Ryukyus was one of the main objectives of the US military invasion and occupation. On March 1, 1945, in preparation for the amphibious assault on Okinawa, Admiral Chester Nimitz issued a political and economic directive for the establishment of a prospective military government in the Ryukyus. This detailed directive spelled out that the impending occupation of the Ryukyus was necessary to destroy “Japan's power of aggression and the military class which controls the Japanese Empire.” It granted the American military governor the power to remove from office all high-ranking or policymaking Japanese officials, and to dissolve all Japanese patriotic or secret societies.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the Ryukyus were to be politically and administratively “de-Japanized.” Just as the US Tenth Army combat units began landing on Okinawa Island on April 1, Admiral Nimitz issued the United States Navy Military Government's Proclamation No. 1. Declaring that “all powers of the Government of the Japanese Empire are hereby suspended,” the so-called Nimitz Proclamation signaled the administrative detachment of the Ryukyus from Japan.<sup>31</sup>

The dawning of the new “American period” set into motion the process of replacing Japanese rule with American rule, subordinating the Ryukyus to the US military. Just one day after the Japanese surrender in the Battle of Okinawa on July 2, 1945, the newly designated deputy commander for USMGR, Colonel Charles I. Murray, immediately began cementing Okinawa’s political subordination. Murray called upon prominent members of Okinawan society to advise and assist USMGR, which eventually summoned over 120 local residents. This assembly of Okinawans then selected fifteen leaders to form the Okinawa Advisory Council (Okinawa Shijunkai), including seven members of the former prefectural government who remained in Okinawa.<sup>32</sup> In a symbolic statement on the new status of the Ryukyus, the Council was noted as the first administrative organization consisting entirely of Okinawans. However, Murray made it clear that the administrative authority of the Council was merely advisory, limited to assisting USMGR.

Shortly after the war, the US Navy command in Okinawa initially granted a limited form of self-government, recognizing the need to win local acquiescence to US military rule. For example, on September 20, 1945, elections were held for mayors and councilmen in the sixteen military government districts, as newly enfranchised Okinawan women turned out to vote alongside men for the first time.<sup>33</sup> Another mark in the political rehabilitation of Okinawa was achieved on April 24, 1946, when Shikiya Kōshin, a respected local educator, was appointed governor of the newly inaugurated Civil Administration. This was another remarkable step towards local autonomy, considering the fact that no Okinawan had ever been appointed prefectural governor under Japanese rule.

Governor Shikiya’s inaugural speech expressed the hopes of many Okinawans. He stated that, “in striving to build a better Okinawa than before, we will achieve the golden age for Okinawa with our hands.”<sup>34</sup> When the Okinawa Assembly was convened on May 23, the twenty-five assemblymen demonstrated determination as they enthusiastically discussed reconstruction plans with the governor.<sup>35</sup> While these measures were implemented in the name of political rehabilitation, USMGR maintained direct control over the appointments of assemblymen and governors throughout the Ryukyus. The limits of political autonomy in the Ryukyus—as in southern Korea—contrasted sharply with the indirect occupation of Japan, where the local, regional, and central governments continued to exercise their authority in cooperation with Allied occupation officials.

Unlike on the Korean peninsula and mainland Japan, however, resettlement in the Ryukyu Islands actually began during wartime. Prior to the Battle of Okinawa, military government officers recognized the need to accommodate civilians who would be driven from their homes, and planned for emergency

resettlement camps. However, these plans suffered from miscalculations resulting from disagreements within the integrated services of the Tenth Army. Military government officers of the Tenth Army originally estimated that roughly 117,000 civilians could be expected to enter the US-occupied areas in the northern portion of Okinawa within three weeks of the invasion. On the other hand, the Tenth Army's Intelligence Section (G-2) disagreed with this figure, estimating instead that approximately 200,000–250,000 refugees would enter American lines in the more populous southern portion of Okinawa. The Japanese military's decision to relocate thousands of civilians from the south to the sparsely populated north appeared to disprove G-2's calculations.<sup>36</sup> However, the exigencies of the unfolding ground warfare ultimately necessitated the relocation of approximately 250,000 civilians throughout Okinawa, most of whom had to move multiple times. According to one historian, the constant relocation of Okinawans



Figure 4. War refugees being relocated during the Battle of Okinawa. June 20, 1945. The note accompanying this photo states, "Okinawan civilians trudge along a road to the area designated by the military government. Many carry their possessions in the traditional manner atop their heads." Reproduced courtesy of the US National Archives (111-SC-209092).

from place to place was “one of the more regrettable tasks undertaken by the military government detachments.”<sup>37</sup> These mass relocations caused many hardships, including severe overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, illness, and death, while food shortages were a constant problem that plagued the refugee situation.

After the war, the US military’s greatly reduced manpower delayed socio-economic reconstruction in Okinawa at a time when the island lay in ruins and civilian refugees suffered from inadequate food and housing. By the time Japan surrendered, the US military in Okinawa had under its control some 320,000 refugees, divided among seven district camps, five of which were concentrated in northern Okinawa.<sup>38</sup> Since food production had collapsed on the island, USMGR had to feed all these refugees with imported US military rations. While Okinawans would continue to depend upon daily food rations for years to come, many became fed up with living out of tents in the district camps. In September 1945, the newly created Okinawa Advisory Council reported to USMGR that they had received multiple petitions from refugees requesting their resettlement as soon as possible.<sup>39</sup> In response to the growing problems that plagued the overcrowded refugee camps, USMGR finally issued a directive on October 23, signaling the beginning of a resettlement program. However, on the eve of repatriation from Japan the following summer, 68,000 refugees were still awaiting resettlement, a process that continued through the end of 1946.<sup>40</sup> Since the US military commandeered such large amounts of private property, many of these residents were forced to resettle on neighboring islands or, in many cases, to emigrate overseas.<sup>41</sup> Okinawans thus became refugees within their own home island.

More than a year after the Battle of Okinawa, when hundreds of thousands of repatriates began resettling in their former hometowns and villages during the second half of 1946, much of the war-torn island remained covered with rubble. The hastily arranged resettlement was not the only extemporized rehabilitation effort that characterized the administrative flux in immediate postwar Okinawa: American occupation officials also had to improvise their mission in the absence of specific instructions from policymakers in Washington, who became engaged in a prolonged debate regarding the political disposition of the Ryukyu Islands. In the meantime, the organizational structure of the US Armed Forces in the Pacific was shuffled and reshuffled, as the Navy and Army traded military government responsibility several times before the latter assumed complete control over the Ryukyus in July 1946. Furthermore, the massive demobilization of American troops after the war precipitated a shortage of civil affairs officers trained to assist military government officials in administering the islands. The result was a palpable sense of apathy and neglect, worsened by a lack of concrete, decisive policies, leading one American journalist to describe occupied Okinawa



as the “forgotten island.”<sup>42</sup> Washington’s indecisiveness, coupled with the US military’s organizational reshuffle, hampered the military government’s ability to tackle long-term political, social, and economic reforms, not to mention repatriation and resettlement in the Ryukyus.

Two other encumbrances further hindered the efforts of American occupation authorities in the Ryukyus to resettle repatriates. First, the devastating effects of ground warfare ensured that USMGR’s primary focus was on the resettlement of surviving war refugees in Okinawa. This was the main reason why USMGR had repeatedly postponed the implementation of SCAP’s Ryukyuan repatriation program. On the other hand, the US Navy’s military officers in Micronesia—another archipelago in the Pacific under direct US military rule—strongly urged the military commander in Okinawa to accept returnees at the earliest possible date. Just as Admiral Nimitz had refused to accede to General MacArthur’s request for repatriation from Japan, Admiral Price also initially resisted, arguing that repatriation from Micronesia would overburden USMGR’s capacity to handle such an influx.<sup>43</sup> However, the SWNCC deemed economic conditions in postwar Micronesia to be even more dire than in Okinawa, and decided that all non-native aliens should be repatriated as soon as possible. As a result, the main island group of Okinawa was opened up, and over 33,000 Okinawans were repatriated from Micronesia to the Okinawa Islands between January and May 1946.<sup>44</sup> US government and military authorities in Washington could thus intervene and determine the order and pace of repatriation, depending on their assessment of strategic priorities in US-occupied territory in the Asia-Pacific region.

Another factor that hindered the resettlement of repatriates was that USMGR had to recruit and train Okinawans who could assist the US military in governing the island, since most prefectural officials had fled Okinawa before the battle. In contrast to US-occupied Korea, the nearly complete absence of local officials with governing experience meant that USMGR had to invest considerable time, energy, and resources to train Okinawans for the major task of administering repatriation and resettlement. For these reasons, the fate of repatriates arriving in postwar Okinawa remained uncertain, as American occupiers fumbled through in their efforts to pick up the pieces and restore order on the war-torn island.

The story of Ryukyuan repatriation from Japan and elsewhere, as previously noted, is inseparable from the story of what happened to Okinawans after they returned to their home islands. Once repatriates were shipped across the 30th parallel, their welfare was no longer the responsibility of SCAP, but now of USMGR in the Ryukyu Islands. USMGR recruited local civilian personnel for the reception, processing, and resettlement of over 180,000 repatriates from Japan—not to





Figure 5. The first family of repatriates from Japan, a father with his four children (front row), are welcomed back to Okinawa by Governor Shikiya Kōshin, Colonel William Craig, and other officers of the military government (back row). Repatriates are wearing wire-strung tags with personal information to clearly identify each individual. Reproduced courtesy of the Okinawa Prefectural Archives (Code No. 0000025605).

mention other overseas repatriates—into Ryukyuan society. This process of reintegration began at reception camps set up throughout the Ryukyu Islands.

On Okinawa Island, these were Camp Kubasaki in Nakagusuku district and Camp Costello in present-day Okinawa City. Camp Costello was also colloquially called “Innumi Yādui,” literally meaning “dog’s eye view shelter” in Okinawan, because a police station built on a nearby hilltop could oversee the entire camp complex, which was closely monitored.<sup>45</sup> In addition, three small camps were established in the city of Naze on Amami Oshima, and provisions were made on Miyako Island to return repatriates to their former homes or to their relatives.<sup>46</sup> These camps were organized and supervised by US Army personnel, but were staffed with local operating personnel. Namisato Kamezō, one of the first repatriates to Okinawa in August 1946, was immediately hired by USMGR to work at Innumi as an interpreter, because he had picked up English while he was a POW

in Australia. But since military government officials infrequently visited the camp, Namisato spent much of his time exchanging information with repatriates. In this way, repatriates often learned for the first time whether or not their family had survived the war and the whereabouts of surviving relatives. According to Namisato, camp employees often identified the most likely location in Okinawa where their relatives might be found.<sup>47</sup> Camp staff familiar with local conditions thus rendered an invaluable service for repatriates, many of whom would otherwise have had trouble recognizing their war-torn island.

Although repatriates were anxious to return home, one of the most important functions of the camps was the registration of repatriates to determine where they could be resettled. At Innumi, ten Okinawan clerks in the registration and records section compiled information on every repatriate who came through the camp. Along with the copies of name lists provided by the Japanese shipmaster, these clerks checked the repatriation certificates that each individual brought with them from Japan. Based on these records, the camp issued its own repatriation certificate confirming that the repatriate had been properly processed for resettlement.<sup>48</sup> According to Namisato, repatriates then took their certificates from Innumi to their town or village, where they delivered them in exchange for a new residency card (*jūminhyō*), since preexisting family registers (*koseki*) were destroyed during the war. Without these certificates from Innumi, repatriates could not officially register their residency in Okinawa, making them ineligible for the free rations of food and clothing supplied by USMGR.<sup>49</sup> Okinawan repatriates, as well as those returning to other parts of the Ryukyu Islands, dutifully complied with these cumbersome administrative procedures out of necessity, since the island population had become completely dependent upon such rations. Such a high degree of dependency on the US military in the Ryukyus was even more pronounced than in US-occupied Korea or Japan.

### **Underclass in a Divided Country**

Korean returnees from Japan, such as the former conscript laborer Kim Deukjung, viewed their repatriation as the ultimate fulfillment of liberation from Japanese colonial rule. They rode the initial wave of repatriation, filled with joy at their newfound freedom and the hope of reintegrating into society as members of the emerging postcolonial nation. While Korean repatriates from Japan represented a diverse group not limited to conscript laborers, most faced economic and social hardships during their reintegration into Korean society. Deprived of their financial assets in Japan, due to SCAP's customs regulations, their hardships were exacerbated by unstable living conditions—and by extension, socio-economic

conditions—in postliberation Korea. The process of resettlement in southern Korea exposed the multiple shortcomings of the American occupiers, Korean officials hired by USAMGIK, and their collective failure to foster the reintegration of returnees into society. Large numbers of repatriates from Japan thus formed a new underclass in their divided and occupied homeland, an underprivileged social status swelled by repatriates from other parts of the Japanese Empire, and by refugees from northern Korea.

What happened to Korean repatriates from Japan can be understood by tracing their movement within Korea. Although population figures from this period do not always reflect actual numbers, statistics compiled by USAMGIK provide useful indications of where repatriates moved to within Korea. The total number of Korean repatriates from Japan to southern Korea through 1948 exceeded 1.4 million people. Of this figure, over 813,000 ended up in the Gyeongsang Provinces, followed by more than 366,000 in the Jeolla Provinces, for a combined total of 1.18 million, or approximately 84 percent, concentrated in the southern provinces.<sup>50</sup> Geographical proximity to Japan as well as place of origin were, of course, major factors in the resettlement of repatriates in these areas. As early as February 1946, however, an estimated 200,000 repatriates are thought to have settled in or around the city of Busan, as they decided against returning to their hometowns.<sup>51</sup> Such a concentration of repatriates contributed to making South Gyeongsang Province, including Busan, not only the most populous province but also the one with the greatest population increase—over 37 percent—through 1946.

While repatriates from Japan constituted the largest number of Koreans in southern Korea, other groups of overseas repatriates swelled the total population of those categorized as “displaced persons.” For example, hundreds of thousands of Korean repatriates from Manchuria were among those who made the long, overland journey down the Korean peninsula before crossing over the 38th parallel in the early months after liberation. Repatriation from Manchuria was fraught with conflict right from the start, as Koreans in northeastern China found themselves caught in the middle of a brewing Chinese civil war that followed the collapse of the Japanese Empire. Many suffered from anti-Korean hostility, as the local Chinese population had long resented Koreans who occupied land or worked at newly built industries, abetted by Japanese colonists in Manchuria. To make matters worse, the Nationalist Chinese confiscated farmlands, industries, and assets from ethnic Japanese and Koreans, encouraging them to repatriate as part of its campaign to reclaim northeastern China.<sup>52</sup>

Korean repatriates from Manchuria were soon joined by a separate group of internally displaced people—those from northern Korea who were forced to leave their homes behind and move into southern Korea. When Soviet occupation forces

entered Pyongyang on August 24, 1945, high-ranking Korean officials of the provincial administration quickly fled south. Unlike their American counterparts, the Soviet occupiers supported the People's Committees in the north, which eagerly ousted other known "collaborators" closely affiliated with Japanese colonists. In March 1946, the North Korean Provisional People's Committee implemented a major land reform, which was popularly received by the majority tenant farmers but simultaneously dispossessed landlords, who reluctantly headed south. Other radical reforms in northern Korea drove increasing numbers of people to cross into southern Korea—a range of people referred to as *wollammin* in Korean—including administrators, landlords, merchants, lawyers, doctors, and teachers, among others.<sup>53</sup> Forcibly displaced from northern Korea, these upper-class Koreans were transformed into underprivileged refugees in southern Korea.

In contrast to Korean repatriates from Japan, a majority of whom were processed through officially designated ports of entry, none of those traveling overland into southern Korea were processed by authorities. Since the 38th parallel was an artificial line demarcating the two zones of occupation on the Korean peninsula, no border controls or travel regulations existed. But occupation authorities in northern and southern Korea assigned greater significance to this artificial line, mainly for security reasons, not unlike the demarcation line between the zones of Allied occupation in eastern and western Germany. Upon learning that Soviet soldiers had entered and looted the city of Kaesong, just south of the 38th parallel, American troops persuaded the Russians to leave, then promptly established a roadblock to prevent reentry. By the middle of October 1945, American forces set up twenty roadblocks along the 38th parallel, while the Soviet forces built as many, each side guarded by armed soldiers. Railway traffic was entirely suspended in both directions.<sup>54</sup> On February 6, 1946, after a three-week conference between the US and Soviet commands, tentative agreements were reached to jointly address economic and administrative problems in Korea, including regulations on the movement of people. However, neither side subsequently adhered to these agreements, as Soviet authorities ignored American complaints about the unregulated flow of Koreans into the southern zone of occupation. In fact, large numbers of Koreans continued to cross the 38th parallel over back roads and through the mountains, especially at night, thus bypassing fortified roadblocks.<sup>55</sup>

Since refugees and repatriates alike entered southern Korea by whatever means they could, American authorities could not always distinguish between the two groups, often using the two terms interchangeably. In a study of the "refugee problem," therefore, USAMGIK's Office of Foreign Affairs simply noted that the largest number flooded into southern Korea during the fall and winter of 1945–1946,

consisting mainly of Korean peasants returning from Manchuria and northern Korea.<sup>56</sup> It was not until much later that Korean officials clearly distinguished between the more than 317,000 repatriates from Manchuria and over 622,000 refugees from northern Korea, who had fled to southern Korea by August 1948.<sup>57</sup> Such unregulated movements of Koreans across the 38th parallel would soon motivate USAMGIK to begin setting up appropriate border control mechanisms in US-occupied Korea.

Meanwhile, the estimated half million Koreans who chartered small boats in Japan and crossed the invisible maritime boundary into Korea proved quite resourceful at finding their own way home. More than other repatriates from Japan who relied on USAMGIK and local authorities, these “unauthorized repatriates” in general utilized kinship bonds and communal networks effectively to resettle in their respective hometowns and villages. Hong Yeopyo and his family, for example, transported rice from Niigata Prefecture and sold it for a profit on the black markets in Osaka, which was known for the large community of migrants from Jeju Island in Korea. Hong’s family then used a portion of their earnings to pay for a berth aboard an old fishing vessel that shipped them back to Jeju. According to Hong, most of the returnees in Jeju Island, including himself and his family, managed to arrive home safely, assisted by Jeju smuggling operators in Japan and Korea. Having thus escaped SCAP’s customs regulations, Hong’s family was prepared for the challenging task of reintegrating into their hometown, which in turn offered strong support for the large number of returnees from Japan:

Even though we returned to our hometown, we didn’t have any farmland, much less a house to live in. So before departing Japan, we purchased aluminum cooking utensils such as pots and pans to sell back at home in order to feed ourselves. . . . Our aunt became my family’s economic support. We worked on her farmland, sowing millet and barley seeds, sometimes [just] pulling weeds.<sup>58</sup>

As a sixteen-year-old, second-generation Korean repatriate, Hong struggled to keep up with the unaccustomed way of life in farming, finding solace from learning to read Korean at night schools. His hard work eventually paid off, as Hong and his family managed to save enough money to purchase a house that they moved into.

Repatriates who had homes to return to were the fortunate ones, as many of them had left Korea in the first place because they had been dispossessed by the loss of land and property during the period of Japanese colonial rule. In the first few months after liberation, various Korean relief organizations operated billets



and shelters to house returnees who had just arrived in Korea. These facilities included Buddhist temples, abandoned schools, and warehouses—any available space that could be used to accommodate returning compatriots.<sup>59</sup> However, this was but a temporary solution to a growing problem that was exacerbated by the arrival of increasing numbers of returnees who needed to be housed. In fact, housing shortages became such an acute problem that a provincial military government officer in charge of repatriation in South Gyeongsang Province was compelled in December to make several recommendations: to institute a government program to reserve scarce construction materials for low- and moderate-cost housing, and to include adequate funds for provincial housing projects in the national budget.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, USAMGIK would delay for almost a year before it began implementing these recommendations.

The administrative flux that characterized postliberation Korea accounted for many such delays in planning for and implementing practical solutions to multiple problems related to the resettlement of repatriates. According to one description, when American occupiers first arrived in Seoul, they found most governmental departments of the colonial state structure in nearly complete disarray: “Public services had been suspended. Absenteeism approached 90 percent of the bureaucratic work force.”<sup>61</sup> This was largely because Korean employees refused to take orders from Japanese superiors, as we saw previously with the example of combative railway workers after liberation. To remedy this problem, USAMGIK promoted Korean bureaucrats to fill official posts held by departing Japanese. This policy of “Koreanization” took months to implement and was executed unevenly across the realm of government agencies. For example, USAMGIK prioritized the agencies of law and order, appointing Korean directors, judges, and chiefs to the Department of Justice, the courts, and the police by the end of 1945.<sup>62</sup> Agencies of public health and welfare, which would become involved in providing assistance to repatriates, remained in flux for a longer period of time.

Meanwhile, the shortage of housing for Korean returnees was emerging as a widespread social problem throughout southern Korea. USAMGIK’s Department of Public Health and Welfare maintained 117 temporary and semipermanent shelters with a capacity of 65,170 refugees during the winter of 1946. However, of the 350,000 Korean families that had repatriated during this period, over half needed housing but found no accommodations available to them.<sup>63</sup> With the onset of severe winter weather, the Department of Public Health and Welfare belatedly devised an emergency plan to provide temporary shelter for homeless persons. The plan called for the construction of basic housing of a “dugout type,” presumably referring to a standard, traditional Korean-style house with a heated floor (*ondol*), designed for two families of four or five persons each.



These temporary houses were to be provided by municipalities, free of rent, with the stipulation that the occupants assigned to the buildings could live in them for up to three years. Holding the construction costs to a bare minimum was a priority for USAMGIK, as public donations of materials were encouraged while labor was to be furnished by volunteers or future occupants of the houses. In addition, the Department of Public Health and Welfare was to provide funds to subsidize the construction of temporary housing in all provinces with substantial numbers of homeless persons. In the case of South Kyöngsang Province, an initial grant of over 7.56 million won was made to provide for the construction of 275 blocks of ten houses, which could accommodate up to 5,500 families.<sup>64</sup> This proposed plan, however, was apparently insufficient, as another emergency refugee housing plan had to be set up in September 1947, followed by a separate welfare housing plan for refugee families in 1948.

Various petitions requesting assistance from US occupation authorities, many of which were written in English, reveal the multitude of challenges faced by many Korean repatriates. One such petition, addressed to the American military governor of South Gyeongsang Province and signed by Seo Yeongdae, is significant for several reasons: First, it was written sixteen months after liberation, illustrating the miserable living conditions that continued to trouble many repatriates from Japan in the province. Second, Seo was the chief of the Busan liaison office of the League of Koreans in Japan, which had been in operation since late November 1945. As such, he was in a position to best evaluate USAMGIK's resettlement program for repatriates from Japan. His petition began by explaining that many Koreans returned to their motherland with heartfelt gratitude to the Allied forces for liberating Korea, but inadequate social services turned them into refugees:

[T]hey have had to wander about the streets, because they couldn't get any houses to live in, and they have had to starve to death, because they couldn't get any job[s] to support their living. Moreover, in such circumstances they couldn't help being pessimistic and degenerated instead of [feeling] hope and passion to rebuild their motherland.

Most troubling, Seo continued, the hardships faced by returnees were leading to serious social problems, including the "dispersion of a family, suicide, disorder of social morality [*sic*] and so forth." With urgency in his tone, his petition warned of the approaching cold winter and of the dire need for better assistance in order to settle the refugee problem as soon as possible.<sup>65</sup>

South Gyeongsang Province was not the only province that faced mounting difficulties meeting the basic needs of incoming returnees from Japan. E. Grant

Meade, a civil affairs officer in South Jeolla Province, describes how repatriation was consistently the most serious problem faced by USAMGIK's Department of Public Health and Welfare. Meade notes that the sudden influx of large numbers of Korean returnees to the province, with its high population density, had a decided effect upon welfare matters, not to mention a negative effect upon the strained provincial economy. On the other hand, he also notes that the Jeolla residents, at least, "displayed consideration rather than resentment over the arrival of their compatriots." Provincial leaders organized a central relief organization with a chapter in every locality, which attempted to provide housing, clothing, and employment for returnees, among other services. For example, when USAMGIK estimated that over 9,000 dwellings were needed in South Jeolla Province, at a cost of more than 12 million won, for its emergency housing plan, residents contributed over 40 percent of the amount by November 1946. Meade admits that the provincial military government had greater difficulty providing employment, since South Jeolla Province's agricultural market was ill-suited for a majority of the repatriates from Japan, who were industrial workers.<sup>66</sup>

Unemployment plagued southern Korea's transition economy from Japanese colonial rule to US military rule, affecting a disproportionately large number of repatriates. The Korean economy virtually collapsed with the termination of wartime mobilization and the simultaneous division of the peninsula into the industrial sector with natural resources in the north and the agricultural sector in the southern part. The economic stagnation in southern Korea resulting from the lack of industrial output contributed to a chronic unemployment problem, which worsened with the influx of an estimated 2.5 million overseas repatriates, as well as refugees from northern Korea. Among the total number of unemployed in southern Korea through November 1946, close to 58 percent were repatriates and refugees, and the figure was as high as 72 percent in South Gyeongsang Province.<sup>67</sup> An earlier survey in that province showed that approximately 300,000 people were unemployed, most of whom had returned from Japan, and were being furnished food, shelter, and clothing. In order to take these people off welfare relief, the provincial military government requested funds from USAMGIK to institute large public works programs, including road repair, bridge construction, irrigation projects, and new housing.<sup>68</sup> While USAMGIK also encouraged repatriates to move back to the countryside to rejoin the agricultural sector, many of them refused, due to the lack of economic incentive.

The problems of housing shortages and unemployment was compounded by the poverty of repatriates, driving many to turn to the burgeoning black markets in southern Korea for support. This problem was a direct consequence of SCAP's customs regulations, which prohibited repatriates from taking more than ¥1,000 in

currency, in order to combat rampant postwar inflation. Grant Meade and William Gane were not the only military government officers who observed that these regulations essentially made repatriates into welfare cases. As early as December 1945, Colonel Francis Gillette reported that the financial aspects of the refugee problem were continually becoming more severe. Since Korean returnees were allowed to exchange only ¥1,000 into Korean currency, Gillette observed that many of them found ways to smuggle in surplus amounts to exchange with “black market financiers at a great discount.” However, the high prices resulting from inflation and scarcity of materials meant that this amount of money was insufficient to enable returnees to subsist for more than a few days. Lacking the means of supporting themselves, “many of these refugees make recourse to some illegal means of supporting themselves,” resulting in a sharp increase in crime.<sup>69</sup> Many more returnees moved into black market districts in large cities like Busan, where they could live and work, while other starving repatriates resorted to stealing in order to survive.<sup>70</sup> The black market trade in Busan quickly became a thriving business, which extended its network by interactions with black markets run by Korean residents in Japan.

News of the poor, unstable living conditions in southern Korea spread among the Korean communities throughout Japan, discouraging many from repatriating to their homeland. In some cases, those who repatriated wrote to their relatives and friends in Japan, advising them against returning until conditions improved. Some were frustrated or disillusioned by the political turmoil on the divided peninsula, while others despaired of surviving amid economic stagnation. All had repatriated from Japan in the hopes of starting a new life, but without a sound resettlement program in place, most became part of a new underclass in US-occupied Korea. In order to escape from such a disadvantaged position in society, many had no choice but to seek assistance from welfare organizations, including those operated by the CPKI and People’s Committees. Other, more literal means of escaping were available to those who had made their livelihood in Japan for varying lengths of time, as well as those with close contacts there, who decided to return to Japan by whatever means they could. Such unauthorized migrations and smuggling operations, in turn, would drive USAMGIK to develop border controls in southern Korea.

### **Refugees on an Off-Limits Island**

Eager to contribute towards rebuilding their war-torn island, Okinawan returnees from Japan, such as the intellectual activist Miyazato Eiki, celebrated the moment of their long-awaited repatriation. Even as he expressed this exuberant

sentiment in poetic terms, Miyazato cautioned against any expectations of resuming life as it had been before the war. Instead, he argued, the new way of life was likely to demand personal humility combined with communal dedication towards the postwar reconstruction effort.<sup>71</sup>

Much like their Korean counterparts, Okinawan repatriates who hoped to reintegrate into society encountered formidable socio-economic challenges. This troubled process of reintegration in their divided and occupied home islands also revealed numerous shortcomings of USMGR, some of which resembled US-AMGIK's negligent policies. Worse still, these problems were further aggravated by strict constraints against physical mobility that had remained in place since the war, as the requisition of land for vast US military bases rendered large sections of the island off limits to Okinawans. Unlike in postliberation Korea, returnees from mainland Japan to the postwar Ryukyus did not form a distinctive underclass, as preexisting social structures had been completely leveled by the devastating war. Instead, repatriates and non-repatriates alike became displaced refugees in their home island.

While SCAP took for granted that all repatriates could be matched to a given hometown or village with a specific address, this basic assumption was disproved in the case of Okinawa, where entire districts had been wiped off of the map by the widespread requisitioning of land for US military bases. When the resettlement of repatriates from Japan began in August 1946, USMGR stipulated that they were to be housed with relatives or friends who could be identified in Okinawa. However, numerous repatriates returned to their homes only to discover that they were the sole surviving members of their household, and therefore had to be housed in tents or other temporary shelters. So-called Class "C" tents—pyramidal tripods supported by poles and pegs—were supplied for their shelter.

In his case, Miyazato Eiki spent several days at the reception camp in Innumi before being relocated three times to nearby camps. Only then did he arrive back to his home village in Mawashi. In each place, he lived out of tents for about a half year. Miyazato recalled, matter-of-factly, that he and his fellow villagers then set up tents once again, this time on their respective lots, while rebuilding their houses, which had been reduced to ashes by the war.<sup>72</sup>

American authorities did order the construction of housing for repatriates in preparation for their resettlement. Between July and December 1946, a total of 17,676 standardized prefabs and localized houses were built.<sup>73</sup> Kuwae Chōkō was among the more fortunate repatriates, who managed to move into such temporary shelters. Upon arriving at his home village of Goeku, later to be renamed Koza, Kuwae could hardly recognize his surroundings, as rows of tents lined a new street that paved over an area where rice paddies used to provide food for

local villagers. Kuwae's good fortune of avoiding tent life was due to his father, who was hired by the Civil Administration to build prefabricated housing all around central Okinawa, including the one he secured for his son's family of three.<sup>74</sup>

The fact that repatriates like Miyazato had to be relocated several times, often living in camps for months before reaching their home villages, reflects how unprepared USMGR was for the task of resettlement. The Ryukyus Command (RYCOM) had spelled out only that if a given village had been opened for resettlement, repatriates were to be sent there immediately; otherwise, they were to be sent to the nearest available village.<sup>75</sup> This provision captures the reality in Okinawa, where much of the land was still occupied by the US military and thus off limits to the residents. Shortly after the US forces first landed on Okinawa in April 1945, the US Army had cleared the entire central and southern part of Okinawa and had begun building military bases in preparation for the impending invasion of Japan. USMGR later observed that the wholesale destruction of buildings in Okinawa was actually speeded up by initial plans for the development of US bases. In clearing areas for roads and military installations, bulldozers "literally ran through rows of [Okinawan] houses, wrecking in a few minutes the work of many years."<sup>76</sup> Although the Japanese surrender precluded an invasion of mainland Japan, rendering these bases unnecessary, the US military did not relinquish the bases while the American mission in postwar Okinawa remained undetermined. The resettlement of repatriates thus commenced haphazardly. Repatriates were sent to villages as they became available, following the multiple and uneven relocations of local residents into refugee camps during and after the Battle of Okinawa.

Land was rare and prized in postwar Okinawa. The reintegration of over 104,000 repatriates in the latter half of 1946 resulted in overpopulation,<sup>77</sup> forcing all islanders to crowd together and live with each other in close proximity. In fact, the influx of such vast numbers of repatriates sometimes led them into conflict with local residents, especially over the contentious issue of landownership. When resettlement commenced in Okinawa, USMGR authorized elected village heads to redistribute residential and agricultural land in areas where residents were permitted to return. Kuwae Chōkō observed that village assemblies debated the issue on numerous occasions, but were unable to reach a consensus on how to administer an equitable land redistribution program. In the meantime, local farmers faced incessant demands to lease their farmland and rice fields, especially in the northern and central parts of Okinawa, to which repatriates from Japan and from overseas had been resettled. According to Kuwae, the problem was further exacerbated by a discrepancy in the variety of rationed goods that USMGR supplied to agricultural and nonagricultural households. Farmers were encouraged to grow sweet potatoes, rice, and other agricultural products that they could sell to

designated shops, making them even more reluctant to part with their land.<sup>78</sup> The continuation of repatriation and resettlement thus squeezed the livelihoods of Okinawans suffering from overpopulation.

USMGR assumed the enormous responsibility of providing for the material needs of residents throughout the Ryukyu Islands, including an increasing proportion of repatriates. Food shortage emerged as an acute problem on Okinawa, where the bombardment of heavy artillery had reduced agricultural and fishing production to a bare minimum. Commercial livestock such as hogs, chickens, and goats, which constituted an integral part of the Okinawan diet, had also been mostly slaughtered. Such total devastation left Okinawan residents in refugee camps completely dependent upon the US military for food, not to mention clothing and other essential living supplies. In July 1945, USMGR was feeding an average of 295,000 Okinawans every day, and by September 75 percent of the food supplied was covered by rations. USMGR was unable to meet the growing demand for imported rations, leading to a reduction in the rations allotted to each individual.<sup>79</sup> Hungry Okinawans rummaged through cans of leftover food near US military bases, watering down the collected contents to eat as soup. Desperate to supplement their food with cooking oils and fats, some Okinawans were even known to have used automobile oil to deep fry what was commonly referred to by locals as “Mobil tempura.”<sup>80</sup>

Okinawans continued to rely on rations even after they were resettled in their hometowns and villages, although many were also forced to live off the burgeoning black markets that began to mushroom throughout the Ryukyu Islands. USMGR had set up local rationing boards in every community to receive agricultural products for redistribution on the basis of need. By early 1946, however, the communally grown food and supplemental goods were no longer rationed for free but began to be sold as a part of postwar Okinawa’s transition back to a money economy.

In May, USMGR introduced a new monetary system, exchanging Japanese yen currency still in circulation for the equivalent amount in Type “B” yen, a form of occupation scrip printed by the US military.<sup>81</sup> But this controlled economy did little to prevent a virtual state of bankruptcy from unfolding in the face of the growing black market trade. Stolen rations and supplies from US military depots that flowed into the black markets were bartered or sold for commodities smuggled into Okinawa to compensate for the shortage of sundries. A “double currency” subsequently emerged, with a discrepancy between the official price and the black market price, resulting in rampant inflation that plagued the Ryukyuan economy. Okinawan repatriates from Japan were accustomed to living off a combination of rationed supplies and black market goods, and thus quickly adapted to local conditions.

While repatriates and local residents were driven to the black markets to make up for dire material shortages in the US-occupied Ryukyus, their smuggling



operations revealed the internal borders that separated Okinawa from the other island groups. After military government teams from Okinawa assumed control of the southwestern Miyako and Yaeyama Islands in December 1945 and the northeastern Amami Islands in March 1946, local governing bodies were formed in each of the island groups.<sup>82</sup> USMGR in Okinawa thus divided the Ryukyu Islands geographically and politically into four provisional governments: one in the Northern Ryukyus (Amami Islands), one in Okinawa, and two in the Southern Ryukyus (Miyako and Yaeyama Islands).<sup>83</sup> Under close guidance by USMGR, these four separate island districts established autonomous political and economic structures. Furthermore, in an archipelago noted for its diversity of distinctive languages and cultures, the occupation divisions reinforced a strong sense of island identities. Such awareness of distinctive identities was particularly pronounced in differentiating between islanders from Okinawa and Amami, which had been under separate prefectural administrations under Japanese rule. The four island groups that the Americans collectively referred to as the Ryukyus were thus marked by multiple lines of division, separated from one another.<sup>84</sup>

As a result of the administrated boundaries created by the American occupiers, residents as well as repatriates in the Ryukyus found themselves cut off from long-established networks of mobility and exchange. The political and economic isolation was compounded by their social isolation ensuing from the stringent travel restrictions that were imposed—first in Okinawa, then later in the other island groups. Ever since the Tenth Army began herding local residents into refugee camps during the Battle of Okinawa, population movements remained tightly controlled. In the face of US military bases with ubiquitous barbed-wire fences and warning signs with large letters that read “OFF LIMITS,” the number of Okinawans authorized to cross military government districts was limited to a minimum. Local residents traveling to a neighboring district without permission from the police were subject to arrest for trespassing.<sup>85</sup> Even when this permission was granted, they had to register and carry with them special transportation passes, thus enabling USMGR to closely monitor their movements. Okinawa had, in effect, become an island off limits to its own inhabitants.<sup>86</sup>

Under US military rule, strict controls over population movements were extended to the other island groups of the Ryukyus, regardless of the fact that they had experienced neither a ground invasion nor forced seizures of land for use as military bases. As a result, residents of the Amami Islands, hitherto part of Kagoshima Prefecture, were shocked to learn that the administrative separation from Japan was to be accompanied by rigid travel restrictions. On February 4, 1946, two days after incorporating the island group into the Ryukyus, USMGR ordered that all forms of interaction between Amami and mainland Japan be terminated.

This sweeping directive demanded that (1) unrestricted travel between Japan and Amami would no longer be permitted, (2) people who desired to travel between Japan and Amami would be limited to those intending to establish permanent domicile in either place, and (3) those granted permission to travel had to follow provisions set up for the planned repatriation program.<sup>87</sup> Amami was now part of the Ryukyus, but analogous restrictions also prevented free interactions with the island groups of Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama.<sup>88</sup>

Such stringent travel restrictions not only hampered resettlement in the US-occupied Ryukyus, but also embittered many island residents who were constantly reminded of the stark reality of direct military rule. For repatriates like Kuwae Chōkō, who were initially unaware of USMGR's tight control over population movements, the sense of disillusionment was even more pronounced. Kuwae's first encounter with the restrictive boundaries of US military rule came when he attempted to visit the *mūtu*, or main branch of the Kuwae family, which had relocated to Ishikawa after the war. An Okinawan policeman stopped Kuwae as he approached the entrance to the district of Ishikawa in the early evening, questioning him on the purpose of his visit, then curtly demanded that he produce his transportation pass for inspection. Bewildered, Kuwae explained how he had just repatriated three weeks ago, hoped to burn incense for his ancestors, and that he knew nothing about such transport passes. His growing anxiety was exacerbated when he was forced to wait over an hour in a dark room of the police station while the policeman made inquiries into his family background, as Kuwae pondered his recent wartime experiences in the imperial Japanese Army:

Suddenly I was reminded of the Zhongshan district in southern China. [There] we did not permit anyone to pass through villages who was not wearing their "certificate of good citizenship" [*ryōminshō*] armbands. It is just the same here. Is this American democracy? In Tokyo it was reported that democratic politics was being introduced to Okinawa under occupation, and that the bright hope of life was returning to residents. And yet I cannot even move around freely in my homeland.<sup>89</sup>

Eventually, Kuwae was released from the police station when his older brother came to pick him up. Only then did he learn that residents were free to move about during the day, but at night were required to wear armbands serving as transport passes when entering other districts. Kuwae was left feeling incensed that US military rule in Okinawa proved to be not unlike Japanese-occupied China in this regard.

The strict limitations on population movements that remained in Okinawa ultimately reflected the extent of devastation on the island, the protracted uncertainty of the US mission, and the corresponding lack of resources needed to clear away the rubble for resettlement. Hampered by the combination of these factors that delayed the postwar recovery and rehabilitation effort, military government officers were slow to respond to the will of Okinawans who wanted nothing more than to return to their former residences. Once the resettlement of refugees and repatriates was largely accomplished, USMGR in March 1947 lifted the restrictions on the free movement of residents in Okinawa. By this time, with the Tenth Army employing large numbers of Okinawans on the US military payroll, the travel restrictions proved impractical since so many residents had to commute to work from one district to another. At the same time, new employment opportunities in Okinawa attracted residents from other island groups in the Ryukyus. Barely able to keep pace with the growing demand for jobs created by the large numbers of repatriates, USMGR in Okinawa imposed new travel restrictions limiting the movement of people between the major island groups. Okinawa thus once again became “off limits,” this time to residents of Yaeyama, Miyako, and Amami Islands, though this did not prevent those who were determined to smuggle themselves into neighboring Okinawa.

### **The Making of South Korean Migration Laws**

The compulsion of American authorities to regulate repatriation and resettlement, even while restricting other forms of population movement, was not unique to the US-occupied Ryukyus; in fact, it was even more pronounced in southern Korea, where the occupiers viewed borders and border controls as vital components of their nation-building mission. The 38th parallel border that divided the Korean peninsula was an obstacle to this mission, and American authorities tried in vain to reach a diplomatic solution with their Soviet counterparts to unify the two zones of occupation. When these negotiations failed to bear fruit, USAMGIK embarked upon a path towards creating a separate state: in October 1946, it held elections for the formation of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly, and in February 1947, it established the South Korean Interim Government. Such independent acts of nation-building demonstrated how Cold War concerns predominated over the initial American policy of eliminating Japanese colonial rule in Korea.

During the first few years after liberation, Korean repatriates from Japan and Manchuria, together with refugees from northern Korea, were the main objects of USAMGIK’s migratory regulations along the borders of occupation. Over time,

occupation forces became more concerned with the enforcement of these regulations than with ensuring the integration of refugees and the reintegration of repatriates into southern Korea. The large-scale inflow of Koreans and the border control mechanisms set up to deal with them served as the basis for the first migration law of the emergent South Korean state. The outbound repatriation of Japanese, including those who entered Korea from Manchuria, also figured into the enactment of this migration law. Another salient feature of this law was a set of regulations against illegal migration, which slowly replaced repatriation as the primary target of border controls. USAMGIK officials drove this process of shaping a migration regime in occupied Korea, even before similar regimes were established in the US-occupied Ryukyus and Japan.

Legislating regulations for the movement of people along external borders also meant redefining internal boundaries of citizenship, as USAMGIK officials helped establish the South Korean state's first nationality laws. Here too, the occupiers' concerted efforts to control the movement of repatriates, refugees, and illegal migrants greatly impacted the promulgation of nationality laws. In the context of the heightening Cold War, the South Korean migration and nationality laws reflected the American-led effort to create a strong national security state that could exert maximum control over its borders and border crossers, as well as its citizens, and, by extension, reflected the extent of American hegemonic authority over the southern half of the divided peninsula.

Shortly after their deployment on the Korean peninsula, US occupation forces quickly recognized the need to establish border controls when they encountered what was described as a rampant problem of "illegal shipping" in the movement of people between Korea and Japan. Illegal shipping was defined as "any shipping moving to or from Korea south of the 38th parallel other than American shipping," and any other ships authorized by the headquarters of the US Armed Forces in Korea (USAFIK).<sup>90</sup> This meant that the numerous private vessels ferrying repatriates were deemed to be engaged in illegal shipping, a viewpoint that was shared by SCAP. As early as November 9, 1945, USAMGIK's Office of Foreign Affairs issued a memorandum stating that those who wished to travel into or out of Korea required its explicit permission, responding to parallel measures SCAP had adopted in Japan. The US Navy had initially considered the possibility of using small sailing ships to assist the mass repatriation program, but ultimately decided against it, due to the difficulty in identifying and controlling such ships.<sup>91</sup> In other words, the Navy's preoccupation with the enforcement of border controls superseded the need for speedy repatriation.

USAFIK implemented its earliest border controls in postliberation Korea along the southeastern coastline across from Japan, though these measures

quickly proved to be limited in effectiveness. For example, US Navy destroyers flashed their lights across Busan harbor at night, aiming to deter the increasing volume in illegal shipping, but such a measure was insufficient in itself to prevent small vessels shielded by nighttime darkness. Other units also initiated an off-shore patrol and seized some vessels and property, along with a number of individuals who were later prosecuted and sentenced to prison.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, American officers sought to enlist local organizations for assistance in administering joint patrols, without realizing that most Koreans at the time saw no real incentive to disrupt the flows of goods and people into the peninsula. When the Central Committee of Korean Relief Societies was formed in late September 1945, USAMGIK officials met with the leadership of the Committee to discuss concrete measures for helping the US military prevent illegal shipping.<sup>93</sup> However, since some of these relief societies were already using their own ships to repatriate Koreans from Japan, USAMGIK encountered difficulty controlling their independent activities. This was also true of the Japanese counterpart in Korea, the Sewakai, which the 40th Infantry Division in Busan reported was the “central agency responsible for the organization and coordination of [this] illegal traffic.”<sup>94</sup> But USAFIK was wary of cracking down on the Sewakai, since its assistance in repatriating Japanese was considered to be an invaluable service to USAMGIK.

The first migratory regulations issued in southern Korea after liberation were aimed at containing illegal shipping, thereby reinforcing USAMGIK’s official efforts at repatriation and resettlement. On February 19, 1946, General Archer L. Lerch, the military governor in Korea, issued Ordinance 49, which aimed at controlling and recording movements of people in the US zone of occupation. This ordinance required all persons, except those in the US military or those subject to the mass repatriation program, to secure a “letter of identity” when traveling into or out of southern Korea. Koreans desiring to leave the country had to apply for these official letters through a local commander of the military government team, who would forward the application to USAMGIK’s Office of Foreign Affairs. The applicants were required to provide legitimate reasons for the trip, itinerary, and addresses in the foreign countries they wished to visit. Their identity was to be verified with official birth certificates and photographs. Similar provisions were also made for anyone who wished to enter Korea, except that a representative of the Office of Foreign Affairs would carefully look through their passports.<sup>95</sup> Henceforth, US occupation forces could check for passports and letters of identity whenever questioning those suspected of illegal shipping.

Since these migratory regulations were primarily aimed at suppressing illegal migration, the USAFIK was initially uncertain whether they applied to Koreans

crossing the 38th parallel border. The suggestion that Koreans traveling into the southern half of their homeland might be treated as illegal immigrants was deemed controversial, and risked violating USAMGIK's goal of establishing a unified nation-state on the Korean peninsula. On the other hand, the unauthorized and unregulated inflow of Koreans into the southern zone of occupation was clearly taxing the capacity of USAFIK to provide for these refugees.

After months of speculation, the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) finally requested a clarification of Ordinance 49, as it became increasingly concerned with reports of communist infiltration from northern Korea. In response, in January 1947, USAMGIK's Department of Justice prepared a legal opinion on the matter. After stipulating that the ordinance referred exclusively to territory occupied by the US Armed Forces in southern Korea, the Department of Justice explained that no agreement had been reached with the regime in northern Korea concerning migration controls. In fact, USAMGIK's initial proposals to implement joint travel regulations had been rebuffed by Soviet occupation authorities, which hardened American attitudes. Emphasizing the importance of exercising efficient control over all forms of migration, the legal opinion of the Department of Justice stated that Ordinance 49 did not exempt persons moving from northern Korea to southern Korea or vice versa.<sup>96</sup> As a result, the CIC received the green light it had been seeking to crack down on illegal entry from northern Korea.

By this time, USAMGIK had come to view border controls as a vital component of its broader efforts to create a national security state in southern Korea. Months after building a coalition of conservative Korean leaders centered around Yi Seungman (Syngman Rhee), who returned from exile in October 1945, General Hodge continued to struggle against leftist Koreans who were supported by the People's Committees. In February 1946, USAMGIK issued an ordinance that mandated the registration of all political parties, thus placing unregistered organizations under public surveillance, and threatened to dissolve them for any breaches of registration procedures.<sup>97</sup> American authorities used this ordinance in May to investigate the Korean Communist Party (KCP), arresting some of its leaders, and in September, issued warrants to arrest Pak Heonyeong (Pak Hon-yong), KCP's top leader at the time. In August 1947, as soon as the US government adopted the policy of creating a separate, conservative regime in southern Korea, USAMGIK began expelling all leftist groups from the state apparatus. In order to further strengthen the anti-communist, national security state after the departure of American occupation forces, USAMGIK also started to reinforce the Korean constabulary and police.<sup>98</sup>

USAMGIK's migratory regulations were revised just before the American occupation of Korea was about to end, long after concern over illegal shipping



across the Japanese border was replaced by communist infiltration across the 38th parallel. On July 30, 1948, USAMGIK issued one of its last ordinances, in order to establish controls over persons entering or leaving the territorial boundaries of the Republic of Korea (ROK), which was to be founded two weeks later. The main revisions in this ordinance pertained to the imminent transfer of authority in the enforcement of migratory regulations from American to Korean agencies. For example, USAMGIK's Customs Bureau and the Office of Foreign Affairs prepared the ROK's counterpart agencies to take over border control measures. In addition, the home affairs bureaus of provincial and municipal governments were assigned as official agents for disseminating information, collecting fees, and forwarding applications and requests to the central government. In a separate section, the ordinance detailed penalties to be meted out to those who violated these regulations: Upon conviction, an individual could be punished by an appropriate fine between 5,000 and 100,000 won, imprisonment or penal servitude between thirty days and three years, or both; punishment for non-Korean aliens could also include deportation.<sup>99</sup> The treatment of illegal entrants from northern Korea was not mentioned, reflecting the unresolved, sensitive question of whether the 38th parallel constituted a national border or not. Just over a year later, this ordinance served as the basis for the ROK's first migration law, legislated in November 1949 and enacted by presidential order in March 1950.

Closely related to the migratory regulations that established Korean letters of identity was another pressing issue: the legal status of Koreans in their liberated but divided homeland. USAMGIK's legal experts recognized that, according to international law, Koreans were technically still recognized as Japanese nationals until a sovereign Korean nation was formally established. Meanwhile, the imperial Japanese government's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, followed by the colonial governor-general's handover of power to the American military governor, effectively terminated Japanese sovereignty over Korea. For practical purposes, USAMGIK decided not to treat Koreans as Japanese nationals, at least for the duration of the occupation period. As William Gane noted, however, the Displaced Persons Division often had difficulty clearly distinguishing Koreans from Japanese, even as it attempted to orchestrate an orderly repatriation for each group.<sup>100</sup>

In order to determine who was eligible for the privilege of repatriation and the right of domicile in Korea, on January 10, 1946, the Office of Foreign Affairs drafted a staff memorandum on the administrative determination of Korean status. According to this memorandum, all persons of Korean parentage, except those who had voluntarily adopted Japanese citizenship, were defined as Korean. This stipulation guaranteed Korean status to repatriates like Hong Yeopyo, who followed his parents to metropolitan Japan, not to mention Koreans who were born

and raised abroad. On the other hand, Koreans who had renounced their colonial status in favor of full Japanese citizenship by transferring their family registers—a legal practice known as *tenseki* in Japanese—were no longer considered Korean. The memorandum also stipulated that foreign women married to Korean men, as well as their children, who desired Korean status could be recognized as such. In addition, non-Japanese persons born in Korea of foreign parentage who desired Korean status could also be defined as Korean.<sup>101</sup>

Korean status as defined in this memorandum was used to determine not only the right of domicile in Korea and eligibility for repatriation of Koreans abroad, but also the liability for deportation of “non-Koreans.” Specifically, three categories of non-Koreans were made subject to deportation: (1) all Japanese except by special dispensation of the Military Governor; (2) all Koreans who renounced their status in favor of Japanese citizenship, unless the renunciation was made under duress; and (3) Axis nationals. In other words, the memorandum implied that Japanese migrants, as well as *tenseki* Koreans who had entered Japanese family registries, were no longer permitted to remain in postliberation Korea. At this time, close to 28,000 Japanese still resided in southern Korea, including 1,300 who did not wish to be repatriated. Since many Koreans at the time faced food shortages while these remaining Japanese were draining the available food supply, General Lerch finally decided that they should be forcibly deported. On March 8, 1946, all Japanese except those classified as essential to USAMGIK were ordered to leave. While most of the Japanese were deported shortly thereafter, special permits were designed to ensure that a small minority who remained had the right of domicile in Korea.<sup>102</sup> If many Korean repatriates from Japan formed an underclass in US-occupied Korea, then American military policy virtually erased the former colonial upper class of Japanese migrants.

USAMGIK’s memorandum on the administrative determination of Korean status served as the basis for the South Korean Interim Government’s (SKIG) rules on Korean nationality. In May 1948, the same month that elections were held to establish a Constitutional Assembly in southern Korea, SKIG enacted more comprehensive rules on nationality that conformed to international norms. SKIG’s provisional rules on nationality stipulated: “Any person who obtained foreign nationality or was entered in a Japanese family register and has waived such nationality or cancelled such family registry . . . shall be deemed to be restored to their Korean nationality.”<sup>103</sup> In other words, this stipulation promised Koreans—including those who reentered Korean family registries—that they would recover their Korean nationality, which had been stripped under Japanese colonial rule. Furthermore, the provisional rules defined a Korean national as a person whose father was a Korean, or *Joseonin* in Korean, at the time of his or her birth. While

other criteria were also stipulated for defining Korean nationality, noticeably absent was the earlier designation that those who had chosen to renounce Korean nationality in favor of Japanese nationality were no longer to be considered Korean.<sup>104</sup> Such a clause apparently did not conform to international norms on nationality regulations, as the common identification of belonging to the new Korean nation superseded personal decisions that were made during the colonial era.

The Nationality Law promulgated by the new South Korean government in December 1948 inherited the same clause on birthright citizenship as the provisional rules on nationality, except that the name Republic of Korea (*Daehan minguk*) replaced the more generic Korea (*Joseon*). While this law was consistent with the South Korean state's efforts to legitimize the name of its newly established regime, the consequences of the name change proved problematic. According to the Nationality Law, all persons were considered nationals of the Republic of Korea as long as their father was a national of the Republic when he or she was born. But how could one become a national of the ROK if he or she was born before the Republic was founded on August 15, 1948?<sup>105</sup> This was a particularly vexing problem for Koreans who were scattered across various parts of the former Japanese Empire. For example, Korean residents in Japan, many of whom supported the North Korean regime, technically remained Japanese nationals by law until the end of Allied occupation in April 1952. Korean residents in China, on the other hand, became Chinese nationals with the founding of the People's Republic in October 1949. No matter what the Nationality Law claimed, therefore, these overseas Koreans were excluded from the legal boundaries of South Korean citizenship.

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 raised the serious issue of how to distinguish between Korean citizens of the two competing regimes on the peninsula. Under chaotic wartime conditions, the ROK government began issuing citizenship certificates. Even after the cessation of this civil conflict, these new documents of national identification continued to serve as an important measure of the ROK regime's strict state surveillance over individual citizens. In turn, this national security state continued to be aided and abetted by the presence of US military forces in South Korea in a joint effort to maximize control over Korean citizens and border crossers throughout the Cold War period.

## Conclusion

Resettlement and reintegration into postcolonial Korean society most often turned out to be a painful homecoming experience, hardly characteristic of liberation and independence, contrary to the expectations of many Korean repatriates from Japan. Like their outbound Japanese counterparts, the majority of Korean returnees

arrived with only what they could carry on their backs and the equivalent of ¥1,000 in cash, making many of them welfare recipients who formed a new underclass in their homeland. Unlike occupied Japan, however, occupied Korea was divided in half, and the southern part of the peninsula was under direct US military rule. This might have suggested that USAMGIK take a more direct approach towards—and thereby become more closely involved in—addressing as outstanding a socio-economic issue as the resettlement of several million Korean repatriates from Japan, Manchuria, and elsewhere. Instead, US military rule came to focus on building a separate national security state in southern Korea, complete with new migration and nationality laws that reflected American concerns over the containment of communism above everything else. As a result, USAMGIK all too often overlooked the pressing need for resettling increasing numbers of refugees and repatriates, thus contributing to the worsening social, economic, and political instability in southern Korea.

The wide range of challenges that Okinawan repatriates from Japan faced as they reintegrated into Ryukyuan society is comparable to the difficulties experienced by Korean repatriates in several important respects. First, the sudden deluge of repatriates severely taxed the Ryukyuan economy already crippled by warfare and occupation, reducing most repatriates into welfare cases, not unlike in occupied southern Korea. In battle-torn Okinawa, especially, destitute repatriates competed with local war refugees for food rations, temporary housing, and the low-wage labor market. Second, just as the Korean peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel, Okinawa was administratively divided from the other island groups within the Ryukyus, at least until the establishment of a unified Ryukyus government in 1952. These internal borders of division resulted in the economic and social isolation of repatriates and local residents alike, leading to rampant smuggling in the Ryukyus and beyond. Furthermore, like their Korean counterparts, Okinawan repatriates encountered direct US military rule in their homeland, where celebrated American political commodities such as freedom and democracy were hard to come by. Instead, military rule in the US-occupied Ryukyus meant strict control over population movements, limited political reforms, and the denial of democratic self-government. To escape from such stifling conditions, increasing numbers of Ryukyuan as well as Koreans began using migrant smuggling networks that took them to Japan, thus opening up a new yet interlinked front in the prolonged process of resettling US-occupied Northeast Asia.

## *Smuggling as Resistance to US Military Rule*

When thirty-five years of Japanese colonial rule in Korea finally came to an end, few Koreans imagined the possibility of compatriots voluntarily departing their newly liberated homeland to head for the former imperial metropole in Japan. Yet that is precisely what happened, as the initial, inconspicuous number of small boats crossing over the Korea Strait soon gave way to a steady and increasing traffic. These waves of Korean men and women making their way towards postimperial Japan preceded other postcolonial migrations, including Indians to the United Kingdom, Indonesians to Holland, and Algerians to France from the late 1940s through the early 1960s.

The unexpected flow of Koreans entering occupied Japan inverted what SCAP called “unauthorized repatriation,” while further extending the trafficking networks that transcended the two zones of American occupations. Hong Yeopyo and his family were among the half million Koreans who departed Japan as part of this unauthorized repatriation. All relied on migrant smuggling operators who took them back to various parts of their liberated homeland. Despite the dual challenges of keeping up with farming while learning to read Korean, Hong grew fond of his new way of life in Jeju Island, where his parents were from. However, when the brewing civil turmoil in Jeju turned violent, he left behind his beloved family and boarded a small smuggling ship that took him back to Japan.<sup>1</sup> Hong became one of many refugees from the Jeju rebellion in 1948,<sup>2</sup> followed by many others who escaped to Japan after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

The first Okinawans to enter postwar Japan were not refugees, but so-called smugglers who, like their Korean counterparts, defied the administrative division and economic isolation of the Ryukyu Islands under US military rule. Those who braved the long, perilous journey from the Ryukyus aboard small and inconspicuous fishing boats were recent repatriates, former residents, or migrant workers intimately familiar with Japan. In addition to securing the material resources necessary for the voyage, they were dependent upon close kinship ties with Okinawan communities in Japanese cities, many of which had been engaged in the black market business since the end of the war. Among them was Arakaki Seiichi,

who had made a profit butchering horsemeat and selling it as beef on the black market in Osaka. When Arakaki then joined his family in the city of Kumamoto, he quickly became involved in selling pilfered US military goods from Okinawa. Drawn to the bold and successful smuggling operations, not to mention the large profits involved, Arakaki repatriated to his native Okinawa, where he promptly joined the local black market network.<sup>3</sup> Participating in these underground economic networks in both Okinawa and Japan, repatriates like Arakaki contributed to the expanding cross-border movement of goods and people during this period of early postwar isolation.

Comparing the experiences of repatriates from Japan to southern Korea and the Ryukyu Islands—such as Hong, Arakaki, and many others like them—demonstrates both commonalities and differences in their reasons for heading back to Japan. The troubled process of postwar resettlement, as detailed in the previous chapter, was a primary factor that became closely linked to the expanding black markets and smuggling trade throughout the region. The first wave of repatriates who boarded migrant smuggling ships heading for Japan utilized these underground networks to escape the poverty, unemployment, and homelessness that awaited many of them in Korea and the Ryukyus.

Over time, these networks served not only economic refugees but also political activists who sought to establish transborder alliances with their counterparts in Japan. Increasing numbers of Korean and Okinawan repatriates joined local forces who demanded democratic reforms, having witnessed or heard of SCAP's sweeping democratization of Japan. In contrast to the progressive reforms that characterized the early years of occupied Japan, the growing resistance to direct US military rule in Korea and the Ryukyus motivated others to seek safety and stability in Japan. To understand this phenomenon as a critical part of the ongoing process of resettlement in the wake of war and empire, we must consider both the “push” and “pull” factors that drove these new waves of unauthorized migration. Examining this process in comparative and transregional context also reveals how these migrants, intentionally or not, posed a direct challenge to the authority of American military occupations in Northeast Asia.

### **Black Market Expansion in Northeast Asia**

Ever since the Tokugawa shogunate decided to “open the country” (*kaikoku*) in the mid-nineteenth century, various groups of migrants had traveled to and from Japan in increasing numbers, subject to modern laws and institutions that regulated their mobility. A succession of migrant communities sprang up across urban centers in Japan, beginning with the foreign concessions and eventually



encompassing ghettos inhabited by seasonal and colonial laborers. The latter were supported by the continuous circular movement of people who crossed the invisible administrative boundary between the Japanese nation and its empire. The Korean community in imperial Japan, like their Japanese counterparts in colonial Korea, lived between two societies in what one scholar has described as a “transborder living sphere.”<sup>4</sup> Okinawan migrants also lived under similar circumstances, regularly crossing to and from metropolitan Japan.

The restrictive borders of occupations established at the end of the war severed Japan from its former empire, making it difficult for those who had become accustomed to circular migration as a way of life. However, this did not mean they simply gave up and abandoned their transborder living spheres. On the contrary, against all odds and often at great personal risk, many attempted to maintain their respective spheres of circular migration, determining for themselves where to live and when to move on. In the absence of commercial trade and ferry services, their self-directed endeavors invariably involved migrant smuggling operations, which developed as an extension of the black market trade, and in response to the growing demand for supplying and transporting goods and people throughout North-east Asia.

The first wave of unauthorized entrants into postwar Japan originated from the Korean peninsula, largely due to geographical proximity. In later waves, they were joined by others from the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, and China. Japanese repatriates eager to circumvent USAMGIK’s restrictive customs regulations led this trend, followed by increasing numbers of Koreans who departed their homeland for various reasons. These Korean men and women were in general convinced that life in neighboring Japan was bound to be better than in southern Korea, where escalating political tensions contributed to the deterioration of socio-economic conditions. Personal letters intercepted by American censorship units and their Korean employees reveal a combined sense of despair and disillusionment that drove people from their country. “Despite the liberation of Korea,” one anonymous Korean noted that his country had “no government and was plagued by inflation,” before stating his intention to head for Japan. Another writer expressed how happy he was upon repatriating to Korea but, having lost all his money, decided to return to Japan.<sup>5</sup>

Poor living conditions alone, however, are not enough to explain why these Korean men and women braved the dangerous journey to enter occupied Japan. Every migrant had his or her own particular reason for seeking refuge in Japan, but several trends emerged over time, from which certain generalizations can be made. For example, in the first few years after liberation, the majority of Koreans crossing into Japan over the borders of occupation were former residents of

Japan who had recently repatriated to Korea. Their border crossings are significant, not only in linking Korea to Japan at a time when dismantling the Japanese Empire was supposed to completely separate it from its former colonies, but also in connecting the prewar and wartime past with the postwar period.

One of the most common motives for Korean repatriates to return to Japan was to be reunited with family or to take them back to Korea with them. After the war, Koreans who lived with their family in Japan often decided to repatriate in groups, instead of all at once. The reasoning was that once the first family members returned and made living arrangements for the remainder of the family, they could send word to the others, or else go back to Japan to accompany them home. This was the case with Hong Yeopyo, who joined his mother in returning first to their hometown in Jeju Island, leaving his father in Japan with the understanding that he would join them after saving enough earnings to support the family.<sup>6</sup> Others abandoned their dreams of resettling in Korea and returned permanently to join their families residing in Japan. Crossing back and forth between Japan and Korea to visit family was more complicated when it involved marriages between Koreans and Japanese. For example, a Korean man from South Gyeongsang Province wrote a letter to the Nihonjin Sewakai in Busan, explaining that he had married a Japanese woman during the two years he lived in Hokkaido. Desperate to rejoin his wife and son who awaited him in Japan, he implored the Sewakai to help him return to Japan.<sup>7</sup>

Other common motives for Korean repatriates making the U-turn to Japan were to search for employment and educational opportunities. In fact, a combination of both often drove them to return to Japan, as in the case of the *zainichi* Korean poet Choe Seokui, who repatriated to Korea in April 1946, only to be back in Japan six months later. Choe had grown up in Japan and experienced a great deal of anguish at not being able to speak Korean fluently when he repatriated at age nineteen, a predicament shared by many young repatriates of his generation. Even though he returned to his hometown of Sacheon in South Gyeongsang Province in order to contribute towards the reconstruction of Korea, he could not find adequate work to support himself. Consequently, Choe decided to “temporarily return to Japan,” in his own words, “to study before once again returning to Korea to make a fresh start.”<sup>8</sup> Although he managed to find his way back to Kyoto, Choe could never have imagined then that he would end up living in Japan for the rest of his life. The psychological and physical distress caused by the inability to adapt to the harsh living conditions in liberated Korea made people like Choe long for the relatively more stable means of living they had left behind in Japan.

Korean men and women attempting to enter occupied Japan rarely did so on their own, instead relying on migrant smuggling networks. These had been active

since the colonial era, especially after 1925, when the Japanese Home Ministry implemented official travel regulations for ethnic Koreans who wished to enter metropolitan Japan. These underground networks specialized in transporting Koreans who were barred from traveling on board officially operated ferry services, either because they were too poor, unemployed, politically subversive, carrying diseases, or simply because they could not speak Japanese. The smuggling rings remained active and managed to outmaneuver Japanese authorities until the Allied air raids and torpedo attacks rendered the business too dangerous in 1944.<sup>9</sup> The clandestine operations reemerged in the wake of the war with the large-scale unauthorized return of Koreans from Japan, then quickly spread to encompass the movement of people and goods in both directions.

The black markets that sprang into action in major port cities like Busan quickly became a thriving business, supported in large part through transborder networks that reemerged after liberation and extended to black markets in Japan. The commodities smuggled into Korea included sundry goods like shoes and medicine as well as carpentry tools and small machinery, while grains like rice and sorghum as well as raw materials such as rubber and leather were smuggled into Japan. A letter written in May 1946 by a resident from Yeosu to the chief of police in Busan reveals the profitability of the smuggling business. According to the letter, a pair of Korean and Japanese smugglers operated a motorboat that made four trips to Japan, bartering goods from Japan for rice in Korea, and reversing the process in Japan, each man making about ¥170,000 profit on each trip. In addition to the motorboat, the pair also operated a sailboat with the capacity of transporting approximately 570,000 gallons of rice. The author of the letter was incensed by such hoarding and profiteering, explaining his motivation for reporting it to the police: "I cannot permit [such] doings to pass unnoticed because we are suffering from a food shortage."<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, many repatriates were attracted to the black markets precisely because of the concentration of such commodities that were unavailable elsewhere. In particular, those repatriates without the safety net of a home or relatives to return to often moved into the black market areas of large cities like Busan, where the food rations were relatively secure, in contrast to provincial towns and villages.<sup>11</sup> Once they established themselves in these black markets, they could make a living by engaging in small-scale business with smuggling operators.

With the commencement of the postwar occupation, SCAP suspended all commercial travel to and from Japan, except for those granted special permission by authority of General MacArthur's headquarters. Since such permission was rarely granted to ordinary Koreans, many turned to black marketers involved in the thriving business of smuggling people. Koreans wishing to enter occupied

Japan normally contacted brokers of the migrant smuggling rings based in black markets of the major port cities in southern Korea, where they negotiated a price for the voyage. Many relied on personal contacts and close associations, including relationships that were formed in Japan. When Chang Jeongsu and two other representatives of the League of Koreans returned to Japan in order to report on conditions in their liberated homeland, they contacted fellow Korean activists from Japan to make arrangements for their journey. According to Chang, their broker refused to accept payment for the illicit passage, saying “this is the least we can do for patriots like yourselves who are working to [re-]build our nation.”<sup>12</sup>

During the colonial era, a broker in places like Busan would have been referred to in Korean as a *bonpan* (“base” or “main”) broker, who coordinated the entire operation—everything from contacting recruiters who were dispatched to rural villages in search of customers, ensuring that the boats were properly operational, to arranging accommodations for those who waited to be smuggled out of the port.<sup>13</sup> After liberation, they took advantage of the departure of the feared Japanese police and coast guards, who were known to have arrested a far greater number of Koreans attempting to depart Korea than those arrested after entering Japan. According to American intelligence reports, Korean brokers often bribed compatriots employed by USAFIK’s newly established Korean Coast Guard to turn a blind eye as their small fishing vessels departed Korea with their clients hiding below the deck.<sup>14</sup> As indicated by the pair who smuggled rice into Japan at great profit, Korean brokers sometimes worked together with Japanese smugglers who were more familiar with navigating the rough waters of the Korea Strait as they approached Japan. If they succeeded in disembarking at an inconspicuous shore point without being detected, the Korean entrants dispersed into various Korean communities in Japan while the migrant smugglers began planning for their next operation.

Transborder smuggling operations also developed in the Ryukyu Islands, as dire economic conditions forced many people to live off of the burgeoning black markets that mushroomed throughout the archipelago and beyond. Most of what was sold, purchased, and bartered on the black markets in Okinawa consisted of US military supplies. The US Tenth Army had amassed large quantities of surplus goods on the island in preparation for the anticipated ground warfare in mainland Japan, leaving these items stockpiled inside the base camps when the war ended. Okinawan men and women subsequently employed by USMGR as construction workers, drivers, cooks, and housemaids on the bases discovered bountiful goods that were not made available to them as a part of their rations. When they arrived for work inside the barbed-wire fencing, they found everything from non-rationed foods such as meat, fish, canned fruit, and milk, to durable clothing

such as military fatigues, dress uniforms (HBTs), and shoes, as well as prized tools such as nails, hammers, and shovels.

Many such Okinawan men and women began taking small amounts of these precious goods and called them *senka*, literally meaning “fruits of war.” Before long, pilfering surplus supplies from US military depots became a widely practiced trade referred to as “winning *senka*,” evoking a realistic image that these Okinawans continued to face a battle for survival. People who engaged in winning *senka*, or *senka agiyaa* in Okinawan, were so common at the time that there was a saying, “Men search for *senka* while women engage in prostitution,” reflecting the survival strategies of those who faced dire conditions in immediate postwar Okinawa.<sup>15</sup> Those who worked inside the major military bases in central Okinawa thus supplied this *senka*, much of which was transported to the thriving black market in southern Okinawa.

Black markets spread rapidly throughout the Ryukyus and beyond, compensating for the division and isolation of the archipelago, not only from the outside world but also from each other. The postwar smuggling trade can be broadly distinguished between what might be called “intra-Ryukyuan” smuggling between the four main island groups and “transnational” smuggling that involved Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan. The former acted as a catalyst that helped to reintegrate the Ryukyus economically at a time when inter-island commerce was treated more like foreign trade.<sup>16</sup> Those who participated in the intra-Ryukyuan operations, such as Ibusuki Kenshichi from the Amami Islands, insisted that they were not engaged in illegal smuggling; instead, they were promoting free trade. Ibusuki was twenty-one years old when he began buying goods from black marketers in Amami and reselling them for a profit in Okinawa. On several occasions, Ibusuki arranged with his friends employed as the crew aboard the official ferry liner to assist him in loading on board black market goods that he was sneaking in and out of Okinawa. According to Ibusuki, numerous island residents cooperated in the clandestine operations and thereby “supported and reinvigorated the Amamian economy in the immediate postwar years.”<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, the transnational smuggling trade that extended beyond the Ryukyu Islands led to a specialization of black market commodities according to the main geographical routes, reflecting the early postwar conditions in neighboring regions. One participant’s detailed description of the variety of goods sold and bartered along these routes provides a glimpse of the extensive regional scale of the well-organized networks of underground economic interaction. Involving black market operators from the Southern Ryukyus, the Taiwan route smuggled in large quantities of rice, sugar, and other staple foods. Such foodstuffs were some-

times supplemented by miscellaneous materials such as tires and rubber tubing for bicycles that were otherwise unavailable in the Ryukyus. These goods were then exchanged for *senka* from Okinawa, including pilfered US military uniforms, wool blankets, and rations of canned foods. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong route involved exporting another type of *senka*—munitions such as cartridge cases, as well as motors, engine oil, and gasoline—that were recycled for use in the Chinese civil war. In exchange, British-style suits, hats, shoes, as well as Hong Kong dollars were imported into the Ryukyus.<sup>18</sup>

From the opposite direction, American medical supplies that were available in Okinawa, especially new antibiotics like streptomycin for tuberculosis, as well as morphine and sulfa drugs, were all in high demand on the Japan route. These were traded for Japanese-made pots and pans, crockery, and carpentry tools for building houses. Black market operators such as Kinjō Natsuko, who was dubbed the “queen of the Okinawan smuggling trade,” handled all such commodities throughout the region. Having become a fairly successful merchant in the Philippines, Kinjō had chartered a small boat to repatriate herself from Taiwan after the war, using her business networks and language skills to build up smuggling operations that took her from Hong Kong to Japan.<sup>19</sup> The industriousness of Kinjō and other operators earned widespread respect from residents in the Ryukyus who benefited from the range of imported commodities.

The transborder networks between the black markets in the Ryukyu Islands and those in Japan, like those that linked Korea and Japan, were brokered by recent repatriates and others who were accustomed to circular migration as a way of life. Arakaki Seiichi, for example, had lived off of black markets operated by Okinawan communities in Japanese cities for three years before he repatriated to his native Okinawa, where he became a *senka agiyaa*. As a truck driver hired to transport supplies on and off US military bases, he managed to set aside considerable amounts of surplus goods, delivering them to local smugglers, mainly from the famed fishing village of Itoman. The hard-won *senka* was then loaded onto fishing vessels headed for Japan, crossing the 30th parallel border along the island of Kuchinoshima to the northeast, while others headed as far as Hong Kong and Taiwan to the southwest. According to Arakaki’s fond reminiscence, this was the “most lively period” in postwar Okinawa because “we stood up for ourselves and made the best of what little we had in the midst of the instability [surrounding our island] after the war.”<sup>20</sup> Echoing this sentiment, Okinawan sociologist Ishihara Masaie has described these early postwar years as the “era of the great smuggling trade,” harking back to the Ryukyu Kingdom’s golden age of regional maritime trade before the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup>



### Caught Up in the Political Vortex

The smuggling networks that developed in Northeast Asia in the wake of the Japanese Empire did not serve only people who wished to escape economic deprivation and profit-driven black marketeers. Instead, these underground networks also came to serve those who crossed the borders of US occupations for sociopolitical reasons, beginning with the transborder movement of people from occupied Korea to occupied Japan. A majority of Korean returnees from Japan encountered economic disadvantages, often falling into poverty, and in the process driving many to join political forces in southern Korea that blamed Japanese colonial rule for their predicament. For them, purging Korean collaborators and redistributing Japanese wealth were among the first steps towards rebuilding their liberated but divided nation, even if their priorities clashed with those of the American occupiers. Repatriates were not simply a passive and monolithic group of poor refugees, but included active participants in the struggle for self-determination. Some of them joined political activists who sought to establish transborder alliances with their counterparts in northern Korea and Japan. From the outset, they clashed with rightist Koreans and USAMGIK, which suppressed leftist Koreans who drew inspiration from the radical reforms that were implemented in Soviet-occupied northern Korea. In the process, southern Korea was transformed into a staging ground for the American policy of containing communism—and a major battleground for regional hegemony between the US and USSR in Northeast Asia. Other repatriates may have been less politically inclined, but they could not easily avoid the rapidly spiraling political vortex that characterized Korea under a divided occupation. This led to the emergence of a new category of border crossers who grew in number from mid- to late 1947: political refugees who fled to Japan to escape the violence and persecution that were spreading throughout the Korean peninsula.

Although USAMGIK did not conduct any public opinion surveys to capture the mindset of Korean repatriates, other available records demonstrate that many of them returned with deep grievances against Japanese colonists and their Korean collaborators. A vast majority of returnees from Japan were former peasants dispossessed from their land, recruited into industrial work, or mobilized into conscript labor during the war. Many of them were deported without receiving their wages. In September 1945, nearly 1,000 former conscript laborers converged upon the Gunsan office of the extant Government-General, angrily demanding just compensation.<sup>22</sup> Vociferous calls for compensation from repatriated laborers continued throughout the American occupation period. At the same time, personal letters intercepted by civil censorship units reveal that many repatriates

developed a new awareness of themselves and of their marginality. “Shall we have to suffer this humiliation?” A repatriate from Japan thus wrote in a letter in June 1946, lamenting how “war refugees,” such as himself, “are turned into beggars.” Meanwhile, he continued:

The robbers, who [returned] from Chungking or Sawan, are welcomed [back] as great generals or revolutionists. Several million yen [*sic*] have been raised to establish a relief organization for their volunteer army, saying that they fought many battles against the Japanese. . . . As for the war refugees, it is no matter whether they go hungry.<sup>23</sup>

Such a critical description of patriots from the Korean Liberation Army in China, many of whom emerged as prominent figures of rightist political parties, reflects how poor repatriates from Japan were affected by contemporary political ideologies. As Bruce Cumings notes, returnees from Japan were often influenced by leftist ideologies, because “the Japanese Communist Party was one of the few groups in Japan that was sympathetic to Korean liberation and called attention to the abysmal conditions of Koreans in Japan.” These returnees became ready recruits for political activists who called for ousting former colonial officials, many of whom were responsible for dispatching them abroad in the first place.<sup>24</sup>

Many of the Korean relief organizations that were established to provide assistance for repatriates recognized the political gains to be made through their work. The Relief Association for Overseas Korean Victims of War, for example, used its patronage from prominent Korean leaders to expand its influence and reinvent itself as a rightist political organization.<sup>25</sup> The chairman of this association, Yu Eokgyeom, who was known for his active support for the Japanese war effort, was also an executive member of the Korean Democratic Party (KDP).<sup>26</sup> Founded by Song Jinu (Song Jin-woo), Kim Seongsu, and others on September 16, 1945, the KDP represented landlords, entrepreneurs, and other wealthy Koreans, many of whom were widely regarded as collaborators. Adamantly opposed to the People’s Committees, the KDP cultivated a close working relationship with US-AMGIK and emerged as the most influential rightist party throughout the occupation period. The KDP leadership also embraced the return of exiled nationalist Koreans, such as Yi Seungman and Kim Gu, and believed it was their patriotic duty to support Yu Eokgyeom’s relief association for other Korean repatriates.

On the other side of the political spectrum, the welfare division of the CPKI was reestablished as the Korean People’s Relief Association (Joseon Inmin Wonhohoe), which was sponsored by the central committee of the newly inaugurated Korean People’s Republic (KPR). The left-leaning People’s Relief Association

opposed Yu Eokgyeom's association, criticizing the fact that it included other rightists such as Yi Yongseol, who also participated in Japanese propaganda to support the war.<sup>27</sup> The two relief organizations continued to condemn one another's politics, each competing for the support of hundreds of thousands of returning compatriots.

Ideological differences were compounded by the divisive issue of collaboration, which pitted Koreans who resisted Japanese colonial rule against those who cooperated with colonial authorities. Identifying who was a collaborator and to what extent he or she was guilty of this charge were highly volatile questions, which had serious implications for some Korean repatriates, depending on their personal backgrounds. For example, in Changheung County, South Jeolla Province, many young Korean men who had served in the Japanese military and who were repatriated after the war attempted to join a newly formed local youth organization. The Changheung Youth Organization, however, like the local branch of the People's Committee, was composed of left-leaning Korean youth who castigated collaborators, including Koreans recently demobilized by the imperial Japanese armed forces. Angered by their rejection, these demobilized repatriates formed instead a local branch of the so-called Kukgun Junbidae, a private militia that clashed with the Changheung Youth Organization.<sup>28</sup> The ensuing conflict lasted until the arrival of US occupation forces in the region in late October, when all groups involved were disbanded, though the nationalist effort to prosecute collaborators continued in various parts of Korea.

Given the deep grievances of many repatriates from Japan, the People's Committees and the KPR enjoyed a comparative advantage in attracting these returning compatriots to their political cause. This coalition of leftists and moderates pressed their advantage by promising further assistance to repatriates during a three-day national conference of the People's Committee representatives, which commenced in Seoul on November 20, 1945. The primary objective of this conference was to respond to General John Hodge's demand that the KPR renounce its claim to represent a national government in Korea, thus avoiding any conflict with the authority of the US military government. While discussions from the first day made it abundantly clear that the representatives rejected Hodge's demand, the second day featured other national issues, including reports on the conditions of Korean repatriates.

Then, on the third day, a representative of the KPR's internal affairs section promised three measures for improving conditions for repatriates: (1) the regional People's Committees would henceforth supervise and coordinate the activities of the various relief organizations; (2) Japanese-owned houses would be confiscated and provided to those in need, with a priority given to repatriates; and (3) a greater

effort would be made to distribute living supplies and help find employment for repatriates.<sup>29</sup> The second measure is particularly noteworthy since it reaffirmed the KPR's campaign to redistribute property and assets left behind by Japanese colonists, in order to benefit all Koreans who suffered losses under colonial rule. Between liberation and the arrival of American occupation forces, many Japanese rushed to liquidate their colonial assets, selling their highly valued homes, restaurants, and factories to wealthy Koreans. In response, on September 14, 1945, the KPR made a public declaration condemning such transactions, while calling for the nationalization of major Japanese industries and the confiscation of Japanese-owned lands for free distribution to peasants.<sup>30</sup> The People's Committees heeded this call, as many of them succeeded in "obtaining affidavits from departing Japanese, giving the local committee title to or responsibility for the managing of local Japanese assets, from small homes to major factories."<sup>31</sup> For People's Committee representatives who attended the national conference in November, there was no question that Japanese property and assets should be reverted to Koreans.

Representatives of the League of Koreans in Japan, including Chang Jeongsu, also attended this national conference, offering their assistance for repatriates as part of the League's larger goal of brokering a transborder alliance with the KPR. On the second day of the conference, Chang's co-representative from Osaka, Kim Minhwa, was given an opportunity to speak on behalf of the League. Kim spoke passionately, describing the poor conditions of Korean repatriates from Japan, emphasizing the common struggle against pro-Japanese collaborators, and pledging the League's support in establishing a unified and independent nation in Korea. He ended his speech by appealing to the representatives of the KPR to support their comrades in Japan.<sup>32</sup> Following the conference, the representatives of the League visited the headquarters of the major political parties in Seoul, meeting with nationalist leaders such as Yo Unhyeong and Kim Gu. They were particularly impressed with Yo, who, as the leader of the People's Party and of the KPR, welcomed Koreans in Japan to join the united front necessary for building an independent Korean nation.<sup>33</sup> This contributed to the subsequent decision that the League's liaison offices would play an important role in facilitating communication and cooperation between leftist organizations in Korea and the League in Japan. Specifically, the liaison office in Seoul would foster the transborder political alliance, while the liaison office in Busan was to coordinate its work with local welfare organizations in providing aid for repatriates. Chang and two other representatives of the League headed back to Japan on a migrant smuggling ship from Busan, in order to consolidate this newly brokered alliance with the KPR.<sup>34</sup>

USAMGIK rejected not only the KPR, but also the proposals that it made during the national conference, especially its promotion of redistributive justice,

even if it was designed in part to benefit Korean repatriates. American authorities were aware that the People's Committees in northern Korea were pushing ahead with their redistribution campaign, but insisted that the disposition of Japanese property and assets was subject to reparations negotiations among Allied powers. On December 6, 1945, General Arnold promulgated Ordinance Number 33, vesting title of all Japanese property to USAMGIK, in order to prevent unauthorized confiscation, management, and distribution by any other party. Declaring that "all such property is owned by the Military Government of Korea," the ordinance warned that any persons violating the provisions "shall, upon conviction by a Military Occupation Court, suffer such punishment as the court shall determine."<sup>35</sup> Another order issued later that month stipulated that USAMGIK's newly established Property Custodian Section was assigned the responsibility of managing all Japanese property in Korea.<sup>36</sup> USAMGIK's confiscation of Japanese property succeeded in eliminating what it perceived as unwanted interference from the KPR and the People's Committees, but it also failed to address the problem of how to provide for needy Korean repatriates.

In the meantime, leftist political forces remained undeterred after USAMGIK dissolved the KPR in January 1946, forming instead a coalition called the Democratic National Front (DNF), which pushed ahead with its campaign to purge collaborators. The leadership of the former KPR invited twenty-nine political parties in Korea to form this coalition, and extended the invitation to the liaison committee members of the League of Koreans in Japan, which subsequently joined the DNF. During its inaugural conference, the DNF on February 16 identified five major categories of "traitors" to be indicted in postliberation Korea. This included *moribae*, or Korean profiteers, who had quickly amassed great wealth through their close connections to property-holding Japanese colonists.<sup>37</sup> The DNF criticized the *moribae* for disrupting the national economy by snatching up vast amounts of real estate left behind by repatriating Japanese. While USAMGIK's Ordinance Number 33 made it difficult for the *moribae* to continue this profitable practice, the DNF condemned the fact that their ownership of Japanese housing made such facilities unavailable to Korean repatriates and other groups in need. Responding to the DNF's call for challenging the *moribae*'s real estate monopoly, organizations such as the Seoul Municipal Housing Union were formed in March to demand a fair redistribution of Japanese homes. The membership of this union consisted of anti-Japanese activists as well as repatriates who had been conscripted into labor and military service—in other words, those who had particular grievances against the Japanese and their collaborators.<sup>38</sup>

The housing shortage for repatriates remained a highly contentious issue, around which all leading political organizations rallied, threatening USAMGIK's

credibility over its inability to resolve the problem. In November 1946 the Social Democratic Party demanded that occupation authorities release all buildings formerly owned by the Japanese, including hotels and restaurants, many of which were then occupied by Americans. USAMGIK responded that its Property Custodian Section would continue to administer such buildings, at least until it could negotiate a disposition settlement with a sovereign Korean state, which was yet to be established. The following month, the South Korean Workers' Party openly criticized USAMGIK, blaming its ineffective policies for the reported incidents of repatriates dying from hunger, starvation, and exposure.<sup>39</sup>

In the face of mounting public discontent, occupation authorities promised at least to release formerly Japanese-owned restaurants, but it failed to follow through, and the majority of the large restaurants remained in USAMGIK's custody.<sup>40</sup> When newspaper articles showed that American officers frequented such restaurants, public opinion quickly turned against them. Criticism of USAMGIK's housing policy continued to plague occupation authorities, as the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly proposed a practical solution to the problem. On September 18, 1947, the Assembly voted in favor of permitting repatriates from Japan to use their personal assets that remained frozen in custody accounts created by SCAP, if they wished to purchase Japanese-owned property in Korea.<sup>41</sup> USAMGIK rejected this proposed legislation, on the grounds that it would violate SCAP's customs regulations, which did not permit any personal monetary transactions between occupied Japan and Korea.

Without adequate housing and employment, many aggrieved repatriates from Japan joined radical forces in demanding reparations, land redistribution, and the ouster of US occupation forces. Increasingly resentful towards USAMGIK, which opposed their grassroots campaign for self-determination, they resolved to resist what they saw as the growing threat of American hegemony in the southern half of the Korean peninsula. The pent-up grievances of repatriates, refugees, and other disaffected Koreans boiled over in the autumn uprisings that raged through the Gyeongsang and Jeolla Provinces from September through November 1946.

The original demands of railroad workers in Busan who went on a general strike on September 23 included higher wages, increases in rice rations, and housing and food for unemployed workers and repatriates. On October 1, several hundred demonstrators marched through Taegu in support of these striking workers, joining them in demanding increased rice rations, when Korean police killed one of the demonstrators. The next day, over a thousand more people joined the demonstrations, bearing the body of the slain demonstrator, sparking what would later become known as the "October people's resistance," which led to bloody reprisals and counterattacks. An American prosecutor who later tried



court cases from the violent demonstrations identified the instigator of the riots as Chae Muhak, a young repatriate who had been sent first to Japan and then to Manchuria for conscript labor during the war.

Within a week, the rioting spread into South Gyeongsang Province, including the Paekcheon uprisings, which the American CIC reported were led by Cho Daejun, a returnee from Manchuria. Korean officials in the Gyeongsang Provinces, where some of the most brutal incidents of violence occurred, later attributed the severity of the autumn uprisings to the poor conditions of repatriates who strained the provincial economy.<sup>42</sup> The suppression of the uprisings resulted in the merger of defiant leftist parties, which formed the Nam-Joseon Nodongdang (South Korean Labor Party, or SKLP), while increasing numbers of repatriates headed back to Japan in order to avoid the partisan conflict in southern Korea.

Just as repatriates from Japan were embroiled in the political unrest spreading throughout southern Korea, repatriates from Manchuria and refugees from northern Korea exacerbated the mounting tide of chaos and instability. Southbound Koreans encountered many of the same economic challenges faced by repatriates from Japan, except that many of the former settled in and around Seoul, instead of Busan. Their visible presence in the capital served as a constant reminder to American and Korean authorities of the need to provide them with housing and employment. USAMGIK's initial concern over having to support an increasing number of welfare cases was soon compounded by the realization that these repatriates and refugees crossing the 38th parallel posed political and ideological problems.

Repatriates from Manchuria may have been drawn to either leftist or rightist forces in southern Korea, depending on their backgrounds and experiences in Manchuria under Japanese rule. On the other hand, acutely aggrieved refugees from northern Korea became some of the most active supporters of rightist politics in southern Korea. For example, an ultra-rightist paramilitary organization called the Seobuk Cheongnyeondan (Northwest Youth Corps, or NWYC) was formed on November 30, 1946, in the wake of the autumn uprisings, recruiting most of its members from dispossessed refugees fleeing the northern revolution. Avidly anti-communist, the NWYC initiated its operations by deploying members to the 38th parallel, where they screened border crossers, apprehending people who were known communists from northern Korea.<sup>43</sup> The NWYC quickly gained notoriety for its violent attacks on leftist organizations, often intimidating and torturing leftist leaders, leading US military intelligence to characterize it as a reactionary terrorist organization.<sup>44</sup> With strong backing from the Korean police and powerful political figures, the NWYC's anti-communist operations spread throughout southern Korea, including the southwestern island of Jeju, with devastating consequences.

Increasingly preoccupied with containing the flow of border crossers from the northern frontier, USAMGIK's neglect of the brewing civil turmoil along the southern frontier proved particularly costly for Jeju. In the wake of the autumn uprisings in 1946, island-wide protests on March 1, 1947, sparked a series of bloody incidents. The protesters intended to recast the commemoration of the March First independence movement against Japanese rule into a demonstration calling for independence from US military rule. American forces and Korean police suppressed masses of angry protesters, resulting in a "cycle of terror and counterterror," whereby "police and rightists brutalized the islanders who retaliated as best they could."<sup>45</sup> The escalating political conflict was exacerbated by the intensifying struggle between two main organizations that infiltrated the island: the leftist SKLP and the rightist NWYC.

Although US military intelligence later alleged that communist forces in northern Korea directed the Jeju uprising, an estimated one-fifth of local inhabitants voluntarily joined the SKLP during this period. Poor economic conditions, the longevity of the Jeju People's Committee, and widespread resentment against the brutal suppression of public demonstrations in 1947 all contributed to the SKLP's successful recruitment of Jeju islanders. Many of these new recruits were impoverished repatriates from Japan and Manchuria—as many as 60,000 returnees, who accounted for 89 percent of the unemployed in Jeju.<sup>46</sup>

Recent wartime experiences often radicalized these repatriates. Kim Dalsam, for example, was among a group of new SKLP leaders in Jeju who were recent student draftees, returning home to take revenge against Korean authorities who cooperated in conscripting them into Japanese military service.<sup>47</sup> Yi Deokgu was another young repatriate from Japan who rose to a leadership position in the military committee of the SKLP in Jeju, and began organizing guerilla units after Korean police arrested and tortured him for three months in 1947.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the NWYC members arrived in Jeju to crack down on the SKLP, thereby avenging themselves against communists who had driven them from their homes in northern Korea. Although they were not native to Jeju, their violent suppression of leftists was so extreme that even the US military's CIC warned NWYC members about their "widespread campaign of terrorism" on the island.<sup>49</sup> In other words, this group of transplanted refugees clashed with overseas repatriates who had the support of a far larger number of local residents, as the growing civil turmoil in Jeju slipped further away from USAMGIK's control.

As John Merrill's study has shown, the outbreak of the Jeju rebellion in April 1948 stands as a testimony to the failure of USAMGIK to build a unified Korean nation; instead, it championed the establishment of a separate, rightist regime that led a brutal suppression of leftists and their suspected sympathizers

that lasted over a year. With as many as 30,000 Jeju islanders killed, “nowhere else did such a violent outpouring of popular opposition to a postwar occupation occur.”<sup>50</sup> The tragically high cost of this desperate attempt to maintain US hegemonic power in southern Korea forced Jeju islanders with ties to Japan to take refuge there. Hong Yeopyo recalled how he was so afraid of the violence that he could not at first imagine the possibility of escaping to Japan, where he was born and raised. But his mother could no longer bear to see him suffer, especially after Hong and other youths in his village were rounded up and tortured repeatedly in prison for two weeks, as the Korean police interrogated them for any connections with leftist activists:

Because I had narrowly escaped death on a number of such occasions, my mother consulted with my aunt, desperately worried that I would get killed if I remained on Jeju Island and “end our family lineage.” They decided “at the very least to save this one son,” then spent what little money they could scrape together and in June forced me aboard a smuggling ship headed for Japan.

Two or three days after being packed into the bottom of the boat full of refugees from Jeju Island, Hong arrived safely in Osaka.<sup>51</sup> Those fortunate enough to escape the carnage in Jeju, including the poet Kim Sijeong, took refuge in Japanese cities with large Korean communities, such as Osaka. Their home island of Jeju embodied the violent aftermath of empire and division, with repatriated migrant laborers squaring off against displaced refugees from northern Korea. Both sides felt acutely aggrieved, grievances that fueled the brewing political conflict on the peninsula. The Jeju rebellion precipitated the Yeosu and Suncheon rebellions in October 1948, which were again brutally crushed—this time by the newly established Republic of Korea Army units, abetted by US military advisors—setting into motion a chain of political violence that foreshadowed the coming war on the peninsula. As a result, the increasing numbers of Koreans who fled their divided and occupied homeland were joined by a steady flow of Korean War refugees, many of whom escaped to Japan.

### **Popular Resistance against Military Rule**

As in southern Korea and Japan, the reintegration of large numbers of repatriates to the Ryukyu Islands not only exacerbated economic hardships, thereby contributing to the regional smuggling trade, but also worsened conditions, bringing about a public reckoning with US military rule in the Ryukyus. While shell-shocked

Okinawans were initially too reticent to discuss politics in the Ryukyus, SCAP's democratization of Japan, coupled with its de-Japanization of Okinawans, spurred an open and active debate among the Okinawan community there. An unanticipated consequence of SCAP's de-Japanization policy was the fact that Okinawan repatriates from Japan were often the most vocal in appealing for greater political autonomy in the Ryukyus. The reintegration of progressive repatriates—including activists from the League of Okinawans—greatly contributed to the formation of political parties in the Ryukyus, many of which championed self-government. Their rise to political prominence stood in contrast to their Korean counterparts, who as repatriates from Japan were largely shunned in national politics.

On the surface, the pursuit of Ryukyuan self-government appeared to conform to the US policy of dismantling the Japanese ruling structure in the Ryukyus. However, the evolving public discourse that supported greater autonomy had to contend with USMGR, which had no intention of relinquishing its direct control in administering the islands. Okinawans were only gradually awakened to the stark reality that American authorities would strictly curtail any move towards self-determination. Meanwhile, the emergence of labor disputes, and public discontent over USMGR's food ration restrictions, grew into overt challenges to American authority. Quickly merging with leading political parties that advocated a pro-democracy movement, these protests amounted to an awakening of popular resistance to the US military's hegemonic rule.

The first group of Okinawans to promote autonomy and self-government after the war included recent repatriates, led by active members of the League of Okinawans in Japan. Equipped with leftist ideological views that dominated the League, these repatriates infused Okinawan politics with progressive ideas for how to rebuild their native island. However, the repatriation of progressive activists from the League created political friction with conservative officials who represented the Civil Administration in Okinawa.<sup>52</sup> Leading members of the League who repatriated in late 1946, such as Kuwae Chōkō and Yamashiro Zenkō, became deeply disillusioned by the harsh reality of direct US military rule in Okinawa. They were particularly disheartened to discover that USMGR had appointed the governor and assemblymen, which represented a political setback, considering the fact that Okinawan assemblymen had been elected to office under the Japanese prefectural administration. Witnesses to SCAP's sweeping democratic reforms implemented in occupied Japan, they blamed the Civil Administration for failing to request equivalent reforms from USMGR in Okinawa. In May 1947, Yamashiro helped organize what was called the "Okinawa construction meeting," which attracted over three hundred people in Okinawa.<sup>53</sup> The two main topics discussed during this meeting centered on the

pressing need to stabilize economic conditions and to establish political institutions representing the will of the people. Greatly inspired by the rigorous discussion, the organizers reported their recommendations to the Civil Administration, calling for direct elections to form a more truly representative government in Okinawa.

Building on the energetic momentum they generated, activist repatriates joined forces with local leftists and other progressives in leading a grassroots democratization campaign in postwar Okinawa. Working together closely, they initiated this campaign during the second Okinawa construction meeting, where the attendees decided to form a political organization that advocated democratic governance. This led to the formation of the Okinawa Democratic Alliance (Okinawa Minshu Dōmei) on June 15, 1947, headed by a prewar leftist named Nakasone Genwa.

In cooperation with Yamashiro and Kuwae, Nakasone orchestrated a petition drive calling for direct elections to replace representatives of the Okinawa Assembly who were appointed by USMGR.<sup>54</sup> The island-wide petition drive garnered over 12,000 signatures, which the Democratic Alliance submitted to the military governor. Meanwhile, on July 20, other repatriates who had participated in union activism and the socialist movement in prewar Japan joined Senaga Kamejirō in forming the Okinawa People's Party (Okinawa Jinmintō), which also advocated the establishment of popular government.<sup>55</sup> These activist repatriates from Japan found common cause with local activists like Senaga and Nakasone, who had themselves spent years in Japan, not only as students of Marxism but also as political prisoners affiliated with the Japanese Communist Party.

League of Okinawans members who repatriated from Japan brought home with them the pro-autonomy stance advocated by the leaders of the League and the JCP. Within months after the war, the JCP reemerged as an increasingly powerful political force under the leadership of Tokuda Kyūichi, an Okinawan who supported outright independence for the Ryukyus. The JCP's message in February 1946 that congratulated Okinawans on their liberation from Japan reverberated in the Ryukyus, especially in the wake of the US Navy's implementation of limited self-government. Governor Shikiya's inaugural address in April promising to build a "golden age for Okinawa" appeared to echo this hopeful message. Before long, however, Okinawans eager for self-government began criticizing Shikiya for failing to deliver on his promise, and newly formed political parties picked up the mantle by publicly addressing the future shape of Okinawa's political disposition. The Okinawa Democratic Alliance was the first political party to advocate greater autonomy for Okinawa, independent of Japan. The People's Party followed with demands to "liberate the Okinawan race" and "establish popular

government.”<sup>56</sup> These same ideas clearly echoed those advocated by the JCP and the League. Before long, other Okinawan repatriates from Taiwan and Micronesia also began disseminating similar pro-autonomy and pro-independence messages, not only in Okinawa but also in the Southern Ryukyus.<sup>57</sup>

Although the newly formed political parties in Okinawa espoused competing visions of democracy, their pursuit of autonomy and independence was not welcomed by American occupiers. In contrast to occupied Japan and Korea, US military authorities in the Ryukyus never promised sovereignty for an independent state. While the US Army periodically spoke of political rehabilitation and limited self-government, in reality USMGR differentiated between Okinawan administration and autonomy.<sup>58</sup> In other words, military government officers continued to make all the major decisions, while Okinawan officials merely participated in administering these public policies. Repatriates from Japan such as Yamashiro Zenkō and Kuwae Chōkō immediately recognized this gap between rhetoric and reality, as they criticized the Civil Administration for its subservience to USMGR; by extension, they became the first political opposition in Okinawa to openly criticize US military rule. Sensitive to such criticism, USMGR belatedly recognized the existing political parties in October 1947, paving the way for the direct election of mayors and assemblymen in local districts.<sup>59</sup> Yamashiro and Kuwae were elected as assembly members from their respective hometowns in February 1948, thus rewarding them for their petition drive that called for these direct elections. However, public discourse on independence was forced to contend with American authorities, who had grown increasingly weary of calls for self-determination in the Ryukyus.

Meanwhile, the continuation of repatriation resulted in overpopulation, brought about shortages in land and food, and aggravated unemployment—problems that led to a series of protests in Okinawa between 1948 and 1949. For example, in August 1948, a large number of unskilled dockworkers who had been conscripted for their labor at Naha harbor protested against harsh conditions and low wages by going on strike. Intolerant of this direct challenge to American authority, Major General William Eagles—the military governor of the Ryukyus—responded by announcing that RYCOM would close ration stores and warehouses throughout Okinawa. Since most Okinawans were largely dependent on US military rations, General Eagles’ sudden decision to cut off their food supply caused widespread public uproar.

Kokuba Kōtarō, a local contractor hired by RYCOM to oversee the Naha harbor operations, acknowledged the poor treatment that workers received. Kokuba was an unauthorized repatriate from Japan at a time when the US military still employed Japanese POWs for the heavy labor required in offloading supplies at



Naha and other ports.<sup>60</sup> The repatriation of tens of thousands of Okinawan men in subsequent months replaced Japanese POWs in providing labor, though poor treatment continued to be the norm. Furthermore, contractors such as Kokuba could not always pay full wages due to budgetary constraints, while Okinawan workers resented the fact that their wages were consistently lower than those of Filipinos hired by RYCOM.<sup>61</sup> Kokuba, who also served as mayor of Minato village encompassing Naha harbor, proposed to the Mayors' Association that they take whatever measures necessary to prevent absenteeism, even if it meant supplying "potatoes and firewood" to the workers.<sup>62</sup> But many members of the Mayors' Association were appalled by RYCOM's drastic action, petitioning General Eagles to reopen ration stores, increase workers' wages, and improve their labor conditions.

Public opposition against RYCOM was widespread, transforming a small-scale labor strike into island-wide protests over food rations in Okinawa. Uniting against the unjust food restrictions imposed upon them, thousands of Okinawans in various towns and villages joined protest rallies. In Naha, for example, teachers, women, and youth groups held a joint meeting to submit a written protest to USMGR. Their protest letter amounted to a blunt criticism of RYCOM, in sharp contrast with the petitions submitted by the Mayors' Association. The Naha group's petition read, in part:

We Okinawans have thus far trusted and cooperated with the US military. Yet the recent order to suspend food rations has betrayed our trust. This amounts to a death sentence and must be immediately rescinded. If this [order] is carried out, all Okinawans will be ignited in the flames of anti-Americanism, and the US military will be responsible.<sup>63</sup>

Continuing protests over the food restrictions and labor strife then merged with the pro-democracy movement that leading political parties had been advocating. The Okinawa People's Party played a leading role in this process by explicitly linking two main principles in its party platform: workers' rights and political autonomy. They aimed to enable larger numbers of Okinawan people to form a united struggle for self-determination. The People's Party skillfully organized collective action, hosting rallies and meetings in towns and villages across Okinawa to mobilize opposition against the food restrictions.<sup>64</sup> The People's Party was joined by the Okinawa Democratic Alliance, which hosted large public meetings to inform Okinawans that USMGR was failing to deliver on its initial promises of democratizing Okinawa. In response, tens of thousands of people participated in these meetings, demanding direct elections for the governor and assemblymen as a part of the overall goal of attaining greater political autonomy in Okinawa.<sup>65</sup>

In the face of such vehement public opposition, General Eagles agreed to re-open food ration stores and warehouses, but only after towns and villages pledged to provide the labor that RYCOM requested. Although food rations were not actually cut off for more than a day, this incident and the ensuing storm of protests exposed the façade of American benevolence. As a result, public discontent reached a new boiling point in January 1949 when RYCOM announced a threefold increase in the price of rationed food. The purpose behind RYCOM's decision was to rein in chronic inflation that continued to plague the Ryukyu Islands, but the food price increase without a corresponding wage increase threatened to impoverish many Okinawans. The resulting food price crisis transcended geographical boundaries, directly impacting the lives of residents throughout the Ryukyus. In Amami Oshima, for example, civil servants and police officers who could no longer live on their low income resigned and joined the smuggling trade.<sup>66</sup>

Galvanizing public opposition to the food price increase, political parties once again began spearheading a resistance movement, organizing mass rallies that attracted ever-larger crowds. Leading members of the political parties, many of whom were equipped with journalistic experience, decided to use the power of the mass media to foment public opinion against the Civil Administration. For example, Yamashiro Zenkō had worked for the *Osaka kyūyō shinpō*, a newspaper published by Okinawan migrants in Osaka from the late 1930s, then became the chief editor for the official newspaper of the League of Okinawans, *Jiyū Okinawa*, after the war.<sup>67</sup> Upon repatriating and discovering that freedom of speech was severely curtailed in Okinawa, Yamashiro convinced the Democratic Alliance of the need to promulgate democratic ideals through an official party newspaper. Yamashiro sought assistance from Kuwae Chōkō, a fellow League repatriate and Alliance member, who readily agreed to lend a mimeograph and stencil that he had secretly brought back from Japan. Together, they printed and distributed nearly a thousand copies of the Alliance's first newspaper, which they consciously entitled *Jiyū Okinawa*, thus demonstrating common cause with the League in their mutual support for the democratization of Okinawa.<sup>68</sup>

The inaugural edition, published on April 16, 1948, featured articles championing democratic elections, including a petition calling for the direct election of governors and assemblymen, to replace the Civil Administration.<sup>69</sup> The Democratic Alliance gained a stronger voice nearly a year later when the People's Party joined its efforts in spearheading a publicity campaign that opposed the food price increase. This was made possible in large part by the fact that Senaga Kamejirō and the leadership of the People's Party also served on the editorial board of the *Uruma shinpō*, which became increasingly critical of the Civil Administration.<sup>70</sup> Expanding their joint activities into a formal political alliance, the People's Party

and the Democratic Alliance, together with the Socialist Party, formed a “popular front” (*jinmin sensen*). According to Senaga, this popular front meant a struggle that pitted Okinawans against USMGR,<sup>71</sup> directly confronting military government officials for the first time since the occupation began. The three parties in the popular front organized seven mass rallies throughout Okinawa in early May 1949, attracting an estimated 21,000 Okinawans who cheered speakers who denounced unjust occupation policies. Circulating petitions that demanded not only repealing the food price increase but also a complete abolition of income taxes, the organizers of these rallies gathered over 30,000 signatures, roughly 10 percent of the adult population at the time.<sup>72</sup>

As soon as the popular front began openly criticizing American occupation policies, General Eagles took swift action to suppress public dissent, reminding Okinawans that they were under direct military rule. On May 8, RYCOM arrested Senaga and other executive members of the *Uruma shinpō* news agency, on the pretext of unlawful possession and use of an electric power generator used for printing the daily newspaper. As in the earlier case of Yamashiro and Kuwae, who were arrested for publishing *Jiyū Okinawa* without an official permit, Senaga was subsequently released for lack of sufficient evidence.<sup>73</sup> Senaga was clearly targeted for further repression, as he topped the list of thirteen Okinawa Assembly members who General Eagles purged from public office when the Assembly was reconstituted in October.

In the meantime, on June 28, USMGR issued an ordinance on its newly codified penal law, which criminalized public demonstrations, political organizations, and publications deemed critical of American authorities. Beyond such explicit restraints on the freedom of speech and assembly, USMGR also restricted the freedom of mobility, stipulating that USMGR had to grant approval of any travel outside of Okinawa.<sup>74</sup> Reflecting USMGR’s growing concern over communist infiltration, the new travel restriction was aimed at containing political activists who were using the smuggling routes to move about the region, including Japan. The enforcement of this ordinance coupled with the suppression of the people’s front temporarily defused the political crisis in Okinawa, but the seeds of resistance against US military rule had been sown, with many turning to Japan for support.

### **The Tsushima Smuggling Route**

When popular discontent and resistance to American military rule in southern Korea became irrepressible, some people escaped to northern Korea, attracted by the promises of progressive developments such as land reform. Others began to

seek refuge in postimperial Japan, where relatively stable conditions prevailed after the war. The maritime route to Japan posed more challenges than the overland route on the Korean peninsula. Regardless of the range of circumstances and motivations that drove an increasing number of repatriates and others to head for occupied Japan, each one of them had to embark upon a precarious undercover journey across the Korea Strait. This usually meant hiding below the deck of a small fishing boat, often packed together like sardines, without any guarantee that they could avoid detection and enter Japan safely. Along the way, those operating the smuggling boats usually first anchored at Tsushima, a pair of large islands that are administratively a part of Nagasaki Prefecture in Japan, but geographically closer to the Korean peninsula. Stretching eighty-two kilometers from north to south and covering an area of nearly 700 square kilometers, the islands of Tsushima served as large, natural stepping-stones for Korean smugglers crossing into Japan. Tsushima thus emerged as one of postwar Japan's most important border islands, largely as a result of these underground operations. Over the course of the occupation period, these islands were transformed into a contested frontier at the forefront of the US-led effort to contain the spread of communism and thereby consolidate American hegemony in the region.

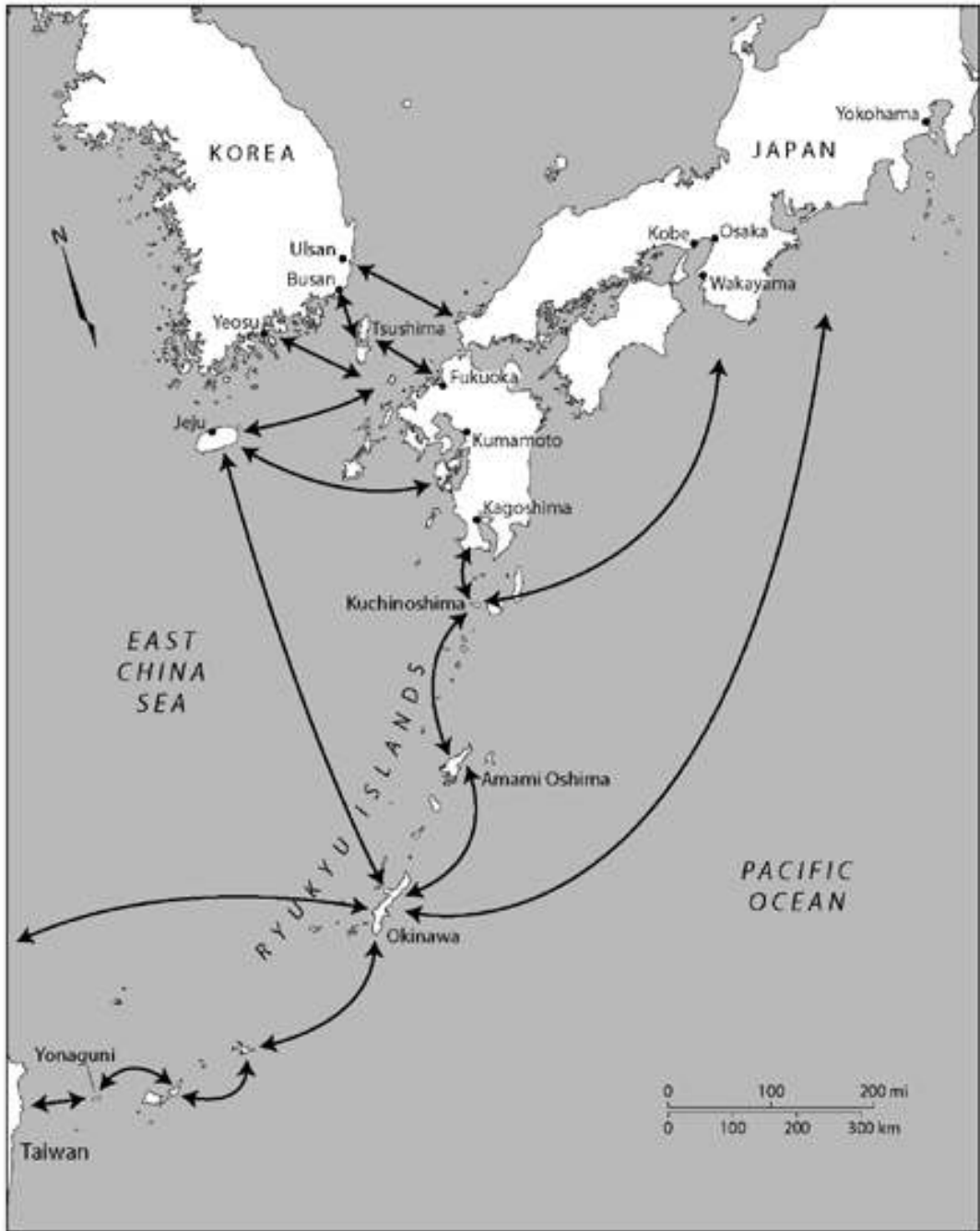
A Japanese police bulletin from 1952 describes the migrant smuggling routes that connected Korea to Japan throughout the Allied occupation period. Although smuggling ships were known to depart from various ports along the southern coast of Korea, including Busan, Masan, Yeosu, and Jeju Island, most of them stopped by the island of Tsushima instead of crossing directly to Japan.<sup>75</sup> Since the northernmost point of Tsushima is less than fifty kilometers from Busan, a mere three- to four-hour motorboat ride, these frontier islands emerged as the focal point for smuggling people into Japan. The so-called Tsushima route then extended to various parts of Japan, depending on changing security conditions, according to Japanese police reports provided to Allied occupation authorities. During the first year of the occupation, the closest and easiest point of entry into Japan from Tsushima was through Fukuoka Prefecture in Kyushu. As soon as the occupation forces clamped down on unauthorized entry, however, smuggling ships headed westward along the coastline of Fukuoka, Saga, and Nagasaki Prefectures and eastward to Yamaguchi, Shimane, and Tottori Prefectures. Following the further tightening of security measures in those prefectures, the course taken by smuggling ships switched to circumnavigating southern Kyushu, reaching the Inland Sea, and heading eastward to the major port cities of Kobe and Osaka.<sup>76</sup>

Besides its geographical proximity to Korea, the natural environment and topography of Tsushima accounted for the relative ease with which Koreans infiltrated the islands on their way to mainland Japan. The two main islands of

Tsushima are surrounded by over one hundred smaller islands, many of which have traditionally served as a natural base for the ubiquitous fishing industry. The small smuggling vessels engaged in the over-water market (*umi ichiba*) could blend in with the local fishing vessels, as they bartered various goods that were far more profitable than the fishing industry. Tsushima thus emerged as the major migrant smuggling base between Korea and Japan, earning its northern port city such nicknames as the “stowaway Ginza”<sup>77</sup> and the “Oriental Casablanca.” In addition, Tsushima is mountainous and covered with copse forests, largely unmarked by roads, making it an ideal place for illegal entrants to escape notice. Furthermore, the main cottage industries on the islands at the time were lumbering and manufacturing charcoal, which used over 530 known huts and countless others in more remote parts of the forests. The majority of the 2,400-plus Korean residents of Tsushima registered by Japanese authorities during the occupation period were employed by these cottage industries, moving from one charcoal-burning hut to another, while Korean smugglers used these same huts to hide illegal entrants.<sup>78</sup>

Tsushima has a long and rich history as a frontier island, which has both benefited and suffered from its position as a stepping-stone connecting Korea and Japan. Having long served as an important trade center, Tsushima was ravaged twice by the Mongol invasions in the late thirteenth century, only to become a maritime base for piracy that plagued the Korean and Chinese coastal cities between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>79</sup> Serving as a military base for Toyotomoi Hideyoshi’s armies that twice invaded Korea, the Tsushima domain enjoyed economic prosperity achieved by its exclusive trading rights with the Joseon Dynasty in Korea between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. In modern times, Tsushima played a decisive role in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, leading to the development of a military base economy on the island. During imperial Japan’s subsequent colonization of Korea, Tsushima was once again transformed into a relay station of socio-economic interaction between the Japanese metropole and the Korean colony. An overwhelming majority of Tsushima residents regularly traveled to Busan for everything from educational and employment opportunities to entertainment and shopping, and Koreans also migrated to Tsushima in increasing numbers, until they reached 10 percent of the island’s population by 1945.<sup>80</sup>

When Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule, Tsushima once again became a frontier, though the borderline drawn along the northern and western coasts soon made it a contentious boundary of division. In order to enforce the administrative separation of outlying islands from Japan, SCAP declared on January 29, 1946, that Japanese territory included the Tsushima Islands, but excluded



Map 3. Major smuggling routes in Northeast Asia, 1948



Jeju Island, Ulleung Island, and the “Liancourt Rocks.”<sup>81</sup> The exact delineation of the border between Japan and Korea remained unclear until the following June, when SCAP established what became known as the “MacArthur Line.”<sup>82</sup> Primarily concerned with defining the extent of the area in which Japanese fishermen could operate, the MacArthur Line running northwest of Tsushima effectively served as an administrative boundary that separated the two American occupations in Japan and Korea. However, USAMGIK contended that the MacArthur Line was no mere border of occupation, but rather constituted a territorial boundary, especially as it prepared to hand over sovereignty to the emergent South Korean state.

Shortly after general elections were held on May 10, 1948, General Hodge staked out his position on the contentious issue. In a memorandum addressed to General MacArthur, Hodge explained how USAFIK had directed the Korean Coast Guard to arrest Japanese fishermen crossing into Korean territorial waters, a violation for which they were subsequently tried and deported to Japan. The following month, William Sebald, chief of SCAP’s Diplomatic Section, countered that the seizure of Japanese vessels and their crews was unlawful, since the MacArthur Line could not technically be recognized as an international border until a peace treaty was signed with Japan to end the occupation. Although MacArthur ultimately agreed with Sebald, this did not prevent President Yi Seungman from directing the Coast Guard to continue to arrest Japanese fishermen crossing over what he held was the Republic of Korea’s national, territorial border.<sup>83</sup>

At the same time, the MacArthur Line was characterized by an ideological conflict that increasingly affected occupied Japan, namely, the containment of the communist threat from the Asian continent. For example, SCAP was alarmed by reported accounts of Korean communists crossing into Tsushima to hold secret meetings with their counterparts in Japan. According to a confidential report filed by SCAP’s Military Intelligence Section, communist leaders from Korea and Japan assembled at what was described as a liaison conference in the town of Kechi, Tsushima, on May 29, 1948. The ostensible purpose of the conference was to discuss the contemporary political situation in Korea and its effects on the planned activities of the Japanese Communist Party and the League of Koreans in Japan. Participants at the meeting were said to have exchanged opinions concerning the need to strengthen liaison methods, in order to counteract the recent establishment of the Japanese Coast Guard. The discussion reportedly led to the adoption of a plan to focus on the Tohoku and Hokkaido regions of Japan as liaison areas, and to use the entire Pacific coast of Japan, instead of depending solely on the Sea of Japan.<sup>84</sup>

This unverified intelligence report stated that the liaison conference held in Tsushima was attended by leading figures of leftist organizations, which were considered inimical to American interests. According to the report, Konno Yojiro—a member of the JCP’s politburo—represented a group of seven Japanese leftists from the JCP and the Japan Youth Communist League; Pak Sacheol—an executive member of the League of Koreans central committee—represented a group of more than a dozen Korean residents of Japan from the League and its affiliate, the Democratic Youth League; and Pak Heonyeong—chairman of the SKLP—represented a group of eight continental Koreans from the SKLP, the Democratic League, and the Democratic Women’s League. As the report explained, Pak Heonyeong was the leader of the underground resistance movement in southern Korea, and maintained close liaison with leaders of communist parties in northern Korea, China, and Japan. His purported participation in the Tsushima conference must have been especially troubling to American occupation officials.<sup>85</sup>

According to another confidential report filed by SCAP’s Military Intelligence Section, a second day of secret meetings was held in Tsushima, including one in the town of Izuhara, attended by thirteen Korean nationals identified only as “communist leaders.” As at the previous meeting, participants reportedly discussed political affairs in Korea, complaining bitterly of the recent election that solidified Yi Seungman’s authority, who was determined to suppress communism. As a result, they ostensibly agreed that “the time has come to realize that the only successful course is for the Japanese and Korean Communists to link their forces together and prepare for violent and aggressive action at the risk of their lives.”<sup>86</sup> Apparently, their course of action was to follow the tactics of resistance employed by those involved in the Jeju rebellion. According to these Koreans, the residents of Jeju Island made a show of obedience when occupation forces were dispatched to Mt. Halla, but the dissident groups quickly regrouped in defiance of local authorities as soon as the troops departed. The SKLP was said to have considered this to be an effective tactic, which was then being extended to the southern provinces of Korea, where dissident groups used the centrally located mountain range as a stronghold of resistance. In anticipation of the bloodshed spreading from Jeju to the Korean peninsula, these Koreans assembled in Tsushima vowed to support fellow communists in Korea as well as in Japan.

Occupation authorities were intent on uncovering underground liaison networks between communists in Korea and Japan during this period, but the veracity of these intelligence reports was never verified.<sup>87</sup> Instead, the first report noted that the intelligence “was obtained from a usually reliable source,” while the second evaluated the information as “possibly true.” Nevertheless, the plausibility of communist liaison activities in Tsushima served as a justification for

SCAP to begin fortifying the MacArthur Line as a Cold War frontier of the US containment policy.

When the Korean War broke out two years later, the Tsushima smuggling route served war refugees fleeing across the border, fanning American and Japanese fears of communist infiltration hidden among these border crossers. Korean communists may have entered Japan in this way, but Japanese intelligence was as inconclusive as its counterpart in the US military. One year after the North Korean invasion, the Japanese government submitted an investigative report to SCAP concerning the security situation on Tsushima. According to this report, four “north Korean guerillas” had smuggled themselves into Japan through Tsushima shortly after the war commenced, three of whom were identified by South Korean authorities. In addition, more than thirty North Korean operatives were said to have entered Tsushima between February and August 1951 before making their way to Japanese cities, where they were thought to be in close contact with the JCP.<sup>88</sup> Whether or not these were North Korean “guerillas” or “spies,” Japanese authorities carefully interrogated the backgrounds and, in particular, the political views of all Koreans who were arrested in Tsushima. Despite refusing to confess any sympathy for communism, insisting instead that they be treated as war refugees, they were deported to South Korea, where the Yi Seungman regime promised to mete out stern punishment against such “red” deserters.<sup>89</sup> Although Japanese and American authorities continued to crack down on unauthorized entry throughout the Korean War, the inflow of Korean men and women continued for over a decade, and Tsushima today remains a frontier island on alert against illegal immigration.

### **The Yamato Smuggling Trade**

Like the southern half of the divided Korean peninsula, residents of the Ryukyu Islands who wished to escape US military rule had to contend with the borders of occupation that isolated them from the rest of the region. The stringent border controls that American occupiers established in the Ryukyus severed vital socio-economic networks, which had historically served as bridges of interaction between the archipelago and the outside world. In the modern era, Okinawa Prefecture led Japan with the highest rates of emigration, as half of the average income of Okinawans is said to have derived from remittances sent home by emigrants. Such emigrants maintained close kinship networks through return migration and by sending foreign-born children to be educated in their native villages, thus expanding their web of “transnational families.”<sup>90</sup> In a similar way, networks of families and friends also expanded to major industrial centers in mainland Ja-

pan, where temporary migrants sent remittances and returned with their savings. These webs of transnational and transregional networks were cut off during the Battle of Okinawa and remained severed after the war.<sup>91</sup> In order to strictly enforce the complete separation of the Ryukyus from Japan, American occupiers prohibited not only the movement of people, but also the exchange of communications and remittance of money. The petition the League of Okinawans sent SCAP in November 1945, requesting a resumption in the flow of people, goods, and information between Japan and the Ryukyus, was ignored for years.

While human mobility was tightly constrained under US military rule, residents of the Ryukyus did not passively accept the imposed isolation for very long, as they steadily expanded the emerging black markets into a thriving smuggling trade. Before long, the island of Kuchinoshima on the 30th parallel border served as an important base of operations for their smuggling trade, transforming the small island into another important frontier of postwar Japan.

The black market economy that emerged in postwar Okinawa could not be contained within the artificial borders set up by USMGR, but extended to other parts of the Ryukyus and beyond. According to Uehara Jingorō, a native of Ito-man in southern Okinawa who was involved in the thriving black market trade, three main smuggling routes linked the Ryukyus to the rest of the region. One was the Taiwan route that spread from Yaeyama and Miyako, using Yonaguni Island as a relay station. The Hong Kong route was a large-scale extension of this Taiwan route. The third was the Japan route, otherwise known as the “Yamato trade,” spreading from Amami and Tokara with Kuchinoshima Island as its main base.<sup>92</sup> In other words, Yonaguni, located on the southern border with Taiwan, and Kuchinoshima to the north on the 30th parallel border with Japan, prospered as the north–south relay stations for smuggling in the Ryukyus.<sup>93</sup> In defiance of USMGR, residents of the Ryukyus were thus reinventing transnational and transregional networks of interaction based on a black market economy.

The development of smuggling networks in the Ryukyus relied heavily on tight-knit kinship bonds, in contrast to Korean smuggling networks, some of which involved cooperative relationships with Japanese nationals. In most cases, one or more merchants from a given island village or coastal township raised the necessary funds to charter a fishing vessel that was owned or operated by trusted friends or relatives from the same hometown. The close contacts that such merchant brokers had with kinship networks from before the war proved extremely useful, as the captain and his smuggling crew embarked upon the familiar fishing routes in the Ryukyus.<sup>94</sup>

A remarkable example of the sprawling smuggling network that reconnected Okinawa with various parts of the former Japanese empire can be found in the

Itoman fishing industry that Uehara Jingorō hailed from. During the colonial era of aggressive international competition, the Itoman fishermen became renowned for their wide-ranging fishing communities, which extended as far south as the Philippines and Micronesian islands, and as far north as Izu and the Ogasawara Islands in Japan.<sup>95</sup> Under US military rule, they managed to reestablish some of these prewar networks, beginning by building smuggling bases throughout the Ryukyus and along the Taiwan and Hong Kong routes. Encouraged by the profitable trade, they expanded their smuggling operations in the opposite direction towards Japan. The Itoman community in Kagoshima managed small inns near the harbor for accommodating fellow Okinawans, using portions of the rent to obtain secondhand fishing boats that could be used as smuggling ships.<sup>96</sup> The Kagoshima base of operations thus became the gateway to the Yamato trade, which extended to other major Japanese harbors, including those in the cities of Kobe, Osaka, Hamamatsu, and Yokohama.

Smuggling boats departing from the Ryukyu Islands to Kagoshima often stopped off at Kuchinoshima, the northernmost island of the Tokara Islands, which emerged as an important smuggling base on the Yamato trade. Barely thirteen square kilometers, this small and otherwise unremarkable island was unfamiliar to outsiders, unlike Tsushima, at least until smugglers transformed it into an inconspicuous haven for their underground trade. Its unexpected rise to prominence was due to its geographical proximity to the 30th parallel that administratively separated the Ryukyus and Japan. In fact, the 30° north latitude border actually cut through the northern end of Kuchinoshima, making this the only island in the Ryukyus that included Japanese territory. Those involved in the smuggling trade were attracted to Kuchinoshima for this reason, taking advantage of its position as a border island. Captains of smuggling boats from the Ryukyus were well aware of the fact that Liberty Ships patrolling Ryukyuan waters gave up pursuing them as soon as their boats crossed into Japanese waters. Similarly, those ashore knew that they could escape authorities by taking a footpath through the fields that led them across the 30th parallel border.<sup>97</sup>

The Yamato trade on Kuchinoshima initially involved black market brokers and suppliers, not only from various parts of the Ryukyu Islands and Japan, but also from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and even Korea. As a result of the increasing numbers of people arriving on this trade route to Japan, the once quiet village of Nishinohama on the northwestern part of the island came to be known as the “Yamato village.” After the People’s Republic was established in mainland China in October 1949, however, the ensuing crackdown against smuggling on the Taiwan and Hong Kong routes restricted the Yamato trade primarily to a Ryukyuan-Japanese operation.

Amamian smugglers, such as Ibusuki Kenshichi from Amami Oshima, often went to Kuchinoshima to sell brown sugar to Japanese black marketers from Kagoshima and Miyazaki Prefectures for a profit. Ibusuki paid Japanese brokers to buy up a certain portion of his brown sugar in Kuchinoshima before continuing on to Kagoshima, where profits were even higher. For example, brown sugar at the time sold in Amami Oshima for twenty B yen, or the equivalent of sixty Japanese yen, but could be sold for about 120 Japanese yen in Kuchinoshima and as much as 300 yen in Kagoshima, five times the original price. Many Amamians such as Ibusuki thus flocked to Kuchinoshima once they discovered the newfound profits to be made from their brown sugar, which came to be referred to as “black diamonds” in the smuggling trade.<sup>98</sup> Recent scholarship has shown that the brown sugar from Amami was also the most common commodity smuggled into the islands just north of Kuchinoshima, including Kuchinoerabu, Yakushima, and Tanegashima.<sup>99</sup> This chain of islands stretching across both sides of the 30th parallel border thus served as natural stepping-stones along the Yamato trade to Kagoshima and beyond.

If Amamians smuggled “black diamonds” across Kuchinoshima, Okinawan men and women discovered another distinctive form of *senka*, scrap metal, that proved to be a lucrative export commodity. The sheer destruction wrought by the Battle of Okinawa has been dubbed the “storm of steel,” which left behind the relics of countless US military jeeps, tanks, combat planes, and partially sunken vessels. During the Chinese civil war, RYCOM offered these rusted relics of war machines to Nationalist China, so that they could be recycled and used against the communists. Meanwhile, enterprising Okinawans also profited from smuggling out what they could get hold of through the Hong Kong route. With the outbreak of the Korean War, Japanese companies then paid for scrap metal that could be converted for their own special procurement industries.<sup>100</sup> By this time, entire families of Okinawans left home to gather this valuable commodity, accounting for the so-called scrap boom, smuggling it into Japan via Kuchinoshima on the Yamato trade route. Occupation authorities strictly prohibited the possession and sale of what they considered US military property, but this did not prevent residents from digging up scrap metal and smuggling it out of Okinawa.<sup>101</sup>

While economic deprivation in the US-occupied Ryukyus drove many to develop the Yamato smuggling trade into a thriving business, increasing numbers joined for social and political reasons. USMGR’s neglect of basic educational needs, for example, motivated schoolteachers to take the Japan route to smuggle in teaching materials. In October 1948, two teachers from Amami Oshima were fired by their schools for illegally entering Japan, an incident that prompted an outpouring of public sympathy when it was discovered that they had done so to purchase



Japanese textbooks for their students.<sup>102</sup> Others followed suit. In December 1949, a member of the Okinawa Youth Alliance (Okinawa Seinen Dōmei) in Japan smuggled into Okinawa sixty copies of Iha Fuyū's *Tales of Okinawan History* (*Okinawa rekishi monogatari*).<sup>103</sup> Given the fact that Okinawa still lay in ruins, these books served as a source of pride and inspiration for Okinawan activists and non-activists alike, not to mention useful history textbooks for teachers. Members of the Youth Alliance and the League of Okinawans often became teachers upon illegally entering Okinawa, and were known to have smuggled in copies of the new democratic constitution of Japan.<sup>104</sup> The democratic rights and values enshrined in the Japanese constitution were of great interest to Okinawans, since no such rights were guaranteed by USMGR in the Ryukyus.

The Yamato smuggling trade thus evolved into sociopolitical networks between residents in the Ryukyu Islands and Okinawan residents in Japan. Countering the strict censorship imposed by USMGR in the Ryukyus, Okinawan smugglers brought back unrestricted information about Japan, both in print and by word of mouth. Based on their firsthand accounts, these border crossers spread the news of the democratization and economic recovery of Japan, which benefited Okinawan residents there but which was denied in the Ryukyus. During the Korean War, they reported on the booming wartime economy, making Okinawans aware of the widening gap between mainland Japan and the Ryukyus. When local residents realized that American policy towards the Ryukyus was centered overwhelmingly on protecting its military assets, they began openly and actively resisting US military rule.

## Conclusion

At the outset of the US-sponsored repatriation programs in Northeast Asia, few people could have anticipated waves of unauthorized migrants fleeing one American zone of occupation for another. Yet this remarkable phenomenon transpired within a relatively short period of time, and soon came to reflect the ongoing process of regional resettlement in the wake of war and empire. If the failure to provide basic socio-economic assistance for Korean repatriates from Japan triggered their U-turn migration, then the rapidly deteriorating political vortex in southern Korea contributed to larger numbers of Koreans seeking refuge in Japan. Much of the political instability originated from USAMGIK's suppression of the KPR and the People's Committees—organizations most inclined to assist repatriating compatriots—largely because occupation officials saw them as advocating communism. Newly deployed US occupation officials at first did not fully understand

that what postliberation Korean society supported, more than any political ideology, was the long-cherished goal of self-determination. Destitute repatriates were among the Korean masses, dispossessed during the colonial period, who most welcomed the local People's Committees, which began confiscating and redistributing Japanese property on their behalf. Leftist associations from the KPR to their successor, the DNF, were not alone in advocating redistributive justice to support repatriates and refugees. Political parties inside and outside of the Interim Legislative Assembly demanded that Japanese property vested to USAMGIK should be released, or at least be placed on the market, in order to resolve the housing crisis that plagued southern Korea. USAMGIK's refusal to meet such demands contributed to rising public discontent towards occupation authorities and the conservative coalition they fostered.

Above all, the denial of self-determination after liberation generated resistance to US military rule and the American hegemony that it represented, leading to the "October people's resistance" in 1946 and the Jeju rebellion in 1948. Many repatriates had no choice but to live on the fringes of society in poor neighborhoods designated for them, decades after the revolutionary turmoil in divided and occupied Korea led to the bloody civil war between 1950 and 1953. Another consequence of the failed attempt at building a unified, postcolonial nation was that repatriates were joined by scores of other Koreans who escaped the political turmoil by traveling to Japan, illegally, before and after the Korean War.

The harsh socio-economic conditions of direct military rule also drove many Okinawan men and women to join the smuggling trade, but very few ventured to Japan for political reasons, at least not during the first few years after the war. This reflected differing political circumstances in the US-occupied Ryukyus and southern Korea. The Ryukyus may have been separated from Japan, but they were not a former colony to be rebuilt as an independent nation-state. The unbending efforts of American occupation officials towards building a Cold War regime did not clash with a grassroots decolonization campaign in the Ryukyus, as it did in southern Korea. In fact, this contentious relationship was reversed in the Ryukyus, albeit with a subtle twist: the American occupiers who supported de-Japanization ran into conflict with Ryukyu residents who espoused concrete forms of self-government.

USMGR initially implemented a more thorough version of SCAP's de-Japanization policy, not only distinguishing Ryukyuan from Japanese, but also dissolving Japanese rule in the Ryukyus. However, this process was limited by the lack of commitment towards a corresponding Ryukyuanization aimed at political, economic, and social rehabilitation. Beyond forming the Okinawa Advisory

Council, holding elections for mayors and councilmen, and appointing an Okinawan governor within the first year of the occupation, USMGR fell short of promising an independent Ryukyuan state. The occupation policy inertia in subsequent years led island residents to become increasingly disenchanted with US military rule, especially after Okinawan repatriates began pushing for progressive and substantive reforms. As a result, the mounting protests that shook Okinawa in 1948 and 1949 soon evolved into an organized movement demanding reversion to Japan in the early 1950s.<sup>105</sup>

## *“Blockade Runners” and the Making of “Aliens”*

American occupation authorities throughout Northeast Asia initiated a coordinated effort to resettle the realm of the Japanese Empire, relying on repatriation as a solution to pending problems in the aftermath of war and empire. In occupied Japan, this led to SCAP’s “de-Japanization” policy of registering “non-Japanese” and segregating them from Japanese society, in order to encourage them to repatriate. In what ways did the unexpected arrival of new immigrants to Japan affect these ongoing processes? How did they, together with the appearance of smugglers and war refugees, help shape migration and border controls in postimperial Japan?

Initial reports that immigrants were quietly entering Japan from its former empire—primarily from the Korean peninsula but also including the Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan—caught US occupation authorities completely off guard. Wartime policy documents and reports such as the civil affairs guide “Aliens in Japan” had failed to anticipate the possibility of postcolonial immigration, and the JCS’s Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive only stipulated that Koreans and Taiwanese in Japan could be repatriated. However, when subsequent reports indicated that increasing numbers of Koreans continued to arrive in Japan, SCAP directed occupation forces to prevent this new wave of immigration from offsetting its mass repatriation program. Units of the US Eighth Army were not the only occupation forces delegated this task; they also included the multinational British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF), consisting of 40,000 troops from Australia, New Zealand, England, and India, which occupied nine prefectures in the Chugoku and Shikoku regions of Japan.<sup>1</sup>

The official history of the Indian contingent of BCOF in Japan concisely summarizes the movement of Koreans to and from Japan, as well as the American response, in the following terms: “SCAP had decided to repatriate every Korean who did not want to be a Japanese citizen back to Korea and declared all Korean immigrants illegal. It was therefore necessary for Occupation troops to blockade all ports of entry and apprehend the blockade runners.”<sup>2</sup> The editor of this history, Lieutenant Colonel Rajendra Singh, accurately interpreted the

essence of American policy towards Koreans in Japan, which after November 1946 held that those who refused repatriation would retain Japanese nationality. Furthermore, Singh's description of Korean immigrants as "blockade runners" aptly captures SCAP's policy of closing the borders of occupation, treating those who entered occupied Japan without its explicit permission as illegal immigrants. Such wartime imagery associated with the term "blockade runners," more than migrant smuggling and illegal immigration, is evocative of the perceived security threat that they posed. In particular, they were seen as a challenge to the occupation authority and its mission of dismantling the Japanese Empire.

At the time of writing, when India was just emerging from British colonial rule, Singh gave no indication of his personal views on Korean immigrants or how their migration to Japan was related to the process of decolonization. As a commissioned officer and editor, his primary responsibility was instead to provide an official, historical account on the Indian contingent's contribution to the Allied occupation, including the blockade of occupied Japan from postcolonial migration.

This naval blockade was implemented through ad hoc measures by which unauthorized immigrants were distinguished from resident migrants. Tracing the development of border controls in occupied Japan sheds light on how and why occupation authorities collaborated with Japanese police in arresting and interrogating unauthorized immigrants from Korea, often without providing access to legal counsel, before deporting them. SCAP had to rely not only on the Japanese police, but also BCOF in the Chugoku region and the US Eighth Army in the Kyushu region and other parts of Japan, in addition to USAFIK along the Korean coastline, to fortify these border controls. The reports of the Indian contingent, along with the New Zealand contingent of BCOF, not to mention USAFIK and USAMGIK records—some of which were at odds with SCAP's policies—offer critical insights into this last piece of the puzzle in resettling Northeast Asia after war and empire.

The enforcement of deportation from occupied Japan demonstrates that the punitive regulations aimed at containing unauthorized immigration were much more than instruments of migration and border control. Instead, deportation became a powerful tool of discretionary social and political control in Japan, as it was in the United States, constituting "a key feature of the national security state, and a most tangible component of recurrent episodes of xenophobia."<sup>3</sup> The US government's Immigration Act of 1924, aimed at excluding Asians and restricting other groups of migrants to America, had produced the politically charged subject labeled "illegal aliens," who were barred from citizenship and threatened with deportation. Strikingly reminiscent of this US policy of excluding Asian

immigration, SCAP prohibited Koreans, Chinese, and Okinawans from entering occupied Japan, and those who did so without its explicit permission were subject to deportation. Mounting concerns over illegal immigration and black marketeering in Japan, compounded by inter-ethnic tensions and intolerance against former colonial subjects, precipitated a nationwide alien registration in 1947.

Legal categories distinguishing “citizens” from “aliens,” not to mention “legal” versus “illegal” aliens, were foreign impositions upon occupied Japan, where judicial provisions guaranteeing a basic set of rights for immigrants did not exist before 1945. For Japanese authorities, the very notion of former colonial subjects claiming any rights in postimperial Japan was anathema. The enactment of alien registration, bitterly opposed by the leading Korean organizations, enabled the Japanese government to identify this new category of “illegal aliens” for deportation, while denying basic civil rights to “resident aliens.” During the following year, SCAP began rebuilding Japan as a Cold War ally of the United States by cracking down on the political activities of leftists, and by strengthening its borders against the threat of communism from Asia. This chapter examines how mounting security concerns over communist infiltration and subversion merged with underlying discriminatory attitudes against migrant minorities to produce a stringent and exclusionary immigration system in postwar Japan. This convergence, backed up by a deepening collaborative relationship between SCAP and the Japanese government, reveals how Asian minorities were increasingly marginalized in Japan after empire.

The conflict over illegal immigration involved not only former colonial subjects, but also migrants arriving from the archipelago formerly known as Okinawa Prefecture. American occupation authorities in Japan responded to smugglers from the Ryukyu Islands exactly as they did with those from the Korean peninsula and other parts of Asia: arresting, interrogating, and deporting them for illegal entry. However, the overall effectiveness of identifying illegal entrants from the Ryukyus was contingent upon whether or not Okinawan and Amamian residents in Japan were subject to the newly enacted alien registration system.

This practical problem revealed divergent views between the occupation administration and the central government in Japan. On the one hand, SCAP had ordered Okinawans and Amamians who desired repatriation to be registered as “Ryukyuan,” thus categorizing them as non-Japanese in 1946. On the other hand, the Japanese government insisted that those who remained in Japan should be treated as Japanese nationals, and therefore resisted the idea of registering them as “aliens” the following year. Such conflicting perspectives, which highlighted the problem of distinguishing Ryukyuan from Okinawans and Amamians—and between “non-Japanese” and “aliens”—made it practically impossible to identify illegal entrants from the Ryukyus.



Meanwhile, the enactment of travel regulations in 1949 authorized limited mobility between the Ryukyus and Japan in order to eliminate illegal border crossings and capture leftist agitators, reflecting the Cold War concerns of American occupation authorities. Issuing travel documents in the form of passports reinforced the treatment of Ryukyuan residents as non-Japanese nationals, even while Okinawan and Amamian residents of Japan were to be considered Japanese nationals. This “passport system” symbolized the legal anomaly of the US-occupied Ryukyus and, as such, was treated separately from Japan’s immigration system, which was still in the process of development. Taken together, this set of two migration control regimes demonstrates the extent to which American occupiers contributed to the process of transforming designated categories of Japanese imperial subjects into aliens.

### **Apprehending “Blockade Runners”**

Within months of the postwar occupation, American authorities were made aware of the fact that numerous Koreans as well as Japanese were freely crossing the Korea Strait back and forth, as if to make up for the suspension of commercial travel. Based on the content of private letters that were intercepted between Japan and Korea, US intelligence units began regularly reporting instances of “secret shipping,” “black market shipping,” and “smuggling.”<sup>4</sup> Occupation officials increasingly viewed such unregulated movements of people and goods as an unwelcome challenge to the official repatriation program that was underway.

Concerned that many of these people were engaged in the expanding black market trade, SCAP prohibited all smuggling operations in January 1946 by closing Japan’s borders to unauthorized entry. In June SCAP explicitly outlawed the movement of Koreans into Japan to prevent the spread of cholera from Korea, authorizing Japanese authorities to apprehend those who violated the travel ban. Taken together, these measures amounted to what Lieutenant Colonel Rajendra Singh referred to as the “blockade” of occupied Japan, designed to apprehend so-called blockade runners. The alien registration that began a year later, which combined wartime Japanese and American models, reinforced this blockade by creating a domestic surveillance system for detecting and capturing illegal aliens. The effectiveness of such restrictive and divisive mechanisms depended on the ability of SCAP to coordinate its efforts with a range of authorities—not only with the US Eighth Army, BCOF, and Japanese authorities, but also with the US Armed Forces in Korea—each of which acted according to its respective jurisdictional interests.

Not all occupation officials closely involved with Korean affairs in Japan were as eager as the rank-and-file occupation forces stationed throughout Japan to

enforce the naval blockade. For example, Lieutenant James Graham—liaison officer for USAMGIK on assignment in Senzaki, Japan—was concerned that the continued smuggling of Koreans into Japan brought added prejudice against Korean residents in Japan. Echoing critical views of other USAMGIK officials, including Captain Robert Beyer's earlier report, he observed that widespread discrimination and unsympathetic treatment of Koreans in Japan contributed to the problem. In order to tackle this problem, Lieutenant Graham sent an internal memo to USAMGIK's Office of Foreign Affairs in May 1946, listing a series of measures that could be implemented to reduce the number of illegal immigrants to Japan. Among them, he suggested that SCAP and USAMGIK consider a plan to reestablish regulated commercial travel between Japan and Korea to allow civilians to legitimately enter and exit each country for personal reasons. Reflecting on the fact that Korea under US military rule, like occupied Japan, was isolated from the rest of the region, he concluded, "it is time to take the iron ring from around Korea and permit a gradual return to normal international discourse."<sup>5</sup>

Lieutenant Graham's proposal of establishing commercial travel may not have curbed the problem of discrimination against Koreans in Japan, but it most likely would have minimized the contested battle against illegal immigration that was just unfolding. Nevertheless, neither USAMGIK nor SCAP officials were prepared to seriously consider lifting the "iron ring" from their respective occupied territories. Instead, they were more interested in his secondary suggestions, including the need for a publicity campaign to raise greater awareness among Koreans that unauthorized entry into Japan was a punishable crime. The liaison office for USAMGIK in Fukuoka echoed this suggestion, since many of the Koreans apprehended for illegal entry insisted that they were never informed of any travel ban.<sup>6</sup> In another report, Lieutenant Graham also stressed the need for the newly established Korean Coast Guard to take effective measures to prevent migrant smuggling ships from leaving the southern coast of the Korean peninsula.<sup>7</sup> The Eighth Army in Kyushu, Japan, agreed that the major Korean ports of Busan, Masan, Yeosu, and Jeju had to be patrolled and checked more effectively to control the source of illegal shipping. By late 1947, however, the Korean Coast Guard was embroiled in a series of violent incidents against the right-wing NWYC, raising fears that communists were infiltrating its ranks.<sup>8</sup> With the increasing level of concern over communism and border crossers from northern Korea, the Eighth Army and SCAP could not always count on support from the Coast Guard in apprehending Koreans headed for Japan.

Meanwhile, SCAP trusted BCOF to lend its logistical support in reining in blockade runners from Korea as soon as BCOF assumed control over the occupation of the nine prefectures that made up the Chugoku and Shikoku regions of

Japan. The New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) that occupied Yamaguchi Prefecture, which had one of the nearest Japanese coastlines to the Korean peninsula, was soon familiarized with the problem of illegal immigration. According to one NZEF report, as of June 1946, the only method employed by occupation troops to apprehend ships carrying illegal immigrants was a system of patrolling the coast, either on foot or in vehicles. Arguing that it was impossible to cover all likely landing places by the use of shore patrols alone, the report recommended that naval patrols working on information supplied by air patrol reconnaissance would be able to cover the coastline more effectively.<sup>9</sup>

In response, a conference was held at the headquarters of BCOF, where occupation officials decided to combine the resources of the New Zealand Air Force and the Royal Indian Navy in assisting Japanese authorities on the ground. BCOF's Navy cruiser, the HMIS *Sutlej*, thus began patrolling the sea off the coast of Yamaguchi and Shimane Prefectures on July 2, and was authorized to halt and search any vessels carrying passengers destined for illegal entry to Japan. Any unidentified vessel that failed to halt was "liable to be fired upon."<sup>10</sup>

BCOF quickly streamlined border control measures implemented by its New Zealand, Australian, British, and Indian contingents, but it periodically had to request the US Eighth Army to increase coordination with American occupation forces. For example, in July 1946 Lieutenant General C. H. Clifton—commander in chief of BCOF—sent a report to the US Eighth Army regarding the illegal immigration of Koreans to Japan. In this report, General Clifton explains that BCOF ground forces were unable to cooperate with the reconnaissance mission of the US Navy's cruiser, USS *E. R. Larson*, off Senzaki and Hagi, because BCOF received no prior information regarding the mission. He recommended that in the future any US naval craft patrolling the waters within the BCOF area of jurisdiction notify his headquarters in advance to enforce joint and coordinated plans.<sup>11</sup> However, General Clifton's recommendation appears to have fallen on deaf ears, as a BCOF report in April 1947 maintained that no direct means of communication existed between BCOF and US naval patrols operating in the Korea Strait, nor with the air or land forces. To better facilitate the exchange of information on the movements of illegal immigrants, the report proposed that a "Combined Report Center" be formed,<sup>12</sup> later culminating in the establishment of the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Center in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture.

When Korean blockade runners managed to penetrate BCOF's tight air and navy patrols, BCOF's ground forces cooperated with the local Japanese police to search for them in resident Korean communities. According to an intelligence report compiled by the 5/1 Punjab Regiment based in Tottori Prefecture, the regiment made a monthly check on the homes of all Koreans in the prefecture to

ascertain whether any of them had landed illegally.<sup>13</sup> Other reports noted that illegal entrants often adopted false aliases, moving from place to place, and so attempted to avoid detection. Since the abolition of the colonial *Kyōwakai* system, the Japanese police could no longer verify the *Kyōwakai* passbooks that had identified Koreans who legitimately resided in Japan. As a result, authorities turned to another form of personal identification that was of great importance to everyday life in the immediate aftermath of war: food ration passbooks.

Japanese and BCOF officials alike recognized that these passbooks were not only a critical source of food for Koreans, but could also be used to verify the legitimacy of their residency in Japan. The commanding officer of the 22nd New Zealand Battalion ordered the chief of the Shimonoseki police to deport all Koreans who did not possess their ration tickets and were living by black marketeering. In response, the Police Department of Yamaguchi Prefecture submitted a plan to strengthen its surveillance over Korean residents throughout the prefecture by investigating not only the food distribution centers but also municipal offices and Korean associations.<sup>14</sup> Starting in October 1946, a similar course of action was initiated in Hiroshima Prefecture, where the police checked all foreign nationals by their ration books in an effort to apprehend illegal immigrants. Those who could not produce sufficient evidence of their identity automatically became suspect and were subject to arrest and deportation.<sup>15</sup> Ration passbooks thus functioned as rudimentary identification documents to distinguish colonial migrants from illegal immigrants.

Using food ration passbooks as official forms of identification for the purpose of state surveillance proved inefficient, since many Koreans as well as Japanese lived off the black markets throughout occupied Japan, without relying on rations alone. Earlier in the year, SCAP had directed the Japanese government to restrict population movements from rural to urban areas, due to housing shortages, unemployment, and food distribution difficulties.<sup>16</sup> This meant that the great waves of persons moving into the cities without official permits became "unregistered people" (*musekisha*), who were unable to apply for food ration passbooks, including large numbers of Koreans. When the US Eighth Army and BCOF ordered prefectural police to round up illegal Koreans for deportation, local authorities often had no easy means of differentiating between unregistered residents and unauthorized immigrants.

Nevertheless, the uniformity of prefectural police chiefs in various parts of Japan proposing to track down illegal entrants by checking for ration passbooks is remarkable, and contrasts starkly with the lack of coordination that often plagued the Allied occupation forces. The powerful Home Ministry still exercised considerable authority over the police force in Japan during this time period and,

in spite of SCAP's policy of decentralizing the police apparatus, proactively contributed to the joint effort in controlling illegal immigration. In June 1946 the ministry also sought sweeping powers to deport Korean "troublemakers," a proposal that SCAP rejected on the grounds that such a measure could be perceived as overtly discriminatory.<sup>17</sup> SCAP wished to avoid the public perception that many of its officers were privately prejudiced against Koreans, though it condoned the increasing xenophobic trend in Japan of overt slander against Asian minorities for their alleged lawlessness. The Japanese media had already begun blaming these minorities for the rampant black market economy in early 1946, a misleading view that was amplified in July by the sensational coverage of a violent incident between the police and Taiwanese "gangsters" in Shibuya, Tokyo.<sup>18</sup> The press also served as a mouthpiece for politicians who were quick to denounce former colonial subjects in the Diet, including Ono Tomemutsu, general secretary of the Liberal Party, who stated that the "social order is being destroyed by non-Japanese nationals." According to an American journalist named David Conde, the growing intensity of subsequent reports led to a "violently demagogic speech" in the Diet on August 17 by Shiikuma Saburō, a member of the Progressive Party, who stated:

We refuse to stand by in silence watching Formosans and Koreans, who have resided in Japan as Japanese up to the time of the surrender, swaggering about as if they were nationals of victorious nations. We admit we are a defeated nation but it is most deplorable that those who lived under our law and order until the very moment of the surrender should suddenly alter their attitude to act like conquerors . . . committing unspeakable violence everywhere. In our misery of defeat, the actions of these Koreans and Formosans makes the blood in our veins boil.<sup>19</sup>

Drawing applause from sympathetic Diet members, Shiikuma went on to accuse Koreans of forming the "nucleus of all black market operations," and "their actions influence all commercial transactions and social life in Japan today." As Conde noted, however, nearly everyone in Japan bought or sold on the black market, and even Prime Minister Higashikuni observed that the extensive involvement of all sectors of society in the illicit business had contributed to Japan's defeat. Nevertheless, Shiikuma made further exaggerated claims by portraying illegal immigrants as dangerous forces of invasion, stating: "The number has reached some tens of thousands and they have carried lethal weapons and formed gangs to manifest astonishing maliciousness, threatening the lives and property of those on whom they descend."<sup>20</sup>

Much of Shiikuma's information was based on official reports by the Home Ministry, which also fanned anti-Korean sentiment. In a subsequent report to the House of Peers on Korean illegal immigrants and black marketeers, Home Minister Ōmura Seiichi blamed their "mistaken sense of superiority as liberated nationals."<sup>21</sup> As a Reuters journalist and a former officer in SCAP's Civil Information and Education Section, Conde knew SCAP censors had read and approved all such attacks against Koreans in the Japanese press. He thus had reason to conclude that occupation authorities contributed to the problem, pointing out how they often expressed anti-Korean sentiment and did not conceal their preference for the Japanese.<sup>22</sup> Conde's assessment reiterated the critical reports of USAMGIK officials, such as Robert Beyer and James Graham, who observed that discriminatory attitudes of the Japanese were being adopted by American authorities.

Encouraged by the growing anti-Korean sentiment, the Home Ministry moved quickly to enact countermeasures against unregistered Koreans and illegal entrants, with direct support from SCAP. This began with a coordinated effort with the police in Osaka Prefecture, which initiated a comprehensive registration of Koreans, thereby attempting to reassert Japanese authority over these former colonial subjects. On September 18, 1946, the Osaka Prefectural Police submitted a plan requiring all Koreans in the prefecture to be fingerprinted at the local police office, which would then issue them identification cards. The Osaka Regional Military Government Team approved this plan because it was deemed more effective than using ration passbooks to identify illegal immigrants.<sup>23</sup> The Korean Registration Ordinance of Osaka Prefecture was thus enacted on November 31, closely resembling the Kyōwakai passbooks, as the police directly administered the fingerprinted identification passbooks for the surveillance of all Korean residents. For this very reason, the Osaka headquarters of the League of Koreans in Japan led a sustained campaign against the reenactment of Korean registration, criticizing the police for targeting Korean residents and treating them as if they were all lawless elements who needed special monitoring. A newsletter sponsored by the League's central headquarters succinctly identified the underlying problem:

We do not defend stowaways. However, using several thousand or perhaps twenty to thirty thousand stowaways as a pretext for issuing residency cards, thus suppressing and trampling upon the social actions and human rights of nearly one million Koreans; mobilizing the media and [government] assemblies to publicize and politicize this issue; isn't this the cunning and far-reaching plot and trap of aggressors and militarists who are hiding in the shadows?<sup>24</sup>



This article represented the critical view of resident Koreans, who chastised Japanese authorities for their attempt to criminalize former colonial subjects by propagating the image that they were stowaways who deserved to be deported. Ultimately, the League's refusal to comply with the fingerprinting requirement, combined with the large number of individuals who falsified their documents, defeated the Korean registration in Osaka, as the ordinance was abolished a half year later.<sup>25</sup>

Recent scholarship has suggested that a BCOF proposal to issue new identity cards for foreigners in Japan, sent to the US Eighth Army in September 1946, may have served as a basis for postwar Japan's alien registration system.<sup>26</sup> Occupation authorities did advocate such a system of registration, if only because it served as a useful means to distinguish Koreans and other Asians from Japanese. In fact, it was Japanese government officials who were the strongest proponents of a nationwide system for registering aliens, submitting several proposals to SCAP for approval. While the Osaka Prefectural Police began registering Koreans in December 1946, the Home Ministry planned to register all Koreans, Taiwanese, and Chinese in Japan as aliens, primarily to detect and deport illegal immigrants. Hata Shigenori and other Home Ministry officials formerly in the Survey and Analysis Section, which had exercised jurisdiction over colonial subjects, devised plans for registering them based on wartime regulations.<sup>27</sup> In the process, Hata found common ground with the Government Section's Korean Division led by Captain Jack P. Napier, who advocated measures to prohibit Koreans from engaging in black markets, smuggling, and illegal immigration.

Issued on May 2, 1947, the Alien Registration Ordinance merged Japanese and American models for issuing official identity documents to certain groups of migrants, who were subject to state surveillance. The Japanese ordinance reflected certain provisions of the US Alien Registration Act of 1940, such as the stipulation requiring Koreans, Taiwanese, and Chinese above the age of fourteen to register and carry alien passbooks. The format of these passbooks, which recorded personal information next to a photograph of the individual holder, was markedly similar to both those issued by the US federal government and the Japanese *Kyōwakai*.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, in contrast to the repatriation registration, alien registration was made compulsory, empowering the Japanese police to arrest and deport anyone who violated the regulations. According to SCAP, the registration ordinance specifically provided for the deportation of illegal entrants, but it also "gave the police a register of potential [*sic*] troublesome aliens."<sup>29</sup> More importantly, while the ordinance explained that the registration was for "administrative purposes," it essentially transformed former colonial subjects into "aliens" in occupied Japan.

Measuring the effectiveness of the national alien registration system as a device for apprehending illegal entrants showed mixed results. On the one hand, the

Table 2. Number of aliens arrested for illegal entry to Japan

		Year						Total
		1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	
Place of Origin	Korea	17,733	6,010	7,978	8,302	2,434	3,503	45,960
	Ryukyu Islands	0	65	102	313	403	821	1,704
	China	4	117	87	87	21	94	410

Notes: Figures include both those arrested at sea and on land. China here includes Taiwan.

Source: Hōmushō Nyūkoku Kanrikyoku, ed., *Shutsunyūkoku kanri to sono jittai: Shōwa 39-nen ban* (Tokyo: Hōmushō Nyūkoku Kanrikyoku, 1964), p. 16.

year in which the Alien Registration Ordinance was passed, the number of illegal entrants dropped by 35 percent from the previous year. On the other hand, these figures were followed by an overall increase in illegal immigration throughout Japan, as the number of arrests rose again the following two years. A similar pattern was observed for the corresponding figures of Koreans arrested for illegal entry (see Table 2). Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) reports indicated a growing trend of Korean immigrants acquiring fraudulent alien registration passbooks once they entered Japan.

Before long, migrant smuggling brokers on the Tsushima route began specializing in the fabrication of registration certificates, and in some cases obtaining legitimate ones, then selling them to illegal entrants for as much as ¥20,000 before they continued on to other parts of Japan.<sup>30</sup> Under such circumstances, the Tsushima police admitted that the rate of arrest in 1951 was as low as 50 percent, while the Japanese Maritime Safety Board determined that the rate was actually only 20–30 percent.<sup>31</sup> More effective measures for apprehending Korean blockade runners were thus contingent upon closer collaboration between Allied and Japanese authorities to revamp alien registration, strengthening it as the central component of a more stringent immigration system in postwar Japan.

## Detention and Deportation

Close attention to Koreans who were arrested for illegal entry reveals a more complete picture of the development of migration and border controls in occupied Japan. In general, those apprehended at sea were returned to Korea straight away, while those who managed to land in Japan were taken to detention camps where they were interrogated before deportation. Koreans arrested in the BCOF zone of occupation were initially transported to a barbed-wired detention camp at the



Figure 6. Japanese police searching fishing boat off the coast of Tsushima with Korean crew suspected of smuggling operations, 1948. Reproduced with permission from Asahi Shimbun Company.

Senzaki repatriation reception center in Yamaguchi Prefecture. When the number of detainees exceeded the capacity of the compound, the surplus was shipped over to the Sasebo repatriation reception center in Nagasaki Prefecture, where the US Eighth Army processed them for deportation.<sup>32</sup> Including another detention camp, subsequently established at Hario near Sasebo, these networks of detention camps became an important part of the Allied occupation's blockade of Japan.

From 1948 onwards, the deportation of Koreans became closely entangled with the increasing preoccupation with containing the spread of communism. For American and Japanese authorities, illegal immigration was no longer simply a socio-economic problem involving black markets, but was now connected to the greater threat of communist subversion.<sup>33</sup> SCAP therefore began actively collaborating with the Japanese government in strengthening postwar Japan's deportation system, which was marked by Cold War security concerns. Just like the joint measures implemented to apprehend blockade runners, the establishment of such a stringent system for detention and deportation was contingent upon this collaboration—not only at the policy level, but also between occupation forces and local authorities throughout Japan, as well as in Korea.

The distinction between repatriation and deportation became increasingly blurred in 1946, reflecting another significant problem in the American-led effort at postwar resettlement in the region. The fact that occupation authorities in Japan transported illegal entrants to detention camps at or near repatriation centers before sending them back to their homeland meant, perhaps inevitably, that deportees and repatriates were often grouped together. SCAP's most comprehensive directive to the Japanese government regarding repatriation, SCAPIN 927, issued in May 1946, contained an important stipulation concerning deportation. Specifically, SCAPIN 927 stipulated that Japanese authorities were not allowed to "repatriate Korean civil prisoners from Japan until they have served their terms of imprisonment."<sup>34</sup> The enforcement of this provision was SCAP's attempt to ensure that Koreans arrested for various crimes were given a fair trial before they were "repatriated," a practice that was also adopted in cases involving illegal entrants.

Just like this SCAP memorandum, official BCOF documents did not strictly distinguish the term "deportation" from "repatriation." At the time, as is still the case today, the two terms were often used interchangeably. For example, a report by the New Zealand Expeditionary Force stated that after August 1946, following an outbreak of cholera, "the only repatriation carried on at Sensaki" was the "shipping back to Korea of illegal immigrants through Sasebo." The report further notes that by mid-August LSTs were made available to transport the majority of Koreans to Sasebo, and "the ferry service has been able to keep pace with the influx at Sensaki."<sup>35</sup> This influx of Koreans into Sensaki refers to captured illegal entrants, and their "repatriation" from Sasebo actually meant *forcible deportation* back to Korea. Such ambiguous use of terminology reflected BCOF's attitude that its primary concern was to ship Koreans out of Japan, whether they were repatriates or deportees.

From the perspective of USAMGIK and Korean officials employed by the military government, whether returning Koreans repatriated voluntarily or were forcibly deported from Japan was a crucial difference with real consequences. Whereas American authorities in Korea processed repatriates for resettlement, it tried the captured crews and the owners or operators of the migrant smuggling vessels, as well as the passengers, in appropriate courts for unauthorized exit or illegal traffic.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, within the American occupation zone in southern Korea, repatriates from Japan were often seen as displaced persons or victims of Japanese colonialism, whereas deportees were chastised as traitors or defectors from the Korean nation. In one case, an irate officer from the Korean Constabulary sharply rebuked 305 deportees who had been shipped back from Japan. The Korean officer accused the deportees of being "deserters" who abandoned Korea

at the very moment when their home country needed their help to build an independent state.<sup>37</sup> Such “deserters” thus represented an additional, unwelcome complication to local officials already burdened by the ongoing task of reintegrating far larger numbers of compatriots into postcolonial Korean society.

USAMGIK became so concerned over the increasing number of deportees among Koreans who were supposed to be voluntarily repatriated from Japan that it decided to lodge an official complaint with SCAP. In August 1947, Lieutenant General John Hodge—commander of USAMGIK—wrote a letter to General MacArthur complaining that even though SCAP’s mass repatriation program was officially terminated in December 1946, the number of repatriates from Japan had steadily increased in previous months. It became evident, Hodge explained, that the Japanese government in many instances had exercised undue license in interpreting SCAPIN 927, using the authority delegated as a device to deport troublesome Korean nationals. As a result, he claimed the Korean repatriation program had ceased to be of a voluntary nature, despite SCAP’s claims to the contrary.

Further, since Japanese police or court records of civil offenders were not being transmitted to Korea, Korean police and security agencies that aided USAFIK encountered difficulty in the surveillance and control of deportees. Hodge alleged that the laxity of controls exercised by Japanese authorities “gave impetus to smuggling operations,” thus complicating the problem of enforcing customs and health measures. To resolve these problems, he strongly recommended that SCAP issue appropriate directives to the Japanese government. Specifically, Hodge requested that (1) Korean repatriation continue to be voluntary in nature, and to operate in conformance with SCAPIN 927; (2) except where illegal entry could be proved, Koreans should not be deported in lieu of serving sentences imposed by judicial authorities; (3) sentences of Korean civil prisoners should not be remitted or mitigated before the normal period prescribed by law has expired; (4) when civil prisoners are repatriated, complete records should be submitted prior to the return of the individual to Korea; and (5) clearance should be secured from USAFIK headquarters before Korean nationals are repatriated to southern Korea.<sup>38</sup>

This letter highlighted the conflict of interest between USAMGIK and SCAP regarding repatriation and, by extension, deportation. General Hodge recognized the importance attached by occupation forces in Japan to continue repatriating Koreans who desired to return to their homeland, while deporting those convicted of criminal acts or of having illegally entered Japan. As he also noted, however, the steady increase in the overall number of Koreans sent back from Japan was detrimental to the southern Korean economy, which was already taxed by the influx of over 110,000 refugees from northern Korea between February and August of 1947.



An internal memo circulated within SCAP's General Headquarters revealed that occupation officials also viewed these Koreans in similar terms, namely as a threat to Japan's economic recovery. Being illegally in Japan, the memo claimed they were "obliged to live outside the law and gravitate toward criminal pursuits," a reference to their involvement in black market activities.<sup>39</sup> In October 1947, General MacArthur responded to Hodge's letter, agreeing thereafter to provide information on repatriates, illegal entrants, and criminal convicts, though stopping short of addressing the basic problem of large numbers of Koreans being deported from Japan.<sup>40</sup> This was also an indirect acknowledgment that the Japanese government had been deporting not only illegal entrants, but also resident Koreans arrested for other crimes, a practice that would continue under SCAP's auspices.

Between 1947 and 1948, the Japanese government's increasing efforts to reestablish control over resident Koreans was matched by SCAP's expanding surveillance over their close ties to communism. This convergence of interests occurred in the context of a broad shift in US occupation policy towards Japan, from the early focus on demilitarization and democratization to the later emphasis on remilitarization and economic reconstruction to support Cold War objectives in East Asia. Even before this policy shift, which became widely known as the "reverse course,"<sup>41</sup> a Japanese-American collaborative endeavor to gather and share intelligence on communist activities was already underway. Shortly after the war, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, an avid anti-communist who headed SCAP's G-2 Section, secretly enlisted Lieutenant General Arisue Seizō, the Imperial Japanese Army's former military intelligence chief, to monitor communist regimes in China and Korea. Arisue and other high-ranking Japanese staff officers also assisted Willoughby by setting up a domestic surveillance section within G-2 to keep track of the Japanese Communist Party and Korean nationalists.<sup>42</sup> This collaborative relationship deepened with the onset of the Cold War-inspired "reverse course."

Japanese and occupation authorities shared a common antipathy towards "lawless" and "radical" Koreans, and in particular towards the political activities of the League of Koreans. SCAP and the US Eighth Army were well aware of the League's ties with the Japanese Communist Party since its inception, and the CIC had been closely tracking its connections with leftist forces in Korea through its branch offices in Busan and Seoul. In September 1947, US Army Intelligence reported that the League had become heavily involved in illegal entry, smuggling, and black marketeering and was "funneling the proceeds from these illicit activities to the Communist Party."<sup>43</sup> The League's vocal demands to free Koreans apprehended for illegal entry only further deepened suspicion and antagonism



among local authorities. Between October and December 1946, *Haebang sinmun*, the official newsletter of the League of Koreans, published a series of investigative reports on the poor conditions of compatriots who were held at detention camps across the Kyushu region.<sup>44</sup> Based on these publicized findings, the League spearheaded a protest movement against the unjust treatment of Korean detainees and their deportation.

A series of incidents in 1948 led to a direct clash between the occupation and the League of Koreans, resulting in the deportation of Korean activists belonging to the organization. The first of these incidents was sparked by SCAP's crackdown on ethnic education in April—the so-called Hanshin Educational Struggle—a series of violent confrontations that broke out in the cities of Osaka and Kobe over issues of cultural and political autonomy.<sup>45</sup> Suspecting Korean schools operated by the League as potential hotbeds of communist propaganda, SCAP ordered the Japanese government to close these schools so that Korean children would attend Japanese schools from April 1948. On April 23, an estimated 15,000 Korean protesters rallied in Osaka, where a group of teachers, principals, and leaders of the League broke into the prefectural office to present their demands to the governor. The police rounded up several hundred Koreans and confined them overnight in the auditorium of a nearby school, including Chang Jeongsu, who in his capacity as a League representative had failed to win any concessions from the governor. Chang and many others managed to flee from confinement after removing all the nightlights in the auditorium, only to resurface the very next day to demand the release of others who had been relocated to a number of prisons in the city.<sup>46</sup>

This incident was followed by more angry protesters in Kobe who occupied the Hyōgo Prefectural Office, forcing the governor to retract the school closure order. For the first time since occupation forces arrived in Japan, General Robert Eichelberger—commander of the US Eighth Army—proclaimed a limited state of emergency to combat Koreans who were demanding the right to educate their children in Korean schools. On April 26, another 30,000 protesters gathered in front of the prefectural office in Osaka, and this time General Eichelberger issued an order to open fire on them, resulting in the death of a sixteen-year-old boy and severe injuries to twenty others. Throughout this series of confrontations, Japanese police, backed by American military police, arrested more than 17,000 people in Osaka and Kobe, of whom forty-two were tried in Eighth Army provost courts. Eichelberger blamed “the Reds” for instigating riots, ignoring the critical issue of ethnic nationalism that lay at the heart of this dispute over Korean schools, as the provost courts convicted six Koreans, who were forcibly deported from Japan on April 15, 1949.<sup>47</sup>

Having forcibly suppressed the struggle to protect Korean schools, the so-called North Korean Flag-Raising Incidents a half year later marked the second violent clash between the occupation and the League of Koreans in 1948. Shortly after the Republic of Korea was officially inaugurated on August 15, SCAP praised the Korean Residents' Union of Japan (Zai Nippon Daikanminkoku Kyoryū Min-dan) for pledging its support to the new regime of President Syngman Rhee. However, the South Korean regime was not as popular among Korean residents in Japan as its counterpart in North Korea, much to the chagrin of American authorities. When the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established on September 9, the League immediately recognized it as the only legitimate government in Korea, and organized a series of celebrations throughout Japan. General Willoughby ordered the Japanese police to enforce a ban on any displays of the DPRK national flag in these celebrations, without any legal basis, but because SCAP refused to recognize the communist regime. On October 12, US military police opened fire on Koreans at a League-sponsored meeting in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, where the DPRK flag was paraded, wounding six participants. Ten days later, the DPRK flag was raised at one of the League's local branches in Osaka, and police rushed in to take it down, leading to more violence. Those arrested were tried in US military courts, where they were convicted of "acts prejudicial to Occupation objectives," a public security ordinance enacted in 1946 to punish violations of SCAP directives and other orders of US Army commanders.<sup>48</sup> As a result, they were sentenced to hard labor and deportation to South Korea, where their pro-communist stance ensured further punishment.

Throughout this turbulent period marked by the growing Cold War confrontation in the region, SCAP and the US Eighth Army grew ever more vigilant about communist infiltration into Japan. This not only meant capturing, interrogating, and deporting illegal immigrants and smugglers from Korea, but also closely monitoring the cross-border activities of leftist Koreans in Japan. Occupation officials were particularly wary of such intelligence reports as the one filed by the CIC on October 18, 1948. It revealed that Kim Ilseong (Kim Il Sung), premier of the DPRK, had sent a secret radiogram to the League of Koreans headquarters in Tokyo. In this radiogram, Kim invited the League to send a delegation to represent Korean residents in Japan at the new government in North Korea. The League immediately responded to this request by holding an election as a part of ceremonies commemorating the founding of the new republic, electing 125 members to be sent to North Korea. Since they considered themselves the official representatives of Korean residents in Japan, the League planned to request visas for the 125 delegates from SCAP. In anticipation of SCAP's refusal to grant official clearance for their

departure, the CIC report noted that the League was prepared to smuggle their representatives to North Korea.<sup>49</sup>

As the US Eighth Army prepared to orchestrate SCAP's crackdown against the League of Koreans, they found an eager partner in Yoshida Shigeru, who became prime minister for the second time in October 1948. Yoshida's administration gained SCAP's strong support in prosecuting Koreans with ties to communism, led by Korea experts in the Japanese government's Special Investigation Bureau (SIB), which functioned as a de facto FBI in Japan. For example, Yoshikawa Mitsusada, a former Higher Thought Police officer who headed the SIB, collaborated with Jack Napier in the Government Section to draft a special ordinance to outlaw "subversive organizations."<sup>50</sup> Yoshida quickly promulgated this in April 1949 as the Organization Control Ordinance, which enabled the government to dissolve any political organizations deemed "subversive," a code word that became synonymous with support for communism. Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, Yoshida—with strong backing from General MacArthur—issued arrest warrants for executive members of the Japanese Communist Party for violating this ordinance, thus intensifying the so-called Red Purge that was underway in occupied Japan.<sup>51</sup>

Yoshida also proposed to tackle Japan's "Korean problem" by deporting all resident Koreans from Japan, an idea he outlined in a letter he sent to General MacArthur in August 1949. Estimating that about one million Koreans then resided in Japan, "of whom one half are illegal entrants," Yoshida strongly suggested deporting them to South Korea at government expense since most of them, he alleged, were communists and criminals.<sup>52</sup> Although MacArthur rejected the proposal for mass deportation, Napier, who coordinated the crackdown on Koreans and the Red Purge, gave SIB's Yoshikawa permission for the government to dissolve the League of Koreans for sponsoring terrorism in Japan. As a result, on September 9, the government enforced the Organization Control Ordinance, and four hundred police were mobilized to forcibly shut down the League's headquarters in Tokyo.<sup>53</sup> Not only did Japanese authorities purge the League's leaders and confiscate its property and assets; they also began to shut down Korean schools affiliated with the organization. The forced dissolution thus marked the dramatic end of the largest and most popular Korean organization in Japan, which had tirelessly championed the rights and interests of its compatriots since their liberation in 1945.

To further enforce its new, tough stance against Koreans in Japan, SCAP gave the government the green light to modify the alien registration system to make it more effective. In July 1949, the Diplomatic Section argued that the Japanese government should be encouraged to reissue alien registration passbooks, tighten



Figure 7. *Haebang sinmun* article, written in Korean, criticizes the revised Alien Registration Ordinance for infringing upon the rights of Koreans in Japan. The accompanying cartoon depicts a Japanese warden in the image of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, who has locked up a Korean prisoner for violation of the ordinance. Potential consequences for violations are listed next to the four chains that bind him: “fine,” “imprisonment,” “hard labor,” and “deportation.” Reprinted from Pak Gyeongsik, ed., *Kaihōgo no zainichi Chōsenjin undō*, vol. 3 (Kawasaki: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1984), p. 303.

police enforcement, and impose tougher penalties for violations of the registration.<sup>54</sup> In response, the government eagerly submitted a proposal for strengthening its authority in registering aliens, which was endorsed by Jack Napier in the Government Section. Enacted on December 3, the revised Alien Registration Ordinance more closely resembled the US Alien Registration Act. Reminiscent of the strictly enforced US statute, it required Koreans and Taiwanese to re-register every three years, increased criminal penalties for any violations, and granted the government expanded powers to deport individuals as it saw fit.<sup>55</sup> The collaborative effort to combat communist subversion thus merged the revamped alien registration with enhanced deportation powers, paving the way for the establishment of a stringent Japanese immigration system that would exclude former colonial subjects.

**Containment on the “Keystone of the Pacific”**

In contrast to the problem of illegal immigration from Korea, neither Japanese nor American authorities were initially alarmed by reports of unauthorized

entry from the Ryukyu Islands. A Japanese government proposal for controlling illegal entry that was submitted to SCAP in June 1946 cited Ryukyans, Formosans, and Chinese, but was primarily concerned with the disproportionately large numbers of Koreans.<sup>56</sup> Six months later, over 20,000 Koreans had been arrested for illegal entry into Japan, in contrast to just eighty Ryukyans. SCAP attributed this to the geographical proximity of the Korean peninsula to Japan, implying that the relatively remote Ryukyuan archipelago accounted for the smaller portions of people smuggling themselves into Japan.<sup>57</sup> However, the Yamato trade between the Ryukyus and Japan was just getting underway at the time, thus evading SCAP's critical attention for a few years. Meanwhile, military government officials in the Ryukyus attempted to curtail the expanding black market trade in late 1948 by eliminating price controls and rationing, simultaneously promoting commercial interaction between the main island groups.

In the wake of the mass protests against US military rule in Okinawa, USMGR in June 1949 enacted a new ordinance explicitly prohibiting unauthorized travel to Japan, acting on intelligence reports that underground political agitators were encouraging public dissent. As economic issues thus merged with political and military security concerns between 1948 and 1949, occupation authorities on both sides of the 30th parallel began to cooperate with one another on jointly addressing the problem of Ryukyuan smuggling.

The impetus for changing course was based not upon SCAP or USMGR recommendations, but rather upon policy directives emanating from higher authorities in Washington. After years of apathy and neglect, the expansion of the Cold War to the Asia-Pacific region convinced American policymakers of the need to determine the political disposition of the Ryukyu Islands. In October 1948 the National Security Council (NSC) decided to develop the Ryukyus into a strategic base for containing the spread of communism in the region. This policy decision was part of a larger plan for outlining an American defense perimeter, which militarily linked the Ryukyus to a chain of islands including Japan.

Five months later, General MacArthur proclaimed that the Pacific Ocean had become "an Anglo-Saxon lake" in which the US line of defense "starts from the Philippines and continues through the Ryukyu archipelago . . . then it bends back through Japan and the Aleutian island chain to Alaska."<sup>58</sup> This bold announcement amounted to a delineation of America's Cold War boundaries in the region, signaling both the end of the isolation of the Ryukyus, and the beginning of their militarization. Okinawa was thus to be transformed from a "forgotten island" into a military base complex so vast that Americans would soon refer to it as the "Keystone of the Pacific."



In response to the NSC’s call to maximize the security of the Ryukyus, various branches of the US government dispatched representatives to investigate local conditions and recommend appropriate changes. One such survey and subsequent report recommended the immediate implementation of far-reaching reform measures, two of which are particularly noteworthy: to form an indigenous central government that would unite the existing civilian administrations in the four main island groups, and to establish trade channels with Japan and other nations.<sup>59</sup> Major General Joseph R. Sheetz, a former military government officer in Korea who became the new commanding general of RYCOM, adopted the transformation of American policy embodied in this report. Sheetz began on October 1, 1949, by issuing a directive to establish a Provisional Government Assembly, which was intended to pave the way for a federal system of government representing all four island groups.<sup>60</sup> He also orchestrated the signing of the Ryukyu-Japan Commercial Trade Agreement in February 1950. This measure not only reestablished economic interaction with mainland Japan, but also helped to import a variety of Japanese goods, instead of continuing to rely on goods imported by the US military. Another significant result of the trade agreement was to curtail the incentive for smuggling among residents, both within and outside of the Ryukyus.<sup>61</sup>

Unaware that these reform measures were laying the groundwork for the development of a military base economy in Okinawa, residents of the Ryukyu Islands initially welcomed what they called “the just governance of Sheetz.”<sup>62</sup> American policies directed towards generating economic growth in Okinawa hinged upon the construction of US military bases and their related industries. Shortly after Sheetz assumed his new post, the Pentagon allotted \$58 million to Okinawa to strengthen its military reservations, while Congress also authorized increased appropriations in the Government and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) funds.<sup>63</sup> The Ryukyu-Japan Commercial Trade Agreement secured GARIOA funds for the construction of new military bases in Okinawa, a large proportion of which was spent on importing Japanese industrial products. This carefully crafted appropriation of government funds was dubbed the “double usage of the dollar,” because it was designed to boost economic recovery in the Ryukyus as well as in Japan.<sup>64</sup>

Meanwhile, American occupiers in the Ryukyus and Japan became increasingly concerned with what they perceived as a common threat of “communist infiltration” in their respective zones of occupation. Such heightening fears drove SCAP in early 1948 to establish G-2’s Civil Intelligence Division—including its Counter Intelligence Corps, Civil Censorship Detachment, and Public Safety Division—as part of an expanded intelligence apparatus designed to combat the



spread of communism in occupied Japan.<sup>65</sup> The primary responsibility of the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) was to identify and monitor “subversive elements” who might commit “acts prejudicial to the Occupation.”

In practice, this meant monitoring and producing detailed surveillance reports on labor union leaders, liberal intellectuals, and leading communists that the CIC found suspicious. The CIC was aided in this effort by its Japanese counterpart in the former Special Higher Police, which had both the knowledge and experience of tracking down such leftist activists, many of whom were from Okinawa. When the CIC intensified its coverage of Japanese and Koreans with ties to communism in 1948, this type of intelligence gathering was soon extended to Okinawan residents in Japan. In particular, members and former members of the League of Okinawans and their affiliated youth corps who were known to have a close association with the Japanese Communist Party were closely monitored.

In fact, political parties and organizations on both sides of the 30th parallel had begun to capitalize on the smuggling networks to coordinate joint action. Here, Tokuda Kyūichi’s concerted attempt to establish cross-border contacts played a particularly important role in the development of political liaisons between progressive forces in Japan and the Ryukyus. As a part of the JCP’s effort to reestablish contact with former members of the communist party and those who supported it before the war, Tokuda reached out to his old comrade, Nakasone Genwa, chairman of the Democratic Alliance. The CIC intercepted a letter in October 1946 from the League of Okinawans to Nakasone, delivered by secret courier, noting that as advisor to the League, Tokuda was believed to be in close contact with Nakasone.<sup>66</sup> In addition, Tokuda dispatched Okinawa Youth Alliance members in Japan to join the People’s Party in Okinawa, thereby brokering relations with the JCP.

For example, a young reporter for the Youth Alliance named Namihira Tokuhachi made an illegal trip to Okinawa in 1947 to investigate political conditions there, then returned to Okinawa again in April 1948, becoming chief of the People’s Party’s youth section. A CIC report noted that Namihira was Tokuda’s protégé.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the chief executive of the Youth Alliance, named Uechi Sakae, repatriated to Okinawa in April 1949, quickly rising to a prominent position in the People’s Party yet again, having received Tokuda’s personal blessings.<sup>68</sup> Although the People’s Party and the Democratic Alliance were not merely regional branches of the JCP, Tokuda’s direct liaisons strongly influenced the ideological orientation and future course of action for these political parties in Okinawa.

A sea change in JCP policy swayed the ongoing debate over the political disposition of the Ryukyus from the time Tokuda appealed to Nakasone in 1946 until Uechi’s repatriation to Okinawa in 1949. Nakasone had welcomed the JCP’s ini-

tial support for Ryukyuan independence, a public platform he continued to advocate even after it became apparent that the JCP had adopted a subtle yet crucial policy shift—namely, that once the Ryukyus freed themselves completely from the yoke of Japanese imperialism, Ryukyuan and Japanese should each build their own people’s republic, then form a union of socialist republics, modeled after the USSR.<sup>69</sup> Such a reformulation of its original stance emerged in tandem with SCAP’s increasing anti-communist policies, which forced the JCP to focus on building stronger alliances with leftist forces in the region. Another critical factor in this process was the ascendance of conservative, pro-Japanese nationalists in the League of Okinawans, which in 1948 began to investigate the activities of communist cells within its organization. By August, the conservative faction prevailed in electing a new chairman, who began excluding communist sympathizers and changed its organizational name to the Okinawa League, in order to disassociate itself from the JCP-affiliated League of Koreans. As a result, leftist members who supported the JCP lost their base of political activity, prompting Uechi, Namihira, and others to relocate to Okinawa, where they joined the People’s Party.<sup>70</sup> The addition of these young members to the People’s Party proved critical to spreading the pro-unification policy that the JCP now promoted.

Convinced that the JCP abetted the formation of the “popular front” in Okinawa, occupation officials on both sides of the 30th parallel attempted to eliminate cross-border cooperation among leftist forces. The chief of SCAP’s Ryukyu Military Government Section, Brigadier General John Weckerling, led this joint effort. In March 1949, Weckerling arranged for the vice chairman of the Okinawa League, Inamine Ichirō, to travel to the Ryukyus to investigate political conditions, focusing on the alleged spread of communism. Having returned to Tokyo in June, Inamine submitted a report to SCAP in which he maintained that Tokuda Kyūichi was attempting to establish contacts with Chinese communists through the Ryukyus and Taiwan. His evidence was the recent repatriation of Uechi Sakae to Okinawa and Miyayoshi Kanzō to Yaeyama—the island group closest to Taiwan—both Youth Alliance leaders dispatched by Tokuda.<sup>71</sup>

Alarmed by the prospect of expanding communist networks between Japan and China via the Ryukyus, RYCOM cracked down on the movement of political activists such as Namihira Tokuhachi, who was identified as having been “actively engaged in the formation of a Communist faction within the People’s Party.”<sup>72</sup> RYCOM arrested Namihira in April for making an unauthorized trip to Yaeyama, where he reportedly discussed with his local contacts the possibility of Chinese communist forces helping to liberate the Ryukyus. When copies of the JCP periodical, *Zen’ei*, and numerous other communist publications were discovered at his home, the incident led to further arrests of People’s Party’s leaders,

including Senaga Kamejirō, while Namihira was tried and sentenced to sixty days of hard labor.<sup>73</sup>

Beyond fostering close, cooperative relations with the Far Eastern Command in Japan, RYCOM also began to strengthen the local police force in a collaborative effort to prevent political activists from infiltrating the Ryukyu Islands. RYCOM demanded that the police increase surveillance to cover illegal border crossers who carried with them political ideologies such as communism and socialism that it considered subversive. According to an Okinawan formerly employed by RYCOM, “the CIC was not interested in smuggling per se. Instead, it was concerned with people who entered [the Ryukyus] from the outside, since spies were using smuggling ships to move about.”<sup>74</sup> In order to crack down on such underground networks operating across its borders, RYCOM lent police patrol cruisers to the civil governments of the four main island groups.

At the same time, CIC personnel and American military police replaced local police, who were considered unreliable or ineffective.<sup>75</sup> Four months into the Korean War, the JCS also approved a proposal by the Far East Command to establish a full-fledged Ryukyuan constabulary and coast guard, just as USAFIK had done in southern Korea. Although these plans ultimately did not materialize due to personnel and budgetary difficulties, in reality, coast guard duties were assigned to a newly reorganized and expanded Ryukyuan police.<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, the US Navy periodically mobilized landing ships (LSTs)—pilot ships of over 15,000-ton class—for apprehending smugglers. The defense perimeter of these ships covered from Kuchinoshima in the north to the shores of Yonaguni in the south, a body of water stretching eight hundred kilometers.<sup>77</sup> Maintaining strict control over these islands on the northern and southern borders of the Ryukyu Islands remained a top priority for US military authorities throughout the Korean War.

Resisting such American efforts to fortify and militarize the Ryukyus, the People’s Party grew more radical and confrontational. It was led by Uechi Sakae, who began promoting reversion to Japan as a means of liberating Okinawa from US military rule. Unlike Senaga, who agreed with General Sheetz to work on developing a cooperative relationship with USMGR, Uechi took a more combative stance, and he was not afraid to criticize occupation authorities in public speeches. His youthful charisma and oratorical skills made him a popular speaker, attracting large numbers of laborers and farmers, making him the “most dangerous of the known Communists in Okinawa,” according to a CIC report.<sup>78</sup>

What the CIC failed to detect was the fact that Uechi deftly and subtly advocated reversion, hitherto a taboo subject in Okinawa, during an endorsement speech he gave on behalf of Senaga on the eve of elections in September 1950. Concluding his remarks by humorously playing on Senaga’s given name, Kamejirō

(*kame* meaning tortoise in Japanese), Uechi declared, “let us people of Okinawa ride on ‘Kame-san’s back’ and have him carry us to the shores of the Japanese mainland!”<sup>79</sup> The crowd of up to 40,000 people reportedly burst into applause, cheering Uechi for a speech that would later be remembered as the first time reversion was openly advocated in postwar Okinawa. When a number of political parties subsequently formed an alliance to jointly promote a reversion movement, they became locked into a confrontational relationship with RYCOM, which aimed to suppress them as communist agitators.

### **Enacting the Ryukyuan “Passport System”**

American occupation officials in Japan, southern Korea, and the Ryukyu Islands were well aware that the prohibition against commercial travel contributed to smuggling and illegal immigration, but the US policy of containing communism reinforced the need for tighter migration controls. In the US-occupied Ryukyus, the strict travel ban created new, unanticipated problems involving the status of residents. For example, in December 1947 the senior military government officer in Amami Oshima wrote to the Ryukyus Command in Okinawa, requesting its decision on how to respond to over 5,000 Amami repatriates who had filed applications to return to Japan. Local records showed that many of these people had only temporarily returned to the Amami Islands, either to see family members, care for sick relatives, or return a relative’s ashes, and that their official residences were registered in Japan. There were also a number of applicants who were permitted to repatriate from Japan to Amami, despite the fact that they had already once repatriated from Amami to Japan in 1946. To make matters more complicated, there were many instances of persons having residences and businesses in both Japan and the Amami Islands.<sup>80</sup>

As the Ryukyus Command was unable to give a definite response, the request for an authorized course of action was forwarded to General MacArthur’s headquarters in Tokyo. The decision that came back in February 1948 permitted the travel of those Amamians who returned to the Ryukyus after the war to locate relatives, and required them to report to SCAP for individual clearance prior to their return to Japan. SCAP also reaffirmed earlier policy that repatriation was solely for the purpose of returning displaced persons to their homeland and that only a one-way trip was permitted. The message concluded that persons entering the Ryukyus from Japan “for reasons other than for proposed permanent residence should be apprehended as illegal entrants.”<sup>81</sup> However, the dilemma of the legal status of Ryukyuan remained unresolved and continued to present problems for those who traveled to Japan without authorization from SCAP.

Faced with mounting concerns over communist infiltration, US military authorities in the Ryukyu Islands and Japan decided to jointly implement a new set of border control measures. The first of these was the inauguration of immigration and customs controls under the auspices of the Okinawa Civil Administration to more effectively combat the ongoing cross-border smuggling operations. According to USMGR's initial proposal, made in August 1949, this measure was specifically aimed at the widely practiced tactic of smugglers bribing Okinawan police to avoid arrest and incarceration. With the Police Department working together with the newly established Customs and Immigration Department, there would be less chance for such payoffs on unauthorized cargoes entering and leaving the major ports in Okinawa.<sup>82</sup> USMGR thus appeared to be initiating the process of transferring the powers of migration controls to the Okinawa Civil Administration, just as SCAP was beginning to do the same for the Japanese government.

Unlike in occupied Japan, however, American officials were not preparing to transfer sovereignty rights to a Ryukyuan government but, on the contrary, were creating new institutional mechanisms for prolonging US military rule. This meant the establishment of new migration controls relied less on collaboration and negotiations with their Ryukyuan counterparts but, more importantly, on joint planning and implementation with SCAP and, to a lesser extent, with the Japanese government.

In the same month that USMGR proposed new immigration and customs controls, SCAP implemented new travel regulations between the Ryukyu Islands and Japan that replaced the previous regulations on repatriation. From August 15, 1949, people traveling from the Ryukyus to Japan could be approved for "compassionate reasons" or where such travel was in the interest of the occupation of the Ryukyus or Japan. In issuing this new regulation, SCAP did not initially define what might constitute "compassionate reasons," stipulating only that RYCOM could approve travel requests for individuals who otherwise might face "undue hardship or physical suffering."<sup>83</sup> The pursuit of higher education may have constituted one such reason, as occupation officials secured GARIOA funds for Ryukyuan students to enroll at Japanese universities beginning in 1949. Besides such students, however, the applicant's burden of proving such vaguely worded criteria to receive RYCOM's official approval was compounded by the high cost of travel expenses. Whereas repatriation was completely free of charge, anyone who wished to travel to Japan according to these new regulations had to incur the cost of the long commercial ferry transport from the Ryukyus.<sup>84</sup> In addition, the full cost of train or bus fares to and from the ports, not to mention food and

accommodation en route, made travel "for compassionate reasons" unaffordable for many residents of the Ryukyus at the time.

Nevertheless, commercial interests drove USMGR to initiate a plan for expanding SCAP's new travel regulations to include those traveling from Japan to the Ryukyu Islands. General Sheetz sent General MacArthur a request for authorizing Okinawan and Amamian residents in Japan to enter the Ryukyus for sixty-day visits with their relatives there. According to Sheetz, such a program was designed to bring into the Ryukyus a small but much needed supply of additional foodstuffs, clothing, and medicines. Linking family visits with the economic rehabilitation of the Ryukyus, he maintained that the "flow of capital will come into the native economy, both by way of gifts from visitors to their relatives and in the nature of creating an incentive for indigenous services to be rendered the visitors." For the very same reason, he also proposed to accept travel applications from Okinawan residents in the United States and Hawaii who wished to visit their relatives in the Ryukyus. In order to prevent visitors from staying in the Ryukyus beyond the authorized period of sixty days, Sheetz assured MacArthur that those whose applications were approved would be issued a nonrefundable round-trip ticket from Japan and back to Japan.<sup>85</sup>

General MacArthur responded positively to Major General Sheetz's request. He authorized individual Okinawan and Amamian residents in Japan to apply for travel to the Ryukyu Islands for "compassionate reasons." This time, the definition of "compassionate reasons" included traveling for the purpose of establishing permanent domicile in the Ryukyus as well as those making temporary visits. The official procedures for such travel applications were stipulated in an operational directive that the US Eighth Army issued on December 7, 1949. According to the provisions in this directive, applications had to be filled out in English and submitted to the foreign affairs section of the local prefectural government, which then transmitted them to the headquarters of the Eighth Army. The directive also stated that travel was to be authorized only for individuals who would not become a "public charge to the Ryukyuan Government." Those applying for permanent domicile therefore had to submit written statements substantiating how they proposed to support themselves, and to what extent their relatives in the Ryukyus could extend financial assistance. Those applying for temporary visits had to agree to purchase their own round-trip ticket on a commercial ferry service prior to their departure and that they would carry their own food from Japan for subsistence while in the Ryukyus.<sup>86</sup> Upon reviewing any other pertinent information bearing on each individual case, the Eighth Army decided whether or not to issue an official travel permit to the applicant.



The lengthy investigations into the personal backgrounds of individuals applying for travel from Japan to the Ryukyu Islands underscored the fact that the 1949 regulations were largely based on heightening security concerns. While SCAP and USMGR allegedly granted special permission to a limited number of travelers for “compassionate reasons,” in reality occupation authorities aimed to screen out political activists who were identified as agitators. As part of the process for obtaining a travel permit, all applicants were first required to file a police report to determine whether they had any political affiliations deemed detrimental to American interests. Upon receiving this security clearance, applicants were then obliged to sign an oath swearing that they would be entering the Ryukyus only for legitimate purposes. As if to highlight the paramount importance of security issues, applicants were warned that they would be under constant surveillance to ensure that the terms of the travel permit were being met. Those who violated these terms had their travel permits revoked, were fined up to ¥30,000, and were ultimately deported to where they had come from.<sup>87</sup>

These strict travel regulations were euphemistically called the “passport system” by residents of the Ryukyu Islands entering Japan as well as by Okinawan and Amamian residents of Japan returning to their native islands. Such people going through border control procedures quickly recognized that the personal identification documents they carried with them were identical to passports they had to produce to national immigration officials. Many of them were indignant that they had to apply for these “passports,” since it implied that they were foreign nationals who were not permitted to remain in the place they were visiting beyond a limited period of time. According to one Okinawan resident in Osaka, the passport system was an institutional form of discrimination against Okinawans, distinguishing them from other minority groups in Japan:

Like the *Buraku* [outcast] people, many Okinawans were hired only for grueling, dirty jobs, but, in a way, we faced worse discrimination because, unlike them, we needed “passports” to visit our hometowns.<sup>88</sup>

The passport system highlighted the unresolved issue of the legal status of Ryukyuans. Whenever Okinawan and Amamian residents of Japan returned to their native islands, Ryukyuan immigration officials inspected their travel documents issued by the Japanese government, which noted them as Japanese nationals. On the other hand, when Ryukyuans entered Japan, they carried travel documents issued by USMGR (US Civil Administration after December 1950), which listed each individual as a “Resident of the Ryukyus,” without direct reference to their nationality.

This discrepancy in status between Okinawans and Amamians in Japan versus Ryukyu residents related to their family registers, which constitute the legal basis of Japanese nationality. In April 1947, the Japanese government proclaimed that residents in the Ryukyus were Japanese nationals by recognizing the family registers in Okinawa as Japanese family registers.<sup>89</sup> By extension, the government recognized Okinawan residents in Japan whose family registers were in the Ryukyus were also Japanese nationals, thus exempting them from the Alien Registration Ordinance that was issued the following month. However, American occupation authorities at the time avoided addressing legal questions surrounding the nationality status of Ryukyu residents until the future political disposition of the islands had been determined.

The dispute over Okinawan family registries was complicated by the fact that most of these official documents were destroyed by the American air raids prior to the Battle of Okinawa. For over a year after Japan's defeat, food ration passbooks issued by the US military substituted for personal identity papers on Okinawa Island, not unlike the way Koreans in Japan were identified before the alien registration system was enacted. In Okinawa, as in Japan, the Foucauldian biopower of the occupying state used these ration passes to provide subsistence for residents, while simultaneously identifying them for the sake of surveillance and control.<sup>90</sup> This biopolitics of food ration passbooks lasted until 1947, when USMGR in Okinawa began reissuing official registration forms. These new registration forms written in English were essential documents of identification within Okinawa, but they were meaningless in Japan, where many Okinawans were still without their family registries, which had been destroyed.

Some Okinawans who entered Japan without authorization took advantage of the legal flux involving their undetermined status by falsely claiming that they were living in a given Japanese prefecture when they were caught without a local residency card. This legal loophole was filled, however, by 1948 when the Family Register Bureau for Okinawans located in Fukuoka Prefecture began issuing family registries for all Okinawans living in Japan, partly as a preventive measure against illegal immigrants.<sup>91</sup> The Japanese government officially recognized only these family registers, not the separate registration forms issued by USMGR in Okinawa.

Ultimately, US occupation forces assisting local officials in the administration of migration controls in the Ryukyu Islands and in Japan were less interested in the legal status of border crossers than in their political orientation. When Okinawan and Amamian residents of Japan went through immigration procedures to enter the Ryukyus, an American CIC agent usually screened them on the basis of blacklists prepared by US military authorities. This did not prevent such

individuals from entering the Ryukyus, however, as some were known to have cleverly changed the pronunciation of their Okinawan names when applying for their passports. For example, the same Chinese characters for the Okinawan surname Kinjō (or Kanagusuku) could be pronounced as “Kaneshiro” in Japanese, and Asato could be pronounced as “Yasuzato.” Since most CIC agents checking the passports only read the names written in the English alphabet, such black-listed people were able to pass through immigration without being detected.<sup>92</sup> US military authorities implemented such tight security checks because they were concerned about communist infiltrators, blaming them for the growing popular support for reversion of the Ryukyus to Japan.

### **Postwar Japan’s Migration Control System**

With heightening Cold War security concerns utmost in their minds, American occupiers in Japan took the lead in establishing a new migration control regime, just as their counterparts were doing in the Ryukyu Islands. In June 1949 SCAP directed the Japanese government to establish an office for immigration services, which would assume responsibility not only for legal movements in and out of Japan but also for deporting illegal entrants. In response, a Japanese cabinet order two months later formed a centralized immigration control division within the Foreign Ministry, while immigration officials were assigned to customs offices at regional ports of entry throughout Japan. However, in accordance with the above SCAP directive, these immigration officers were placed under the supervision of the commanding general of the US Eighth Army, which retained ultimate authority over immigration and deportation decisions.<sup>93</sup> From this point until the restoration of full sovereignty in April 1952, American and Japanese officials engaged in prolonged negotiations, at times quite contentious, over the reformation of Japan’s migration control system. This process, in contrast to the previous two years of close collaboration, tested that relationship and posed a final challenge for American authorities, who became increasingly determined to reshape Japanese migration laws in the image of the United States.

Occupation historian Takemae Eiji explains that in mid-1949, Washington ordered MacArthur’s command to begin returning administrative powers to the Japanese government, and that directives were rarely issued after that point.<sup>94</sup> While SCAP did faithfully transfer various executive powers back to the government, its close involvement in reshaping Japan’s migration controls meant it still relied on directives and memorandums. Mindful of the impending peace treaty negotiations that signaled the termination of the occupation, SCAP carefully restored partial sovereignty rights to an expectant government, including admin-

istrative rights to conduct trade, establish liaison offices overseas, and participate in international conferences and agreements.<sup>95</sup>

This marked an important turning point, at which the American occupiers initiated a gradual process of bringing occupied Japan out of isolation, though it still remained cut off from much of the East Asian region. The partial restoration of the occupied state's migration controls was certainly a part of this trend, though the special significance American officials attached to the subject meant it was treated in a separate category, together with the exercise of jurisdiction over aliens in Japan. Dissatisfied with government ministry officials and their legislative drafts, SCAP's staff sections repeatedly demanded revisions, revealing that they were not quite ready to hand over the reins of migration controls.

Occupation authorities insisted Japanese officials resolve two particular problems with existing migration controls: the overall ineffectiveness of ad hoc measures adopted by a divided and decentralized state structure on the one hand, and the persistence of police involvement in migration procedures on the other. To address the former problem, SCAP directed the Japanese government in February 1950 to establish more effective customs, immigration, and quarantine controls "in agreement with generally accepted international practice."<sup>96</sup> For those American officials involved in drafting this directive, conforming to "international practice" actually meant adopting an immigration system based on the contemporary US model—namely, a powerful, centralized, and independent government agency that controlled all matters pertaining to aliens entering, exiting, and residing in the country.

SCAP drove this point home in a subsequent memorandum, reiterating the need for a unified agency that would handle both immigration and deportation procedures, though one that was independent of the Japanese police.<sup>97</sup> SCAP's uncompromising stance represented the consensus view between the Legal Section, which opposed police interference in judicial matters of deportation, and the Government Section, which supported strengthening the authority of immigration officials.

The Japanese government initially attempted to forestall SCAP's demands to institute an American-style immigration system for several reasons. According to Kawakami Iwao, a mid-level Japanese bureaucrat employed by the Attorney General's Office, many of his colleagues complained that establishing a centralized immigration bureau would cost the government time, energy, and resources that would be required for training new personnel. Furthermore, they felt strongly that the Japanese police since the prewar period had proven to be well equipped to deal with unauthorized border crossers, and thus were not convinced they should be removed from the enforcement of deportation procedures. Finally, in

the wake of the closure of the Sasebo Repatriation Center, the issue of which government agency would assume jurisdiction over the Hario Detention Camp was in dispute.<sup>98</sup> Reflecting these views, the government submitted to SCAP a provisional draft for compartmentalizing migration controls, instead of unifying them into one governmental agency. This draft proposed that the Foreign Ministry's immigration section would continue to handle legal entry to and exit from Japan, that the Attorney General's Office would assume jurisdiction over the Hario Detention Camp, and that the national and regional police forces would arrest and transfer illegal immigrants to designated detention camps.<sup>99</sup> SCAP rejected these proposals, necessitating further rounds of challenging negotiations, a process that was greatly affected by external developments in East Asia as well as in the United States.

The outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, sent shock waves to neighboring Japan, accelerating SCAP's plans to institutionalize an ever more effective migration control system. One week after the North Korean invasion, SCAP circulated an internal memorandum addressing the state of affairs in Korea and how it might affect the treatment of unauthorized immigrants in Japan. The memorandum called for urgent countermeasures in dealing with a range of pressing problems, including the anticipated inflow of Korean refugees and the temporary suspension of deportation.<sup>100</sup> The following month, SCAP summoned the heads of relevant staff sections to meet with their Japanese counterparts, highlighting the importance of close cooperation over these issues under wartime conditions.

During this meeting, a general consensus emerged that security concerns over communist infiltration outweighed the possibility of creating a refugee program for Koreans fleeing the war. According to Kawakami Iwao, the Japanese government readily agreed to treat war refugees as illegal immigrants, thus transporting them to the Hario Detention Camp to be deported back to Korea.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, SCAP in September directed the government to establish new procedures for processing illegal entrants at detention camps. Reflecting the heightened state of security concerns, Japanese authorities were instructed immediately to obtain complete information concerning the identity and circumstances of entry, taking into custody all arms and military supplies in the possession of the detained persons. Furthermore, the directive reiterated SCAP's earlier demand to organize a centralized agency for migration controls, and to do so within fifteen days.<sup>102</sup> This time, the government complied immediately, formally establishing the Migration Control Agency within the Foreign Ministry on October 1.

The formation of the Migration Control Agency, as it turned out, represented but one of several more turning points in subsequent negotiations, which were greatly swayed by the unfolding debate over immigration reform in the United

States. In 1950, Senator Pat McCarran submitted a 250-page draft omnibus bill, accompanied by a 900-page investigative report, which, according to one historian, saw "revision of the nation's immigration laws as a tool in the United States' urgent battle against Communism." This bill was strongly opposed by congressmen, not to mention President Harry Truman, who were in favor of liberalizing immigration laws in order to improve foreign relations, especially with Asian nations, thus ensuring their cooperation in the heightening Cold War conflict. However, the North Korean invasion in June convinced McCarran that the "matter was too urgent to wait for immigration revisions," as he introduced the Internal Security Act, with its provisions for the exclusion, deportation, and even the denaturalization of communists.<sup>103</sup> Catapulted into action by the US decision to intervene in the Korean War, Congress in September enacted the so-called McCarran Act, overriding President Truman's veto. American authorities in Japan closely followed these developments in their home government, as they engaged their Japanese counterparts in negotiations over similar issues involving migration controls.

In January 1951, SCAP's G-1 Section sought the advice of Nicholas D. Collaer, a recently retired official of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), marking the final push for Americanizing occupied Japan's migration controls. Whereas Legal Section officials had insisted upon judicial guarantees for certain rights of individual migrants, even for "illegal aliens," Collaer represented the more uncompromising opinion then ascendant in the United States: the advocacy of stronger immigration restrictions at all costs. As described in recent scholarship, Collaer was originally brought to Japan to draft an ordinance for deporting "undesirable aliens," but after a few months of consultations, he convinced SCAP of the need to legislate a comprehensive immigration law that included anti-subversion measures.<sup>104</sup> Based on his wartime experience as supervisor of the INS internment camps in Texas, coupled with his personal involvement in the US Immigration and Naturalization Bill, Collaer determined that stringent controls over aliens were necessary to prevent communist agitators from infiltrating Japan.

As Nicholas Collaer began crafting Japan's postwar migration regime, SCAP attempted to remold the Japanese government into a national security state to serve American interests beyond the occupation period. One such endeavor was the creation of a secret commission in May 1951, composed of representatives from various staff sections of SCAP and the Eighth Army, called the Committee on Counter-Measures against Communism in the Far East. During their first meeting on June 5, participants proposed that a counterpart committee be set up in the Japanese Diet, which would later be established as the Special Committee for Administrative Inspection (Gyōsei Kansatsu Tokubetsu Iinkai), to investigate



communist activities in Japan. They also discussed various measures for empowering the government to deport Korean communists, thus affirming the Yoshida administration's ongoing efforts to rid Japan of "Korean troublemakers."<sup>105</sup> Collaer and Jack Napier from the Government Section participated in these secret meetings, proposing anti-sedition measures linked to strict immigration and alien controls, which were largely inspired by existing US statutes.<sup>106</sup>

In June 1951, Collaer produced a detailed draft for an immigration law, based on the bill that Senator McCarran had recently submitted to Congress for debate. Later enacted in 1952 as the McCarran-Walter Act, the bill combined the Alien Registration Act and the Internal Security Act, thus providing the American state extraordinary powers of surveillance, detention, and deportation. Closely following the McCarran-Walter Act, Collaer's draft legislation combined and enhanced existing immigration and deportation procedures and included a long list of "classes of aliens excluded from admission," with whole sections of text taken verbatim from the US law.<sup>107</sup> Collaer also advocated the legislation of a more stringent alien registration system by insisting on mandatory fingerprinting for all aliens, thus reviving the Osaka Prefectural Police's earlier attempt to fingerprint Koreans and enacting it on a national scale.

One month after the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in September 1951, the promulgation of the Immigration Control Ordinance completed SCAP's transfer of immigration controls to the Japanese government. Based largely on Collaer's recommendations, the ordinance reflected SCAP's concerns over the subversive potential of blockade runners in the midst of the heightening Cold War conflict. The government largely accepted its provisions, as they granted Japanese officials what they had sought for so long—broad administrative authority to deport illegal immigrants, resident aliens with criminal records, as well as any other aliens "performing acts injurious to the interests and public order of the Japanese nation."<sup>108</sup> Although the ordinance provoked heated protests from resident Koreans, the government hoped to use its newly acquired powers to deport Koreans involved in the anti-war movement, some of whom resorted to sabotaging US military installations in Japan. The government's control over Koreans was reinforced by the passage of the Immigration Control Law on November 1, 1951, and the new Alien Registration Law on April 28, 1952, the same day that Japan regained its independence.

## Conclusion

Within five months after the war, SCAP closed Japan to unauthorized entry and initiated a concerted effort to apprehend and deport illegal immigrants, thus

marking the symbolic origin of occupied Japan's isolation from Northeast Asia. However, occupation officials periodically questioned the practical effect of isolating Japan from the rest of the region. As early as May 1946, Lieutenant James Graham of USAMGIK's Office of Foreign Affairs called for a plan to reestablish commercial travel to reduce the number of illegal immigrants, arguing in favor of casting off the "iron ring" from around Korea, and by extension, Japan. This was not simply an issue of competing interests and jurisdictions between occupation administrations in Japan and Korea, as SCAP's G-2 Section in July 1949 also proposed removing travel restrictions as a solution to resolve the ongoing problem of illegal immigration. Even after the Japanese government regained sovereignty in April 1952, mainland China and the Korean peninsula remained off limits, while the Ryukyu Islands were only accessible to limited interaction. Such restrictive border controls would remain the source of a particularly vexing problem for Korean residents in Japan, whose isolation from their neighboring homeland was compounded by their segregation within Japanese society.

By the time the Allied occupation drew to a close, over 46,000 Koreans had been arrested and deported for unauthorized entry into Japan. However, US occupation authorities did not and could not completely block out illegal immigration; neither did they succeed in eliminating the regional smuggling trade in Northeast Asia.<sup>109</sup> Instead, they installed a highly centralized Immigration Bureau within the Japanese Ministry of Justice, which SCAP mandated had to conform to American standards. In practice, this meant Japanese immigration officials, like their American counterparts in the INS, used deportation not only for the sake of border controls, but also as a powerful tool of discretionary social and political control over aliens in Japan. Using the Korean War as a justification for the need to contain communism, this newly enhanced deportation regime also emerged as a key feature of the national security state in Japan, closely following the state of affairs in the United States. Based largely on the US Internal Security Act and McCarran-Walter Act, the Japanese Immigration Control Law of 1952 empowered the Ministry of Justice to deport aliens whose activities were deemed "injurious to public order and interests."<sup>110</sup> To better monitor their activities, the Alien Registration Law of 1952 made it mandatory for all aliens in Japan to be fingerprinted.

The Japanese government in the wake of the occupation thus gained virtually unlimited power to deport any aliens it wanted in the name of national security. At the same time, it also stripped Koreans and Taiwanese of their Japanese nationality the day the occupation ended. The normalization of relations with the Republic of China, signed into effect on the same date, April 28, 1952, meant most Taiwanese in Japan were immediately recognized as Chinese nationals. In contrast,

the absence of diplomatic relations with either state in Korea left more than a half million Koreans *de facto* stateless persons, without any legal rights or protection in post-occupation Japan. This denationalization law, combined with the alien registration and immigration control laws, empowered the government to deport not only illegal immigrants but also a much larger, highly vulnerable population of stateless Koreans in Japan. Powerful collaboration between Japanese and American authorities had already marginalized these former colonial subjects; as stateless persons, they were almost completely excluded from postimperial Japanese society.

The exclusion and marginalization of Japanese subjects who were transformed into aliens—processes that resulted from US occupation policies aimed at separating Japanese from non-Japanese in the wake of war and empire—were not unique to former colonial subjects in Japan. While the San Francisco Peace Treaty spelled an end to the occupation of Japan, it also affirmed that the Ryukyu Islands and, by extension, its residents would remain divided from postwar Japan. Although John Foster Dulles in 1951 famously proclaimed Japan’s “residual sovereignty” over the Ryukyus, the text of the treaty actually made no such commitment but, instead, legitimated indefinite US military rule. In fact, the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) cemented the administrative separation of the archipelago from Japan by issuing an ordinance that stipulated provisions for the Government of the Ryukyu Islands (GRI), which was to be established on April 1, 1952.

This ordinance maintained that the GRI formed the basis for local self-government in the Ryukyus, ignoring the fact that USCAR still controlled executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Upheld as the “Ryukyuan Constitution,” the ordinance also detailed the rights and duties of Ryukyuan residents, even though these limited rights could be suspended at any time. According to Article 3 of this constitution, a “Ryukyuan” was defined as “a natural person whose birth and name are registered in a family register in the Ryukyu Islands.”<sup>111</sup> However, nowhere was any mention made of nationality, much less Japanese nationality, and the family registers cited were those issued by the US military, not the Japanese government. As a people without nationality and citizenship—either Japanese or American—historian Kano Masanao has argued that Ryukyu residents became stateless persons.<sup>112</sup> In contrast to the statelessness of the Korean minority in post-occupation Japan, however, Ryukyu residents had become stateless in their own homeland.

Notwithstanding USCAR’s claim that the GRI was now on the path towards self-government, the enactment of a new set of migration regulations revealed an American attempt to build the façade of an independent nation-state in the

Ryukyus. Building on the earlier "passport system," in January 1953 USCAR issued an ordinance for establishing a comprehensive migration control system, complete with a mandatory alien registration for all "non-Ryukyuan" except US military personnel. Comparable to the powerful migration control regime that US occupation officials crafted in Japan, those who violated the alien registration regulations in the Ryukyus were subject to arrest, interrogation, and deportation.<sup>113</sup>

These regulations were primarily aimed at monitoring an increasing number of Japanese who arrived in Okinawa for the construction of US military bases, requiring them to register as "aliens" or face the threat of deportation. American authorities in the Ryukyus pushed further in their quest to institutionalize migration controls in the image of a nation-state. In February 1954, USCAR issued an ordinance revising the Ryukyuan migration control system, this time requiring fingerprinting as a part of alien registration and expanding the scope of deportable offenses.<sup>114</sup> This was followed a year later by the enactment of a revised version of the "passport system," which enforced stricter travel regulations for Ryukyuan residents.<sup>115</sup> USCAR gradually transferred administrative responsibility for these migration regulations to the GRI, but never gave up its final authority to grant entry, exit, and residency permits. The tightly controlled borders and boundaries of the Ryukyus thus reflected the underlying hegemonic power of US military rule, which lasted until the reversion of Okinawa Prefecture to Japan in May 1972.

## *Conclusion*

For many US policymakers, including the administration of George W. Bush prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Japan after World War II offered a successful model for how best to conduct a military occupation. However, amid the hasty and ill-conceived predictions of triumph for the American occupations in Iraq or Afghanistan, parties within and outside of the US government alike usually forgot some important historical details.

Together with their counterparts in southern Korea and the Ryukyu Islands, US occupiers in Japan had helped to transform the regional order in Northeast Asia, from an order dominated by the Japanese imperium to a new American hegemony. The dissolution of the Japanese Empire meant the expulsion of officers and soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, the *kempeitai* military police, colonial statesmen and bureaucrats, *zaibatsu* elites and employees, and vast numbers of migrant settlers, from liberated colonies and occupied territories alike. They were replaced by an influx of American occupying armies and their dependents, military government officers, CIC agents, civil affairs experts, and visiting statesmen and businessmen. For these US authorities, occupied territory was a borderless realm of free and unrestricted movement, as they encouraged a steady inflow of American citizens, goods, ideas, and culture, helping to reorient the former Japanese Empire from Asia to America.

Throughout the occupation period, authorized parties associated with the Allied forces did enjoy considerable freedom of movement. On the other hand, former imperial subjects, who had been accustomed to circular migration in the “transborder living sphere” of the Japanese Empire, found that the newly drawn borders of occupation restricted them to a one-way return migration. A half century of migrants moving, settling, and intermixing within the Japanese Empire was abruptly cut off with Japan’s defeat in war on August 15, 1945.

This epochal moment divided imperial subjects into defeated Japanese and liberated colonial subjects, initiating a messy and protracted unmixing of these populations along ethnic lines in the wake of empire. At first, the Japanese government prioritized the repatriation of demobilized military servicemen, including

Taiwanese and Koreans, while deporting Chinese and Korean laborers conscripted for the war effort—except for coal miners. Embracing their liberation, other resourceful Korean migrants chartered small fishing boats for their return journeys, leading a spontaneous mass exodus from Japan. Ethnic organizations such as the League of Koreans emerged to facilitate this return migration, while providing support for compatriots who remained in Japan. Likewise, driven by a resurgent sense of Okinawan identity, the League of Okinawans also demanded that the Japanese government assist fellow islanders while they awaited repatriation. Representing the needs and interests of their respective migrant communities, these influential organizations contributed to the process of ethnic segregation that unfolded in postimperial Japan.

The deployment of US occupation forces in Japan, Korea, and the Ryukyus symbolized the dawn of American hegemony in the region, and their joint repatriation program played a decisive role in resettling Northeast Asia. When the limited number of remaining Japanese commercial ferries struggled to meet the high demand for transporting repatriates, the US military provided a hundred Liberty Ships and eighty-five LSTs to expedite repatriation to and from Japan.<sup>1</sup> The close cooperation and coordination among occupation forces in the region helped determine the order, schedule, and overall pace of repatriation through 1946 and beyond. They also endorsed the registration of former colonial subjects and Ryukyuan as “non-Japanese,” reflecting SCAP’s de-Japanization policy, which strongly encouraged these migrant minorities to repatriate.

However, competing jurisdictions and divergent interests among various occupation authorities also resulted in periodic disagreements over how best to administer repatriation regulations. USAMGIK’s blunt criticism of the strict customs restrictions imposed upon repatriates is particularly significant, as it called into question the effectiveness of SCAP’s repatriation program. SCAP’s ESS Section stubbornly defended this policy, insisting that the customs regulations applied equally to Japanese and non-Japanese alike.<sup>2</sup> Yet this turned out to be a moot point, especially after repatriation was made mandatory for all Japanese nationals, while non-Japanese were given the freedom to repatriate or not. More than a half million Koreans ultimately decided to remain in Japan, thus retaining the sum of their hard-earned savings. Furthermore, the officially promoted “mass repatriation program” amounted in the end to a misnomer of significant proportions, as it accounted for less than one-tenth of the 1.5 million Koreans who returned to their homeland after liberation.

In addition to inter-occupation cooperation, the American-led effort at resettling Northeast Asia was dependent upon a high degree of mutual collaboration between the occupiers and the occupied. SCAP succeeded in brokering cooperative



relations with the Japanese state, which eagerly sought to retain its governing authority, in the execution of repatriation. On the other hand, USAMGIK and USMGR each struggled to plan for and implement policies aimed at reintegrating returnees, largely due to the absence of a functioning state or a meaningful comprador class in Korea or the Ryukyus after Japanese rule. Military government officials had at their disposal ample supplies of material resources to meet the needs of returnees, but they were hampered by a dearth of reliable local officials with governing experience to administer a sound resettlement program. Consequently disregarded, returnees found themselves relegated to the fringes of society, where many resorted to food rations and the black markets for survival. Others joined political movements to resist direct US military rule. To escape from their predicament, increasing numbers of Korean and Ryukyuan returnees from Japan resolved to resettle in the former metropole, utilizing smuggling networks to return to the Japanese islands.

SCAP responded to the waves of unauthorized immigration by attempting to enforce a blockade of occupied Japan, eager to avoid this unexpected challenge to its mass repatriation program. Again, it relied on close cooperation and coordination with the Eighth Army, BCOF, and the Japanese police to apprehend, detain, and deport these “blockade runners.” The joint effort to combat smuggling and illegal immigration indirectly affected the large Korean community in Japan, as American and Japanese authorities actively collaborated with each other to deal with the “Korean problem.” This collaboration spawned the alien registration system, which merged preexisting Japanese and American models. It was primarily aimed at documenting former colonial subjects to reestablish state surveillance over them. Alien registration was then incorporated into the powerful new migration control system, shaped by American immigration laws, which gave the Japanese state discretionary authority to deport undesirable aliens in the name of national security.

In the context of the heightening Cold War in Northeast Asia, SCAP was hardly alone in the American-led effort to block illegal shipping and immigration from occupied territory. USAMGIK also institutionalized a rudimentary system of identity documentation closely linked to restrictive migration regulations, transferring the centralized power of enforcement to the national security state it created in South Korea. In addition, USMGR enacted its “passport system” to stamp out rampant smuggling, while enforcing stringent security measures for screening communist infiltrators. Each of the three US occupation administrations in the region thus bequeathed exclusionary border and migration controls, helping to consolidate American hegemony in the divided realm of the former Japanese Empire.

## Controlling Postwar and Postcolonial Migrations in Europe and Asia

A few historians have discerned the significance of how the borders of American occupations were closed off from the rest of the region that Japan had recently called the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Noting the striking absence of Japanese–Asian intercourse in the wake of empire, Marius Jansen observed that Japan after World War II “was in total isolation from Asia and much of the West” for a half decade or more. Drawing a historical parallel with the Tokugawa period, he rightly attributed this postwar isolation to travel restrictions imposed on the Japanese, who had so recently been scattered throughout Asia.<sup>3</sup> John Dower also adduced Tokugawa Japan’s two centuries of self-imposed seclusion, contrasting it with occupied Japan’s “strange seclusion,” which saw the country withdraw from the world while locked in a close embrace with its American conqueror.<sup>4</sup>

As insightful as these historical analogies with early modern Japan are, closer analogies with postwar Japan’s occupied isolation are found by comparing border and migration controls between US military occupations in Northeast Asia and Central Europe after World War II. Securing newly redrawn borders of jurisdiction by controlling the movement of people who crossed over them was a pressing issue for Allied occupiers in postwar Europe as well as in Asia. The architects of postwar Europe used these borders to divide and isolate occupied Italy and Germany from the rest of the region that the Axis powers ruled over, including Austria, which the Allies occupied separately. Serving as a direct model for the postwar occupations in Asia, the isolation of occupied territory in Europe was enforced by suspending foreign relations, repatriating masses of people, and closing borders to contain free travel and emigration.

In occupied Germany, American authorities implemented a law that prohibited anyone from crossing the German frontiers, except as authorized by the US military government, and civilians were not even allowed to leave their place of residence without permission. The primary purpose of this border control law was to “seal off Germany as a security measure to prevent the escape of German intelligence personnel and other unwanted persons, primarily former Nazi officials.”<sup>5</sup> American authorities deployed in occupied Japan followed the same logic, blockading borders to prevent Japanese war crimes suspects from fleeing the country. The establishment of Allied border controls in occupied territory was thus aimed initially at containing a lingering security threat posed by Axis fugitives who remained at large.

Beyond such security concerns from the late war, the escalating political rivalry between the US and USSR contributed to the tightening of border controls,

further isolating occupied territory in Europe and in Asia. Mere months after the end of the European war, the focus of American authorities shifted from Germany's external borders to its internal borders, as a flood of German refugees crossed into the western zones from the eastern zone under Soviet occupation.<sup>6</sup> Much like the internal migration of millions of Koreans who crossed the 38th parallel into American custody in US-occupied southern Korea, an estimated 1.6 million Germans crossed over from the Soviet zone through June 1946. As a result, the Allies agreed to close off zonal borders, requiring all persons to obtain inter-zonal travel permits, or passports, without which one was punishable for illegal border crossing.<sup>7</sup> No such internal passport system was implemented in Korea, where American and Soviet authorities lacked either the willpower or the manpower to cooperate in monitoring their shared border. The fortification of Cold War frontiers in Germany and Korea continued beyond the occupation period, as the two divided nations became isolated from one another for decades to come.

German refugees fleeing the Soviet zone were but one of many groups of people who crossed Europe's postwar borders, legally or not, during the tumultuous years between World War II and the emerging Cold War. Allied military directives ordered the repatriation of an estimated 8 million civilians. Categorized as "displaced persons" (DPs), these included concentration camp inmates, prisoners of war, forced laborers, and foreign workers in Germany at the end of the war. In addition, there were an estimated 3 million other displaced persons in other parts of Europe, most of whom had been displaced by the Nazis' carefully planned wartime state policies. Ethno-national identity served as a critical marker for sorting these people, especially between nationals of wartime allies and enemy states, a distinction that was invoked when establishing priorities for their repatriation.<sup>8</sup> As a result, a majority of displaced French, Belgian, Dutch, Polish, Czech, and Soviet nationals were repatriated rapidly by the fall of 1945. Italians, as nationals of a former enemy state, were repatriated next, while the expulsion of Germans from Central and Eastern Europe, underway since early 1945, meant that no special provisions were made for them in the Potsdam agreements. American authorities adopted many of these measures from early postwar Europe and applied them in Asia, where postwar repatriation was just getting underway.

Although humanitarian concerns drove the Allies to expend significant resources in providing care for displaced persons in Europe, powerful political motivations in determining their fate often worked against these vulnerable people. One such problem involved the Anglo-American-directed repatriation of over 2 million Soviet nationals, many of them against their will, in order to abide by agreements made among wartime allies. Since the Soviet Union was an important ally in the war against fascism, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden

promised in September 1944 that all Soviet nationals would be repatriated “whether they were willing to return or not.”<sup>9</sup>

This promise was signed into an agreement in May 1945, initiating the enforcement of repatriation, often involving British and American troops pushing desperate people across the border into Soviet custody. Confirming their worst fears, the journey of these reluctant repatriates often met a tragic end: among the 5.5 million Soviet nationals repatriated through the early 1950s, one in five were shot or dispatched to the Gulag, while many more were exiled to Siberia.<sup>10</sup> In the meantime, inter-Allied cooperation was replaced by the Cold War conflict, as the Western Allies belatedly terminated forced repatriation in 1947 and began recasting displaced persons as political refugees from communist states. Instead of relying on repatriation, the US government thereafter championed the emigration of these anti-communist refugees from Europe, ostensibly for humanitarian reasons.

In Asia, too, the treatment of displaced persons during the postwar years exposed a predicament of competing motives, as well as underlying contradictions, between political expediency and humanitarianism. As was the case in Europe in the wake of war, the treatment of millions of forced laborers, military conscripts, prisoners of war, and “comfort women” mobilized and displaced by the Japanese war effort throughout Asia largely depended on postwar contingencies—namely, which Allies were in command of what territory, and whether those authorities recognized a humanitarian need for repatriation.<sup>11</sup> And just as in Europe, so too in Asia did US occupation forces provide the bulk of needed resources and the organizational leadership in orchestrating mass repatriation.

While the 2.5 million migrants in Japan discussed in this book were fortunate enough to be offered the choice of repatriating or not, those from other parts of the former Japanese Empire were at the mercy of local forces. The Nationalist Chinese (GMD) authorities distinguished displaced persons from those who actively aided Japan’s war effort or who willfully benefited from Japanese rule, a distinction that directly affected Chinese politics toward repatriation. Koreans who migrated to the puppet state of Manchukuo were therefore to be returned home voluntarily, though the GMD’s confiscation of their property and assets drove an estimated 700,000 to 800,000 Koreans out of northeastern China.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Soviet authorities made no such distinctions, detaining an estimated 43,000 Korean laborers to continue working in coal mines in Sakhalin, where they were forced to remain until the 1990s, when a small number began to be repatriated to North and South Korea.

In considering Allied policies towards postwar population transfers, it is noteworthy that displaced persons constituted but a fraction of people who moved, or

were removed, in Europe or Asia. An estimated 12 million ethnic Germans expelled from Central and Eastern Europe were also displaced from their homes, and a large proportion of them perished in the process. The 3.2 million Japanese civilians repatriated from various parts of Asia were displaced, too—not by the war itself, but by the terms of the postwar settlement that followed. These displaced Germans and Japanese, especially those who ended up in Soviet hands, suffered as much as other displaced persons for whom the Allies cared.<sup>13</sup>

However, US authorities coined the term “displaced persons” to refer specifically to various victims of fascist states and their respective policies of enforced population movements, and thus excluded nationals of enemy states. Within a year after the war, the use of this term was expanded to include victims of Soviet political persecution. As noted by Gerard Cohen, “the acronym DP exclusively applied to particular victims of Hitler and Stalin,” an important status conferred on a relatively small percentage of displaced persons around the world.<sup>14</sup>

In occupied Japan, American officials were disinclined to recognize colonial migrants who refused repatriation as displaced persons, leaving them without any aid from either occupation or Japanese government agencies. Instead, they were registered as “aliens” and required to carry identity passbooks as part of a newly instituted state surveillance system, which had no parallel in the treatment of displaced persons in postwar Europe. Neither were those who entered occupied Japan considered refugees—not even those fleeing the Korean War—but rather condemned as illegal immigrants, subject to deportation. In this sense, the right to seek asylum, as enshrined in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was not applicable to these continental Asians after its adoption in 1948. Political refugees from communist states, on the other hand, enjoyed a more favorable status in human rights laws shaped largely by the United States and its Western Allies.<sup>15</sup> Reflecting one of many ambiguities involving such rights for refugees, those fleeing US military rule and US-sponsored, undemocratic regimes in East Asia were unworthy, unwelcome, and detrimental to American interests in the Cold War context.

A comparison of the experiences of displaced persons in Europe and Asia, and how the Allies treated them, reveals a noteworthy intersection between postwar and postcolonial history that is distinctive to Northeast Asia in particular. Repatriation, resettlement, illegal migration, and deportation were all parts of the mass population movements in both postwar history and postcolonial history. In the case of the former Japanese Empire, the “postwar” and the “postcolonial” commenced simultaneously when Japan lost both the war and its empire in August 1945. The victorious Allies were forced to contend with the reality that displaced persons in Asia, unlike in Europe, had been displaced not only by years

of violent warfare, but also by decades of Japanese colonialism, complicating the task of population transfers after the war. Reluctant to confirm the status of Japanese colonial subjects as displaced persons, Allied governments showed no special commitment to helping them. This lack of concern resulted in SCAP's ambiguous policy of treating Koreans and Taiwanese *both* as liberated peoples *and* as enemy nationals, depending on the circumstances.

Such evasion could only spark ongoing friction between Japanese authorities and former colonial subjects. When it did, occupation officials often insisted that such problems be resolved through repatriation or deportation. The Allies thus aimed to return all non-Japanese and Japanese alike to their respective homelands, reflecting their commitment to divide and isolate Japan from its former colonial empire in Asia. In this sense, repatriation served as a prime example of what Lori Watt calls "third party decolonization," whereby the Allies triangulated the process of dissolving Japan's empire by interposing themselves between the defeated Japanese and liberated Asians.<sup>16</sup>

In practice, decolonization in Northeast Asia meant removing Japanese colonial institutions, laws, and authorities, replacing them with local elements that Allied occupation officials carefully chose to establish postcolonial states. Although the particularities in this process of eliminating Japanese colonialism varied depending on the policy priorities of the Allies, a common consensus soon emerged that the removal of all Japanese colonists was in their best interest. In Taiwan, Manchuria, and other parts of China, the Nationalist Chinese detained a minority of Japanese technocrats and soldiers, who were compelled to help rebuild an industrialized, anti-communist nation. The Republic of China relied on American assistance in returning all other Japanese.<sup>17</sup> Many American authorities shared with their Chinese and Korean counterparts serious concerns with the fact that Japanese migrants had at times acted as agents of Japan's imperial expansion.<sup>18</sup> By uprooting and returning these migrant settlers from what had been Japanese colonies and occupied territories, repatriation served as a crucial means of postwar decolonization. SCAP's ban against overseas travel and emigration of Japanese nationals also contributed to the decolonization in Northeast Asia, not unlike similar restrictions enforced against Europeans by postcolonial nations in other parts of Asia and Africa.

The comparative framework also exposed the limits of the language of "decolonization" to describe the dissolution of the Japanese Empire in Northeast Asia. The Allies in the region never officially adopted decolonization as a major policy objective, or even used the term, while European officials were forced to recognize the global trend of decolonization after the Second World War. The preferred focus of American occupiers in Northeast Asia was on nation-building, even if



this policy objective was not evenly applied to all their occupied territories, as exemplified by the prolonged US military rule in the Ryukyu Islands. For this reason, SCAP maintained the position that unresolved problems resulting from Japanese colonial rule be addressed in the future through bilateral negotiations between Japan and its former possessions, and that the United States, as a third party, would not interfere in such matters.

This was a somewhat disingenuous stance, especially given the fact that USAMGIK had proposed plans for mediating a settlement between Japan and Korea, only to have them rejected by SCAP.<sup>19</sup> However, the third-party rationale was employed as a convenient justification to avoid becoming embroiled in sensitive issues of colonialism. Such an evasion of questions related to decolonization was reflected in SCAP's failure to compel Japanese authorities to reimburse Korean conscript laborers for their unpaid wages and assets, despite its initial commitment to do so. It is reflected again in SCAP's announcement in November 1946 that former colonial subjects in Japan would retain their Japanese nationality, thus pressing repatriation on Koreans and Taiwanese who maintained they were liberated nationals of other polities. Ultimately, US authorities in Northeast Asia determined that the painstaking effort required to reach a postcolonial settlement did not necessarily serve American interests, which were squarely focused on the containment of communism and the cultivation of client states in the region. However, the consequences of this Cold War freeze on decolonization would plague US-mediated efforts to foster closer ties between Japan and South Korea beyond the normalization of relations in 1965, resurfacing as the so-called history problem beginning in the 1980s and which has remained salient since then.

The US effort at dismantling the Japanese Empire was also fraught with conflict and contradictions in the Ryukyus, where the ambiguous status of the archipelago and its people was intertwined with their history, ethnicity, and identity. By categorizing Okinawans in Japan as non-Japanese, and encouraging them to return to the Ryukyus, SCAP persistently promoted their de-Japanization. Meanwhile, in the wake of the mass protests against US military rule in Okinawa between 1948 and 1949, USMGR began to advocate a "Ryukyuanization" of the archipelago.<sup>20</sup> The dual policy of de-Japanization and Ryukyuanization implied liberation, decolonization, and independence—powerful ideas that resonated with liberal Okinawans. However, even those repatriates who advocated autonomous self-government were confronted by the stark reality of direct military rule in the Ryukyus, which contrasted starkly with the democratization of occupied Japan. The elusive appearance of Ryukyuan autonomy, symbolized by travel documents issued to "Ryukyuan" without any reference to their nationality, was an American creation, invented to maintain the division of the Ryukyus

from Japan. The policy of de-Japanization ultimately backfired when successive waves of resistance against the US military's neocolonial rule led Ryukyuan residents to demand reversion to Japan.

The anomaly of the indirect and haphazard dissolution of the Japanese Empire precludes any facile comparisons with postcolonial migrations that accompanied decolonization in other parts of the world. On the one hand, the repatriation of Japanese settlers from Japan's liberated colonies in Asia may be comparable to the repatriation of the French *pied noir* from revolutionary Algeria, or of Italian settlers from Italy's liberated Mediterranean and East African colonies.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, occupied Japan's isolation from postcolonial Asia, enforced by SCAP's ban against immigration, stands in stark contrast to the dramatic increase in postcolonial migrations to Europe. Whereas immigration to Japan from its former empire came to a prolonged standstill after 1945, a reverse trend became apparent in Holland, France, and the United Kingdom. In these countries, over 3 million people from the former colonial world had settled by 1980. Initially, this new wave of immigrants to Europe was largely refugees fleeing their homelands for having supported the losing side in colonial wars, including 13,000 Indonesians who settled in Holland and 85,000 *harkis* from Algeria who settled in France. They were soon followed by hundreds of thousands of postcolonial immigrants, who provided the low-cost labor that promoted the economic recovery of Western Europe after the Second World War.<sup>22</sup>

No such parallels can be found in postimperial Japan. Having lost its empire by fiat, not through colonial wars of independence, the Japanese state faced no obligation to accept Chinese, Taiwanese, or Korean collaborators, who were persecuted at home but unable to seek refuge in the former metropole. Neither was the state compelled to rely on immigrant laborers, as millions of Japanese repatriates and internal migrants from rural areas contributed towards economic recovery and growth. Furthermore, Japanese emigration to Central and South American countries resumed in 1952, supported by post-occupation government programs aimed at tackling the problem of overpopulation in Japan. The minuscule number of postcolonial immigrants to Japan were treated as illegal aliens. Those who managed to escape detection had to live in constant fear of arrest and deportation for years, if not decades.

Such vastly differing patterns of postcolonial migrations must be understood in relationship to the transformation of citizenship rights in metropolitan Europe and Japan after the Second World War. Unlike Japan, which was forced to relinquish its empire at war's end, France and the United Kingdom attempted to bolster their crumbling empires through an expansion of citizenship, including conceding the right of colonial subjects to enter the metropole. For example, the passage

of French Union citizenship in 1946 established legal equality between French nationals and colonial subjects, thus eliminating the latter term from official language. The UK followed suit in 1948 by passing its Nationality Act, which affirmed that inhabitants of its Commonwealth had British nationality, with equal rights of entry into and employment within the UK.<sup>23</sup> Although French citizenship was subsequently revoked from Vietnamese, Algerians, and others who fought against and gained independence from France, the British law guaranteed citizenship rights to former colonial subjects, thus honoring Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stated, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.”<sup>24</sup>

Unconstrained by international human rights accords that it did not sign (and could not have signed) during the occupation, the government of the newly independent Japan immediately stripped former colonial subjects of their Japanese nationality on the very day the occupation ended in 1952. Such a unilateral denationalization thus left more than a half million persons stateless, without any citizenship rights, in postimperial Japan. The Japanese government presented these stateless aliens with two potential solutions to solve their predicament: repatriation and naturalization. In December 1955, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs devised a plan to encourage repatriation. After four years of intense lobbying and negotiations, it began in December 1959 to ship out tens of thousands of Koreans to North Korea.<sup>25</sup> From April 1952, the Ministry of Justice opened the door to naturalizing former colonial subjects, as more than 20,000 Koreans and Taiwanese became Japanese citizens through 1960.<sup>26</sup> However, an overwhelming majority could not return to their respective homelands for economic and sociopolitical reasons, and refused to renounce their ethnic heritage and identity as a precondition for obtaining Japanese citizenship. The Japanese state thus continued to treat these former colonial subjects as stateless persons, who were totally unprotected by any legal rights.<sup>27</sup>

Korean residents in post-occupation Japan (*zainichi* in Japanese) remained stateless persons, at least until Japan and the Republic of Korea signed a treaty normalizing relations in 1965. According to the terms of the treaty, Koreans who had migrated to Japan during the colonial period and their descendants were offered a special status as “treaty permanent residents” (*kyōtei eijūsha*).<sup>28</sup> Holders of this anomalous status were granted certain privileges as South Korean nationals, such as the right to travel or study abroad, no longer hampered by fears of being barred from reentering Japan. Following ratification of the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1982, North Koreans were permitted to acquire “general permanent residence,” a status more secure than statelessness, but less so than the formal treaty rights enjoyed by South Koreans. Under the terms

of the Refugee Convention, Koreans and other foreign residents became eligible for state health, pension, and disability benefits; government housing services, child-rearing allotments, and other entitlements formerly reserved for Japanese nationals.<sup>29</sup> However, nationality clauses still bar *zainichi* Koreans from most public-sector jobs, including the teaching profession. Furthermore, the Education Ministry does not honor the high school diplomas of Korean ethnic high schools, making it mandatory for their graduates to take an equivalency exam to enter state-run universities.<sup>30</sup>

American occupation authorities were fully aware that Japanese officials were preparing to denationalize former colonial subjects but did nothing to intervene, remaining quietly complicit in the denial of human rights in postimperial Japan. Such tacit complicity was part of a larger US effort to maintain Japan's active collaboration in combating communism within and beyond its borders, especially since a majority of *zainichi* Koreans openly supported the North Korean regime through the 1980s.<sup>31</sup> Taken together with exclusionary immigration laws, which American occupiers took a more direct role in drafting, such complicity and collaboration paved the way for the construction of national security states in the region that emerged in the wake of empire. Standing above this hierarchy of national sovereignty, the foreign occupiers themselves remained exempt from such exclusionary laws, as their priority remained the consolidation of American hegemony in the region beyond the occupation period.

### **The Expansion and Curtailment of American Hegemony**

How did the administration of US military occupations serve to lay the foundations for expanding American hegemony in Northeast Asia after World War II? One way to answer this question is to measure the extent of American authority in the region by examining the extralegal authority of US occupation forces, who were totally immune from existing local laws. This legal immunity entered force at the very moment American occupiers crossed into occupied territory, as they were exempt from standard immigration and customs regulations. Instead, an official deployment order or transfer order from the appropriate military authorities governed the entry and exit of US occupation forces, whose military identification served in lieu of passports. Such minimal requirements guaranteed maximum freedom and flexibility in moving military personnel throughout the region.

On the other hand, US occupation officials set up detailed regulations to control the movement of people and goods in Japan, Korea, and the Ryukyus,

demonstrating that their authority extended to the very borders of occupied territory. The authority to enforce these regulations was gradually transferred to local officials, though none were allowed to inspect the personal belongings of occupation forces, much less deny their entry and exit, regardless of any violations.

Another illuminating and more controversial example of the occupiers' absolute immunity was their exemption from criminal jurisdiction in occupied territory. American servicemen who committed crimes ranging from petty theft, reckless driving, and black marketeering to assault, rape, and murder could not be punished by local jurisdictions. As a result, American soldiers and sailors in Japan, Korea, and the Ryukyus broke the law with impunity. Sexual violence against local women, in particular, was a prevalent problem. Military police were authorized to arrest American servicemen found to have committed such criminal acts, which were punishable by military courts as stipulated in the Articles of War. In reality, however, MPs arrested relatively few servicemen for these offenses, and the military courts convicted even fewer. Furthermore, news of criminal activity by occupation forces was totally suppressed, as censorship orders outlawed the publication of articles and reports considered "inimical to the objectives of the Occupation."<sup>32</sup> Such a concealed and lenient application of extralegal military jurisdiction would emerge as a major source of conflict when US officials demanded perpetuation of the practice beyond the occupation period.

A final, related measure of American hegemony after World War II can be gleaned by tracing the legal expansion of US military authority outside of the framework of military occupations. The extension of diplomatic immunity enjoyed by American servicemen was formalized as part of a series of bilateral and multilateral security treaties the US government signed with its Cold War allies in the 1950s. These security treaties served to lease territory for US military bases, while accompanying status of forces agreements (SOFA) granted extralegal immunity, in a set package that helped to secure American hegemony throughout the Cold War era and beyond. US military bases therefore became exclusive zones of "occupation" within a nation, whereby the host nation held *de jure* sovereignty while the US exercised *de facto* sovereignty over the leased territory. Such arrangements amounted to the establishment of a new form of extraterritoriality, based on unequal security treaties, that East Asian states grudgingly accepted in exchange for American military assistance in containing communism. This expansion of American hegemony thus became interlinked to a vast, global network of US military bases around the world.

US military occupations, together with their border and migration controls, fundamentally reshaped the state and society of occupied territories in Asia and Europe after World War II. Today, the presence of over 125,000 American troops

on US military bases in Japan, South Korea, Germany, and Italy serves as one of the most visible, enduring legacies of these occupations. The military bases that replaced the occupations are the clearest territorial markers of postwar American hegemony, which are maintained to defend allies while also limiting their sovereignty, making them US dependencies.

As Bruce Cumings has noted, this hegemonic penetration was most apparent in semi-sovereign nations that were on the front line of the Cold War, such as West Germany and South Korea.<sup>33</sup> And yet American predominance in East Asia made this hegemonic power feel that much more palpable, whereas Allied cooperation in Western Europe resulted in regional integration represented by multilateral institutions. The inability to assert independent foreign policy or defense initiatives, relying instead on the growing political, economic, and military power of the United States, led to the creation of what some have called American client states in East Asia.<sup>34</sup>

The maintenance of hegemony, however, depends upon the ability of a hegemon to enforce its dominance—a basic principle that the United States could not, and did not, uphold indefinitely. While the US government secured strong alliances with anti-communist states in Northeast Asia, social resistance against American hegemonic power grew over time, especially in post-occupation Japan. Long before the protest movement against the renewal of the US-Japan security treaty culminated in the violent riots of 1960, one of the strongest and most consistent forces of opposition came from leftist Korean residents in Japan. SCAP's order to forcibly close down ethnic schools in April 1948 disillusioned an entire generation of resident Koreans, who had initially welcomed US occupation forces as an "army of liberation." Maintaining their strong spirit of independence, however, volunteer teachers continued to educate the Korean youth by tutoring them in exchange for meals with their families, while the larger communities began collecting donations to rebuild ethnic schools. Likewise, the enforced dissolution of the League of Koreans in September 1949 engendered deep-seated resentment against American and Japanese authorities, serving as a strong motivation for rebuilding a new ethnic organization.

A half year after the outbreak of the Korean War, former League members established the Democratic Front for the Unification of Koreans in Japan (Minjeon in abbreviated Korean), initiating an anti-American struggle to oppose the US intervention in the civil war. Building upon its cross-border contacts with the Korean peninsula, in 1955 the Democratic Front was reorganized as the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryun in abbreviated Korean), explicitly aligning itself with the North Korean state. According to Sonia Ryang, Chongryun soon commanded "mass support among Koreans in Japan for whom



North Korea still had greater sway than South Korea.” Mindan, its rival organization, was not as popular, largely because the United States backed the authoritarian regimes in South Korea. Hundreds of thousands of *zainichi* Koreans continued to support Chongryun and the 160 schools it operated throughout Japan, thus resisting the American allies that threatened to break its transnational networks of interaction and cooperation with North Korea.<sup>35</sup> The Alien Registration Law’s onerous and demeaning requirement to forcibly fingerprint all non-Japanese every five years, a direct legacy of Japanese-American collaboration during the occupation, galvanized Koreans across the political spectrum into a resistance movement. In the midst of McCarthyism in the US and the Red Purge in Japan, Nicholas Collaer had convinced the Japanese government to enact mandatory fingerprinting in a systematic practice that would endure for decades. Just as the League of Koreans led a sustained campaign against the Osaka Prefectural Police’s attempt to fingerprint Koreans in 1946, Korean and Chinese organizations launched an intense campaign against the reenactment of fingerprinting in 1952. Whereas the appeal of these ethnic organizations was limited mainly to minority aliens, the institutionalized discrimination against them received widespread public sympathy when an individual first-generation Korean immigrant refused to be fingerprinted in 1980. This incident encouraged others to engage in civil disobedience, leading to well-publicized court cases supported by human rights groups.<sup>36</sup> The persistent resistance movement finally forced the government to abolish mandatory fingerprinting in the year 2000, nearly a half century after Collaer insisted that it be implemented to track “subversive” aliens.

Another illuminating example of the limitations of American hegemony can be found in the intermittent struggle against US military rule in the Ryukyu Islands, which paved the way for the reversion of Okinawa Prefecture to Japan in 1972. The incorporation of the Ryukyus into America’s defense perimeter in the Asia-Pacific region had resulted in renewed contacts and increased interactions with Japan. Nevertheless, the 30th parallel border remained in place, separating the Ryukyus from Japan. This administrative division became the main subject in the contentious public debate over the political disposition of the Ryukyus, which was reignited with the commencement of US-Japan peace treaty negotiations in early 1950. In order to justify the US government’s decision to retain control over the strategically valuable archipelago, USMGR held elections for governors and assemblymen, leading to the inauguration of the four island group (*guntō*) governments in November 1950. The following month, the military government was reorganized to resemble SCAP’s indirect occupation of Japan, allegedly for American civil affairs officers to operate through the *guntō* government authorities. In reality, however, the newly named USCAR maintained

a firm grip on the reins of governing authority.<sup>37</sup> This American effort to construct a façade of democratic and sovereign governing structures was not lost on the political opposition in the Ryukyus, many members of which came to embrace the possibility of returning to Japanese sovereignty as a viable alternative to the elusive dream of independence.

The Okinawan reversion movement evolved into a cross-border political movement, linking together various pro-reversion activists and organizations in the Ryukyus with those in Japan. Some of the earliest reversion activists in Japan were former civil and public servants from Okinawa Prefecture, including Nakayoshi Ryōkō, who gained national prominence for their strong opposition to trusteeship.<sup>38</sup> Specifically, US Secretary of State Dean Acheson publicly announced in January 1950 the possibility that the Ryukyus would be placed under a UN trusteeship, catapulting reversion to the forefront of public opinion against the indefinite separation of the Ryukyus from Japan. Upon hearing Acheson's announcement, Nakayoshi sent a long letter to Governor Taira Tatsuō in Okinawa, urging him to organize a signature drive against trusteeship and in support of reversion, and promised to do the same in Japan.<sup>39</sup> Shortly after news reached Okinawa that Prime Minister Yoshida accepted the Ryukyuan trusteeship arrangement in January 1951, Taira's Socialist Mass Party, together with the People's Party, announced their support for reversion. In April these two parties formed the Association for the Promotion of Reversion to Japan (Nihon Fukki Sokushin Kiseikai), or Reversion Association, which began a signature drive campaign throughout Okinawa calling for reversion. When it became apparent that the signature drive in Okinawa was failing to meet expectations, Nakayoshi sent over 2,000 leaflets to the Reversion Association for distribution, encouraging all Okinawans to unite themselves in support of the movement.<sup>40</sup> In response, Okinawan activists in the Ryukyus and in Japan formed a united front between the reversion movements on both sides of the 30th parallel.

Okinawa was not the only island group in the Ryukyus to be swept up in the cross-border reversion movement with Japan. In fact, activist organizations in the Amami island group and their counterparts in Japan that coordinated the reversion movement preceded Okinawa's, were better orchestrated, and were more united. Geographically and historically closer to Japan, Amami stood apart from the rest of the Ryukyus. The sustained political movement to reunite Amami with Japan was, therefore, just as much a unified expression of pro-Japanese sentiment as it was a rejection of the US effort to create the Northern Ryukyus as part of an imagined Ryukyuan polity and identity. The expanding scale and momentum of the underground networks of Amamian activists, even

more than their Okinawan counterparts, proved a formidable challenge to the border and migration controls of American authorities on either side of the 30th parallel. What emerged then was a cross-border reversion movement largely independent from—and ultimately more successful than—the Okinawan movement.

Unlike Okinawa, where the push for greater autonomy was the prevailing political trend in the immediate postwar years, public support for reversion surfaced in Amami as early as 1947. For a large number of Amami residents, disillusioned by their island group's separation from Japan, General MacArthur's press statement in March calling for an early peace with Japan was received as welcome news. MacArthur suggested that the political status of the Ryukyu Islands should be decided at a peace conference, raising expectations among Amami residents who hoped for an early end to Amami's division and military occupation.<sup>41</sup> Local newspapers eagerly reported on the subsequent diplomatic maneuvers. Nakamura Yasutarō, the editor of *Amami Taimusu*, also began providing greater coverage to Japan's democratic reforms, contrasting them with Amami's growing list of problems, thereby giving expression to widespread popular support for reversion. American authorities began to take notice in August 1947, when Nakamura reportedly helped organize a public rally in the city of Naze, attended by an estimated 3,000 residents, to advocate not only elections and reforms but also reversion to Japan. The CIC noted that this mass rally was quickly followed by various meetings organized by Amami's council of municipal leaders, the law revisions committee, and the education department, all of which expressed "the unanimous desire of the people for return to Japan."<sup>42</sup> Upon investigating Nakamura's popular base of support, the CIC discovered that he had formed an underground communist party, which enlisted widespread support from a large number of young Amamians. As a CIC study of communist influence on Ryukyuan politics observed, Nakamura and his followers represented the strongest organized faction of potential political activists in the Northern Ryukyus.<sup>43</sup> What this report failed to note, however, was the fact that Nakamura was a former member of the JCP in prewar Japan, and that he had formed the Amami Communist Party (ACP), assisted by an underground agent dispatched by the JCP.<sup>44</sup> Neither could the CIC have known that the ACP then decided to depart from the JCP's early policy of Ryukyuan independence, advocating reversion instead as an expression of the strong identification of Amamians with Japan.

On the other side of the border—and at the opposite end of the political spectrum—conservative Amami residents in Japan were slowly beginning to rally support for reversion even before MacArthur's peace treaty initiative. Politically

conservative Amamians in the Kansai region first attempted to form a federation of like-minded members in February 1947. They largely aimed at countering their dominant, liberal rivals such as the Amami League and the League of Okinawans. Right from the outset, the preparatory committee members unambiguously declared that their goal was to promote a reversion movement. They met again in March 1948, this time formally establishing the Amami Union (Amami Rengō) Osaka headquarters, inspired by the formation of conservative Amami coalitions in Hyōgo and Kyoto Prefectures. Using nationalist language, the executive committee declared that the administrative division from Japan made Amami an “orphan of the South Seas” that threatened its “ethnic extinction,” before concluding, “we firmly reject this, demanding and expecting instead total reversion to be [included] in the peace treaty.”<sup>45</sup> The Amami Union thus helped lay the groundwork for the nationalistic appeal that would characterize the coming reversion movement.

A series of incidents between 1949 and 1951 culminated in a resurgent movement towards reversion, a movement that quickly transcended the 30th parallel border. The first of these was USMGR’s threefold increase in food prices in Amami, implemented in April 1949, following similar economic austerity measures enacted in Okinawa three months earlier. The resulting food price crisis drove many desperate Amami residents to join the black market trade along the Yamato smuggling route, while galvanizing youth groups, labor unions, and other organizations into a united opposition movement.<sup>46</sup> This opposition movement triggered another incident when occupation authorities fired a twenty-six-year-old teacher for orchestrating a pro-reversion debate at a youth group meeting. Undeterred, the teacher-activist illegally crossed into Japan and joined an Amamian youth group in Miyazaki Prefecture, which had just launched an organized reversion movement in August.<sup>47</sup> Shortly thereafter, a student association in Tokyo responded by holding rallies in support of reversion. These youth groups then began to organize a coordinated pro-reversion campaign with the Amami Union, which had grown into a national federation representing twelve regional branches throughout Japan. During the US-led peace treaty negotiations, the Amami Union expressed its strong opposition to Amami’s indefinite separation from Japan in a four-page petition to General MacArthur, explaining that Amamians were Japanese nationals, not Ryukyuan.

On the other side of the border, the Amami Oshima Reversion Council (Amami Ōshima Nihon Fukki Kyōgikai), or Reversion Council, was formed in February 1951, and immediately began collecting signatures in support of returning the islands to Japan. Two months later, the Reversion Council had collected over 139,000 signatures, or 99.8 percent of Amamians over the age of fourteen who

supported reversion.<sup>48</sup> This overwhelmingly successful signature drive served as an inspirational model for Okinawa's pro-reversion signature drive the following month. In August, on the eve of the peace treaty conference, eleven delegates from the Reversion Council illegally entered Japan, capturing media attention—not to mention widespread sympathy—in their joint quest with the Amami Union to make a direct appeal to government officials.<sup>49</sup>

The San Francisco Peace Treaty signed the following month legitimated indefinite US military rule in the Ryukyu Islands, but American hegemony proved vulnerable to public opinion. The continuing Amami reversion movement received sympathetic media coverage not only in Japan but also from abroad, prompting the US government to conduct a number of investigative studies. In March 1952, USCAR's Civil Information and Education (CI&E) office compiled a public opinion survey, which concluded that favorable attitudes towards reversion were "too intense and deep-seated to be changed overnight." An anthropological study compiled in October found that the people of the Amami Islands were "culturally more Japanese than Okinawans," and recommended that the reunion of the islands with Japan could help win back the hearts and minds of Amami-ans.<sup>50</sup> These studies helped convince American policymakers to readjust the territorial boundaries of the Ryukyus, as the US government in August 1953 declared that the Amami Islands would be returned to Japan. The Joint Chiefs of Staff ultimately determined that the Northern Ryukyus were of minor strategic value, especially since the mountainous terrain of Amami Oshima was unsuitable for airfields, which were already under construction in Okinawa. While the Pentagon's strategic calculations were thus paramount, Amamian activists could rightfully claim that they had successfully resisted US military rule when the Amami Islands were finally reverted to Japanese sovereignty in December.

The reversion of the Amami Islands to Japan, juxtaposed with the continued occupation of the Ryukyu Islands, revealed the extent to which American officials were willing to shape and reshape the administrative boundaries of US-occupied territory to serve their security interests. On the other hand, the cross-border reversion movements clearly demonstrated the limitations of American military hegemony. Reversion activists, protesters, and their sympathizers saw through the façade of a Ryukyuan nation-state, which American officials had sought to craft. Other symbolisms of nationhood that masked the absence of sovereignty, such as the US military's failed attempt in 1954 and 1956 to inaugurate a national flag for the Ryukyus, only reinforced the feeling of disillusionment against the United States.<sup>51</sup>

Ryukyu residents who were able to leave their islands—prominently including students who attended universities in the United States and Japan—returned

with an acute awareness of their predicament. The travel documents they carried with them were not official passports issued by a national government, but rather certificates issued by USCAR that were recognized only by the US and Japanese governments. The US Navy administration in the Bonin Islands issued similar travel documents that, like USCAR's, identified each individual with no reference to nationality.<sup>52</sup> Fed up, many Ryukyu residents decided to reject such symbols of subjugation and engaged in an intermittent struggle against American military rule. After a series of protest activities against the US military's draconian land policies in the 1950s, another wave of protests occurred in the late 1960s that culminated in a forceful demand for reversion to Japanese administration.<sup>53</sup> Boatloads of reversion activists from the Ryukyus and Japan convened at sea for joint rallies along the 27th parallel, which had replaced the 30th parallel as the administrative border after the reversion of the Amami Islands. Before long, this became an annual event held on April 28, which was referred to as the "day of humiliation" when Japan had regained sovereignty in 1952 but remained divided from the Ryukyus. Reminiscent of the Yamato smuggling operations, the so-called "4.28 rally at sea" (*4.28 kaijō shūkai*) embodied a new form of resistance to American hegemony, which continued until the reversion of Okinawa Prefecture to Japan in 1972.

The reversion of Okinawa, however, did not mean the US military returned vast areas of the island it occupied, as Okinawans had demanded. Instead, the Japanese government agreed to cover the cost of retaining a substantial American military presence in Okinawa, while compensating landlords for the free use of their agricultural lands. The widespread disillusionment of Okinawans deepened over time, as many US military bases were downsized or closed in mainland Japan, even while they became concentrated and reinforced on Okinawa Island. In September 1995, the abduction and gang rape of a twelve-year-old schoolgirl by three US servicemen resulted in an outburst of anger, leading to a mass demonstration of an estimated 85,000 Okinawans the following month. The joint effort of the US and Japanese governments to contain the crisis by vowing to close down the Futenma Airbase backfired, as they agreed to construct a new, alternative base in Henoko Bay, without the consent of the Okinawan governor. The sustained resistance against the Henoko relocation reflects what some scholars have described as the fundamental issue with the Okinawa "base problem": the relentless "US insistence on Japanese submission and support for its hegemonic order," even as American credibility withered with the aggressive wars of invasion in the early twenty-first century.<sup>54</sup>

At the time of this writing, the US military has completed the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, and the American combat mission in Iraq is



scheduled to end by 2022. Whether these momentous developments mark the imminent demise of American hegemony is for future historians to determine. At a minimum, the largely unsuccessful US military occupations in the Middle East make a strong case for reexamining the history of other ineffective American occupations, in Northeast Asia and beyond.

## NOTES

### Introduction

1. Hong Yeopyo describes the circumstances that drove him to board smuggling ships between Osaka and Jeju in his memoir, Ko Chanyu, *Koria taun ni ikiru: Hon Yopyo raifu hisutorii* (Osaka: Entaitoru Shuppan, 2007), pp. 19–33.

2. Arakaki Seiichi's colorful description of his involvement in the smuggling trade in Okinawa under US military rule is found in Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, ed., *Naha shishi shiryōhen*, vol. 3, part 8: *Shimin no senji-sengo taikenki 2* (Naha, Okinawa: Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, 1981), pp. 210–211; his wartime and postwar experiences in Japan are covered in pp. 400–403.

3. Despite the fact that pilfering and reselling goods from US military bases played a key role in local economies throughout the region for decades, scholars have largely examined this phenomenon within a national framework. For a transnational study on a related topic, American GIs and local prostitutes, see Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moom, eds., *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

4. Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder, *What Is Migration History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), pp. 55–56.

5. Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

6. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szantion, eds., *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992); Thomas Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

7. Victor Roudometof and Paul Kennedy, eds., *Communities across Borders: New Immigrants and Transnational Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2002); Harzig and Hoerder, *What Is Migration History?*

8. Ko, *Koria taun ni ikiru*, p. 20.

9. Naha-shi Kikaku-bu, *Shimin no senji-sengo taiken ki 2*, p. 402.

10. In his study on mobility and encounters on the margins of the Japanese Empire, David Ambaras explains that “what borderland people understand as licit exchanges is frequently different from what states define as illegal transactions.” David R. Ambaras, *Japan's Imperial Underworlds: Intimate Encounters at the Borders of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 22. More broadly, see Willem Van Schendel and Itty Abraham, “Introduction:

The Making of Illicitness,” in *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things: States, Borders, and the Other Side of Globalization* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 1–37.

11. John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

12. Adam M. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

13. See, for example, Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

14. Ian Buruma, *Year Zero: A History of 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).

15. Sarah Kovner, *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 8–10.

16. Eyal Benvenisti, *The International Law of Occupation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 1.

17. For a comprehensive study of Japan’s imperial rule in the Pacific islands, see Mark R. Peattie, *Nan’yō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1988).

18. Rogers Brubaker, “Aftermaths of Empire and the Unmixing of Peoples,” in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building*, edited by Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 155–180. For an incisive study on the population exchange between Turkey and Greece, which was enforced as a part of the process of dismantling the Ottoman Empire, see Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: The Mass Expulsions that Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

19. On the issue of voluntary versus enforced repatriation, see, for example, Rowena Ward, “Delaying Repatriation: Japanese Technicians in Early Postwar China,” *Japan Forum* 23, no. 4 (December 2011): 472–483.

20. Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), p. 2.

21. Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 5–9.

22. For a detailed account on the UNRRA program in China, see George H. Kerr, “The UNRRA-CNRRA Story,” in *Formosa Betrayed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 158–183.

23. Pamela Ballinger, “Borders of the Nation, Borders of Citizenship: Italian Repatriation and the Redefinition of National Identity after World War II,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 3 (2007): 713–741.

24. John Lie, “Asian Studies/Global Studies: Transcending Area Studies and Social Sciences,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review E-Journal* 2 (2012), <http://crosscurrents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-2>.

25. John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 22–23.

26. Laura Hein, “Revisiting America’s Occupation of Japan,” *Cold War History* 11, no. 4 (November 2011): 587.

27. Michael Cullen Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire after World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); Deokhyo Choi,

“Crucible of the Post-Empire: Decolonization, Race, and Cold War Politics in U.S.-Japan-Korea Relations, 1945–1952” (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 2013); Mire Koikari, *Cold War Encounters in US-Occupied Okinawa: Women, Militarized Domesticity, and Transnationalism in East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

28. For scholarship on Koreans in Japan during the occupation period that examines the relationship between their mobility and border controls, see Ōnuma Yasuaki, *Tan'itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete: Zainichi Kankoku-Chōsenjin to shutsunyūkoku kanri taisei* (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 1986); Kim Taegi, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai: SCAP no tai-zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku, 1945–1952 nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1997); Choe Yeongho, *Jaeilhangug-ingwa jogukgwangbok: Haebang jikuui bonguk gwi hwangwa minjokdanche hwaldong* (Seoul: Geulmoin, 1995); Yi Yeonsik, “Haebang jiku haoedongpoui gwi hwangwa Migunjeongui jeongchaek” (MA thesis, University of Seoul, 1998). For scholarship on mobility and border controls in the US-occupied Ryukyus, see Ishihara Masaie, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi: Senka to mitsubōeki no jidai* (Tokyo: Banseisha, 2000); Yakabi Osamu, “Kokkyō no kengen: Okinawa Yonaguni no mitsubōeki shūsoku no haikai,” *Gendai shisō* 31, no. 11 (September 2003); Doi Tomoyoshi, “Beigun tōchika no Okinawa ni okeru shutsunyūkoku kanri seido to ‘hi-Ryukyujin,’” in *Gendai Okinawa no rekishi keiken: Kibō, aruiwa miketsusei ni tsuite*, edited by Tomiyama Ichirō and Mori Yoshio (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2010). Other relevant works include Araragi Shinzō, ed., *Teikoku hōkai to hito no saidō: Hikiage, sōkan, soshite zanryū* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2011); Pak Dongseong, ed., *Teikoku Nippon no sai hen to hutatsu no “zainichi”: Senzen, sengo ni okeru zainichi Chōsenjin to Okinawajin* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2010).

29. Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*; Mark Caprio and Yu Jia, “Occupations of Korea and Japan and the Origins of the Korean Diaspora in Japan,” in *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, edited by Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 21–38; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

30. Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan*.

31. Hajo Holborn, *American Military Government: Its Organization and Policies* (Washington, DC: Infantry Journal Press, 1947), p. 3.

32. The field manual, *United States Army and Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs* (FM 27-5), was a revised edition of an original version published in June 1940. For further details on the original and revised versions of FM 27-5, see Merle Fainsod, “The Development of American Military Government Policy during World War II,” in *American Experiences in Military Government in World War II*, edited by Carl J. Friedrich (New York: Rinehart, 1948), pp. 24–35.

33. Shōichi Koseki, *The Birth of Japan's Postwar Constitution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); Dale M. Hellegers, *We the Japanese People: World War II and the Origins of the Japanese Constitution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

34. Field manual, *United States Army and Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs*, p. 14.

35. “Korea: Koreans Outside Korea: Repatriation of Koreans in Japan,” July 6, 1945, p. 7, Records of the Office of Assistant Secretary and Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, 1941–1948 (National Archives and Records Administration [hereafter NARA], Record Group 59, Box 12).

36. Office of Strategic Services, “Civil Affairs Guide: Aliens in Japan,” June 29, 1945, p. 29 (GHQ/SCAP Records, National Diet Library [hereafter NDL] in Japan, ESS 12322–12324).

37. Ota Masahide, “The US Occupation of Okinawa and Postwar Reforms in Japan Proper,” in *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation*, edited by Robert E. Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1987), pp. 296–297.

38. As Bruce Cumings has noted, there was no historical justification for the division of Korea, adding that if any East Asian country should have been divided it was Japan, like Germany, its Axis partner. Bruce Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), p. 186.

39. James I. Matray, “Development Delayed: U.S. Economic Policy in Occupied Korea, 1945–1948,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 10, nos. 1/2 (Spring–Summer 2001): 29–52.

40. Barak Kushner, *Men to Devils, Devils to Men: Japanese War Crimes and Chinese Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 1.

41. The American occupation of Japanese territory was also divided by separate branches of the US military, which established their respective command structures in the region. The Ogasawara Islands, which the Americans renamed the Bonin Islands, were administered by the US Navy as part of its Pacific Command, whereas Japan, southern Korea, and the Ryukyu Islands that are the focus of this book were administered by the US Army’s Far East Command. For a political history of the US Navy’s occupation of the Bonins between 1945 and 1968, see Robert D. Eldridge, *Iwo Jima and the Bonin Islands in U.S.-Japan Relations: American Strategy, Japanese Territory, and the Islanders In-Between* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2014). For a longer social and cultural history of these islands and their inhabitants, see David Chapman, *The Bonin Islanders, 1830 to the Present: Narrating Japanese Nationality* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016).

42. See, for example, Chalmers Johnson, *Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn Young, eds., *The New American Empire: A 21st Century Teach-In on U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: New Press, 2005); Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Bernard Porter, *Empire and Superempire: Britain, America, and the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Craig Calhoun, Frederick Cooper, and Kevin W. Moore, eds., *Lessons of Empire: Imperial Histories and American Power* (New York: New Press, 2006).

43. Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 393.

44. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), p. 44.

45. Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. xii.

46. Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 9.

47. Gang Deng, *Maritime Sector, Institutions, and Sea Power of Premodern China* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999). In regard to pirates (*wakō*)—many of whom originated from Japan—and their smuggling activities, see Peter D. Sharpinsky, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late-Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2014).

48. See, for example, Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991);

Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640–1868* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

49. See, for example, Akiyama Masaru, “Shokuminchiteki taiken to Okinawa kindai,” *Okinawa daigaku chiiki henkyūjo nenpō* 6 (March 1995): 103–162; Imanishi Hajime, “Teikoku Nippon to kokunai shokuminchi: ‘Naikoku shokuminchi ronsō’ no isan,” *Ritsumeikan gengo bunka kenkyū* 19, no. 1 (September 2007): 17–27.

50. Edward I-te Chen, “The Attempt to Integrate the Empire: Legal Perspectives,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, edited by Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 241–242.

51. Eiji Oguma, *The Boundaries of “the Japanese,”* vol. 2: *Korea, Taiwan, and the Ainu, 1868–1945* (Tokyo: Trans Pacific Press, 2017). See also David Chapman and Karl Jakob Krogness, eds., *Japan’s Household Registration System and Citizenship* (London: Routledge, 2014).

52. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Migrants, Subjects, Citizens: Comparative Perspectives on Nationality in the Prewar Japanese Empire,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 6, no. 8 (August 2008).

53. Ibid. See also Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

54. According to Japanese government records, 139 Taiwanese were arrested for illegal entry and were subsequently deported from Sasebo, Japan, through May 1950. Sasebo Hikiage Engokyoku, ed., *Kyokushi*, vol. 2 (Sasebo: Sasebo Hikiage Engokyoku, 1951). The Chinese Mission began to register Taiwanese in Japan as Chinese nationals—and, by extension, Allied nationals—from June 1946, but Japanese and American authorities treated them as former colonial subjects who retained Japanese nationality. While Taiwanese in Japan were not officially recognized as Chinese nationals until April 1952, they were included in the mass repatriation program and were required to carry alien registration passbooks. A Sino-Japanese history of repatriation, resettlement, and unauthorized migrations with a focus on Chinese efforts to decolonize Taiwan constitutes an important subject that awaits future study.

## Chapter 1. Liberation and Segregation in Occupied Japan

1. For official figures of “non-Japanese” compiled by the Japanese government, see Kōseishō Engokyoku, ed., *Hikiage to engo 30-nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 1978), pp. 154–155.

2. See, for example, Pak Gyeongsik, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi* (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1989).

3. Kim Ilhwa, a fourteen-year-old Korean girl living in Osaka at the end of the war, described this euphoric scene of Korean comrades in her neighborhood rushing out to celebrate their emancipation. She is one of fifty-two first- and second-generation Koreans in Japan who were interviewed as part of an oral history project, many of whom gave vivid accounts of how they experienced the moment of liberation in Japan. Kim Ilhwa, “Watashi no ‘kokoro no kunshō,’” in *Zainichi issei no kioku*, edited by Kang Sang-jun and Oguma Eiji (Tokyo: Sūeisha, 2008), pp. 623–624.

4. This episode of Kim Deukjung’s experiences at the Kamioka mining plant was recorded by the South Korean government’s Truth Commission on Forced Mobilization under Japanese Imperialism, which also compiled and published the oral testimonies of eighteen other conscript laborers in wartime Japan. Iljegangjeomha Gangjedongwon Pihae Jinsang Gyu-myeong Wiwonhoe, ed., *Gangjedongwon gusulgirokjip*, vol. 1: *Dangkko ragoyo?* (Seoul: Gungmu



Chongnisil Sosok Iljegangjeomha Gangjedongwon Pihae Jinsang Gyumyeong Wiwonhoe, 2005), pp. 288–289. For a concise and sound analysis of the Truth Commission, including but not limited to victims of wartime Japan’s forced mobilization program, see Dong-Choon Kim, “Critical Assessments of the South Korean Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” in *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, edited by Mikyoung Kim (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), pp. 144–158.

5. This Korean organization in Osaka, Chōsenjin Kyōkai, was formed on August 28, 1945. For further details concerning Korean organizations in Japan that emerged in the wake of liberation, see Chang’s remarkably vivid autobiography on how he became a tireless activist representing various social-political movements on behalf of Korean residents in Japan: Chang Jeongsu, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō: Zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi eno shōgen* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1989), pp. 131–137.

6. Hong Yeopyo’s story is retold by Ko Chanyu, a resident Korean writer who was instrumental in the oral history project published as *Zainichi issei no kioku*. Ko then decided to publish Hong’s memoir separately, including this description of intergenerational differences on how Koreans experienced liberation in Japan. Ko Chanyu, *Koria taun ni ikiru: Hon Yopyo raifu hisutorii* (Osaka: Entaitoru Shuppan, 2007), p. 20.

7. After the annexation of colonial Korea, twenty-six members of the Korean royal family were incorporated into the Japanese imperial household (Chōsen ōkōzoku). The son of the last Korean emperor, Yi Un, and other family members remained in Japan after liberation. Shinjō Michihiko, *Tennō ōkōzoku: Teikoku Nippon no jun-kōzoku* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2015), pp. 209–232. Forty-six ethnic Koreans were elected to public office in Japan between 1929 and 1936, mostly to municipal councils, though Pak Chungum is most famous for his successful bid to become a member of parliament in the Imperial Japanese Diet. Pak also decided to remain in postwar Japan. Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1994), p. 149.

8. Minato Keisatsushochō, “Kōseikai huku shikaichō no Chōsen dokuritsu ni taisuru ikō naisei ni kansuru ken,” September 14, 1945. Reproduced in Pak Gyeongsik, ed., *Chōsen mondai shiryō sōsho*, vol. 13: *Nippon haisen zengo no zainichi Chōsenjin no jōkyō* (Chōfu: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1990), pp. 76, 78.

9. Sawara Keisatsushochō, “Chōsenjin gendō ni kansuru ken,” August 27, 1945. Reproduced in Pak, *Nippon haisen zengo no zainichi Chōsenjin no jōkyō*, p. 12.

10. Arakaki Seiichi, “Fukuin gunjin to sokaisha no hazama,” in *Naha shishi shiryōhen*, edited by Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu (Naha: Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, 1981), p. 400.

11. David John Obermiller, “The U.S. Military Occupation of Okinawa: Politicizing and Contesting Okinawan Identity, 1945–1955” (PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 2006), p. 157. See also Steve Rabson, *The Okinawan Diaspora in Japan: Crossing the Borders Within* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012).

12. Kuwae Chōkō, *Tsuchi ga aru, asu ga aru: Kuwae Chōkō kaikoroku* (Naha: Okinawa Taimusu-sha, 1991), pp. 33–47. This is one of several autobiographies written by Kuwae, who, like many other Okinawans in Japan, describes how he cast aside his Japanese identity shortly after the war.

13. Miyazato Eiki’s remarkably straightforward view that Okinawans were liberated after the war is recounted in his memoir written by his son: Miyazato Kazuo, “*Uchinaa*” *mihatenu yume: Miyazato Eiki to sono jidai* (Naha: Bōdā Inku, 1994), pp. 121–123.

14. Yamashiro's autobiography honestly grapples with his renunciation (*tenkō*) of leftist politics, support for the war effort, and bitter resentment towards Japanese authorities, sentiments that were commonly expressed by many other Okinawans from his generation. Yamashiro Zenkō, *Hi no sōsōkyoku: Ichi tenkōsha, sekirara no kyūseki* (Naha: Ryūyōdō Shobō, 1978), p. 174.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 175–176.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 177–178. See also Higa Shunchō, *Okinawa no saigetsu: Jidenteki kaisō kara* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1969), p. 203.

17. The “disappearance of Okinawa Prefecture” is the Japanese title of a memoir by a former official of the abolished prefecture; Urasaki Jun, *Kieta Okinawa-ken* (Naha: Okinawa Jiji Shuppansha, 1965).

18. From the police chief of Niigata Prefecture to the chief of the Police Department, Home Ministry, “Zaijū Senjin no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken,” Tokkō hisen gōgai, August 20, 1945, in an annual report by the Tokkōka, “Shōwa 20-nendo naisen kankei shoruitei, shumushō hōkoku” (Japanese National Archives). At the time, the Japanese Special Police (Tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu) in every prefecture submitted investigative reports on the activities of Korean residents to the police chief, and the governor then forwarded the final report to the Home Ministry.

19. In some isolated mining districts, supervisors did not even inform the Koreans that they were liberated, so that they were forced to continue mining into the postwar period. Kim Taegi, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai: SCAP no tai-zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku, 1945–1952 nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1997), p. 86.

20. “Sensō shūketsu ni tomonau kōjō, jigyōjō jūgyōsha no ōkyū sochi ni kansuru ken” (Kōseishō hatsu kin dai 189 gō), August 22, 1945. See Kōseishō Engokyoku, *Hikiage to engo 30-nen no ayumi*, p. 150.

21. The US Strategic Bombing Survey later found that only four 10,000-ton class ships and 158 ships of more than 1,000 tons remained in Japan at the end of the war. United States Strategic Bombing Survey, Transportation Division, *The War against Japanese Transportation 1941–1945* (Washington, DC: USSBS Transportation Division, 1947), pp. 96–98.

22. Hokkaido Shinbunsha, ed., *Dōkoku no umi: Karafuto hikiage sansen sōnan no kiroku* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shinbunsha, 1988).

23. The US Pacific Fleet had issued a temporary ban on all Japanese ships over one hundred tons from setting sail while the first American occupation forces began arriving in Japan on August 24. It was on this very day that the *Ukishima Maru* exploded off the coast of Maizuru. The exact cause of the explosion has never been determined since the Japanese government used media censorship to cover up the incident, fearing an angry backlash from resident Koreans. See Kim Chanjeong, *Ukishima maru Pusan-kō e mukawazu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1984).

24. “Himitsu shirei, Chōsenjin shūdan inyū rōmusha nado no kinkyū sochi ni kansuru ken” (Keihokyoku hohakkō dai 3 gō), September 1, 1945. A copy of this order can be found in Pak Gyeongsik, ed., *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1976).

25. Hakata Hikiage Engokyoku Kyokushi-gakari, ed., “Furoku: Kaikyoku mae o kataru zadankai,” in *Kyokushi* (Tokyo: Kōseishō Hikiage Engo-in, 1947), p. 5.

26. “Himitsu shirei, Chōsenjin shūdan inyū rōmusha nado no kinkyū sochi ni kansuru ken.”

27. The total number of Koreans conscripted to work for private companies in Japan since 1939 is estimated to be more than 667,000. As a result of a great number who escaped, died, or were otherwise unaccounted for, the best estimate of those who remained in Japan at the end

of the war is believed to be 280,000. See Higuchi Yūichi, “Chōsenjin senji rōdōinsha no kikoku,” in *Chōsenjin senji rōdō dōin*, edited by Yamada Shōji, Koshō Tadashi, and Higuchi Yūichi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), pp. 254–255.

28. CLO 349, Subject: “Repatriation of Koreans,” October 23, 1945.

29. This figure is based on a petition by the Nihon Kensetsu Kōgyō Tōsei Kumiai to the Japanese government. A copy of this document is reproduced in Pak Gyeongsik, ed., *Chōsen mondai shiryō sōsho*, vol. 1: *Senji kyōsei renkō “Kasen rōmu taisaku iinkai katsudō kiroku”* (Kawasaki: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1990), pp. 16–17, 79–80.

30. William Underwood, “Names, Bones, and Unpaid Wages (1): Reparations for Korean Forced Labor in Japan,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 4, no. 9 (2006): 11.

31. Iljegangjeomha Gangjedongwon Pihae Jinsang Gyumyeong Wiwonhoe, *Dangkko ragoyo?*, pp. 296–297.

32. Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, p. 100.

33. According to William Underwood, these Japanese corporations received state compensation from the fall of 1945 to the spring of 1946. See Underwood, “Names, Bones, and Unpaid Wages,” pp. 11–12.

34. Moriya Yoshihiko, “Nihon haisen chokugo no Hokkaidō Ishikarikuchi taden deno hikyōsei renkō Chūgokujin Chōsenjin no tōsō,” *Sasebo kōgyō kōtō senmon gakkō kenkyū hōkoku* 36 (1999).

35. Nagaoka Chitarō, “Nanmin no koro: kyūen undō no omoide,” *Okinawa taimusu*, January 11, 1961.

36. Naimushō, “Naimu jikan tsūchō yōshi,” September 20, 1945, and its addendum, “Okinawa-ken ni taisuru gyōsei nado sochi ni kansuru ken.” These official documents are reproduced in Urasaki, *Kieta Okinawa-ken*, pp. 263–267. The Japanese term for the Provisional Okinawa Prefectural Office is Rinji Okinawa-ken Jimusho; for Kyushu Region Government General, Kyūshū Chihō Sōkanfu.

37. Naimushō, “Okinawa-ken ni taisuru gyōsei nado sochi ni kansuru ken.” Reproduced in Urasaki, *Kieta Okinawa-ken*, pp. 265–267.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

39. Higa, *Okinawa no saigetsu*, p. 203.

40. For further details regarding the wartime evacuation of Okinawans to Japan, and their treatment by Japanese officials after the war, see Matthew R. Augustine, “Dividing Islanders: The Repatriation of ‘Ryūkyūans’ from Occupied Japan,” in *Japan as the Occupier and the Occupied*, edited by Christine De Matos and Mark E. Caprio (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 206–225.

41. Baron Ie Chōjo reported on this incident to the House of Peers in the eighty-ninth session of the Imperial Diet, as is detailed in the stenographic record: “Dai 89 kai teikoku gikai kizokuin, shūgiin giin senkyōhō kaisei hōritsuan tokubetsu iinkai giji sokkiroku, dai 2 gō.” The stenographic record is also reproduced and discussed in Gabe Masao, “Okinawa: Senchū/sengo no seiji shakai no hen’yō,” in *Chiiki kara minaosu senryō kaikaku: Sengo chihō seiji no renzoku to hirenzoku*, edited by Amakawa Akira and Masuda Hiroshi (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2001), pp. 25–26.

42. The local history office of Naha City, Okinawa, recorded an impressive number of interviews with residents regarding their wartime and postwar experiences, including this one, that have been published in a two-volume set. Ikemiyagi Mitsuko, “Sokai no asa,” in *Naha shishi shiryōhen*, vol. 3, part 7: *Shimin no senji-sengo taikenki* 1, edited by Naha-shi

Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu (Naha: Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, 1981), p. 402.

43. For example, the so-called Ōshima incident took place in Miyazaki Prefecture in July 1946, and the “Nihongi incident” in Kumamoto Prefecture took place the following month. For further details of these incidents by an Okinawan in Kumamoto at the time, see Arakaki, “Fukuin gunjin to sokaisha no hazama,” p. 402.

44. Okinawan migration to Asia-Pacific regions such as Micronesia and the Philippines during the first half of the twentieth century is the subject of several chapters in Ronald Y. Nakasone, ed., *Okinawan Diaspora* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002). For Okinawan migration to Taiwan, see Hiroko Matsuda, *Liminality of the Japanese Empire: Border Crossings from Okinawa to Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2018).

45. An estimated 2,000 died aboard repatriation ships or shortly after they arrived in Japan. Nishizawa Ken’ichirō, “Hishima Mindanao chiku ni okeru hōjin jōkyō ni tsuite,” in *Kaigai hikiage kankei shiryō shūsei*, vol. 33, edited by Katō Kiyofumi (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2002), p. 196.

46. Dōhō was the Japanese term used in the report to refer to compatriots who were repatriating from Davao, Philippines. “‘Dabao’ zairyū dōhō hikiage jōkyō hōkoku.” Reproduced in Katō, *Kaigai hikiage kankei shiryō shūsei*, vol. 33, pp. 203–207.

47. Kagoshima Hikiage Engokyoku, *Kyokushi*, pp. 2–3.

48. Uraga Hikiage Engokyoku, ed., *Uraga hikiage engokyokushi* (Uraga: Uraga Hikiage Engokyoku, 1947), pp. 24–25.

49. Kinjō Takenobu, the former employee of the Fukuoka office, spoke about his experiences in an interview by Miyagi Osamu and Kamiesu Yasuaki: “Hikiagesha no kikan to mikkō,” in *Yonabaruchōshi, shiryōhen*, vol. 1: *Imin*, edited by Yonabaru-chō Kyōiku Inikai (Yonabaruchō: Yonaburu Chōshi Henshū Inikai, 2006), pp. 215–216.

50. Naimushō, “Okinawa-ken ni taisuru gyōsei nado sochi ni kansuru ken.” Urasaki, *Kieta Okinawa-ken*, p. 267.

51. These prefectures included Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Shizuoka, Mie, Gunma, and Ibaragi Prefectures. Uraga Hikiage Engokyoku, *Uraga hikiage engokyokushi*, pp. 143–151.

52. Morita Yoshio, “Zainichi Chōsenjin shōgū no suii to genjō,” *Hōmu kenkyū hōkokusho* 43, no. 3 (July 1955): 55.

53. Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, pp. 91–93.

54. Iljegangjeomha Gangjedongwon Pihae Jinsang Gyumyeong Wiwonhoe, *Dangkkō ragoyo?*, p. 51.

55. For a detailed study of the conditions of Koreans in Hakata immediately after the war, see Izumi Kaoru, “Haisengo no Hakata-wan ni okeru Chōsenjin kikoku ni tsuite,” *Hōsei kenkyū* 60, no. 1 (November 1993): 71–101. For a study of Koreans in Shimonoseki and Sensaki, see Suzuki Kumi, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no kikan engo jigyo no suii: Shimonoseki Sensaki no jirei kara,” *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi kenkyū* 36 (October 2006): 163–184.

56. Edward W. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan, 1904–1950* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), pp. 43–44.

57. Hakata Hikiage Engokyoku Kyokushi-gakari, “Furoku: Kaikyoku mae o kataru zadankai,” p. 30.

58. Tetsudō sōkyoku gyōmukyokuchō, “Kanpu oyobi ni Hakupu kōro keiyu ryokyaku yusō no ken” (Ungyōyu dai 20 gō), September 12, 1945. Reproduced in Pak, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei*, vol. 5, p. 60.

59. *Unzen Maru*, a freight ship with a capacity to carry 800 people, was dispatched to Hakata, while *Asahaku Maru*, a commercial ferry with a capacity of 1,000 people, was dispatched to Sensaki. By the end of September, at least four more ships were dispatched to make the round trip between Japan and Korea. Izumi, “Haisengo no Hakata-wan ni okeru Chōsenjin kikoku ni tsuite,” pp. 80–81.

60. Naimushō, “Hikiagemin jimusho secchi ni kansuru ken,” September 20, 1945. Reproduced in Pak, *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei*, vol. 5, p. 61.

61. Kōseishō kenminkyokuchō, Naimushō keihokyokuchō, “Shūsen ni tomonau naichi zaijū Chōsenjin oyobi Taiwanjin no shori ni kansuru ōkyū sochi no ken” (Kōseishō hakken dai 152 gō), September 28, 1945. Cited in Kim, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai*, pp. 107–108

62. For a detailed study on the wartime Kyōwakai system that controlled Koreans in Japan, see Higuchi Yūichi, *Kyōwakai: Senjika Chōsenjin tōsei soshiki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1986).

63. *Minseika* were social welfare departments specifically designated to handle Korean affairs in a number of prefectures that had large Korean populations, such as Hokkaido, Osaka, Yamaguchi, and Fukuoka.

64. Fukuoka Prefecture began renting the stables at the Japan Horse Racing Association (Nihon Bajikai) near the docks of Hakata harbor on September 5, 1945. Hakata Hikiage Engokyoku Kyokushi-gakari, “Furoku: Kaikyoku mae o kataru zadankai,” p. 26.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

66. The Japanese police records from Fukuoka Prefecture note that this Korean organization was formed in early October 1945. Fukuoka-ken Keisatsushi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Fukuoka-ken keisatsushi, Shōwa zenshi* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka-ken Keisatsu Honbu, 1980), p. 521.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 521–522.

68. Kōseishō Sensaki Hikiage Engokyoku, ed., *Senzaki hikiage engokyoku-shi* (Senzaki: Kōseishō Sensaki Hikiage Engokyoku, 1946), p. 24.

69. Hagiwara Shintarō, *Saraba Sensaki hikiage-kō: Haisen, gekidō no hazama kara* (Tokyo: Marujusha, 1985), p. 66.

70. From the time the Shimonoseki Repatriation Center’s Sensaki Branch Office was established in December 1945 until it was closed down in August 1946, 125,737 ordinary repatriates departed from Sensaki. Kōseishō Sensaki Hikiage Engokyoku, *Senzaki hikiage engokyoku-shi*, p. 26.

71. The Zainichi dōhō kyūgokai in Shimonoseki sold tickets for the “stowaway boats.” Kōseishō shakaiyoku fukurika, “Shimonoseki tairyū Chōsenjin in kansuru jōhō,” October 18, 1945. Cited in Suzuki, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no kikan engo jigyō no suii,” pp. 172–173.

72. Precise figures for this category of return migration are impossible to account for, due to the exodus of Koreans through unofficial channels. Edward Wagner, who described it as a spontaneous exodus, estimated up to 525,000; Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, p. 44. Morita Yoshio, on the other hand, gives an estimate of around 400,000; Morita, “Zainichi Chōsenjin shogū no suii to genjō,” p. 57.

73. Gwon Il was involved in the formation of Zairyū Chōsenjin taisaku iinkai (Committee for Korean Residents), while Kim Duyong formed Zai Nippon Chōsenjin kyoryūmin renmei (League for Korean Residents in Japan), respectively.

74. Chang, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō*, pp. 135–136.



75. Yamaguchi-ken keisatsu, “Daitōa sensō shūketsu ni tomonau minshin no dōkō ni kansuru ken,” August 18, 1945. Reproduced in Awaya Kentarō and Nakazono Hiroshi, eds., *Haisen zengo no shakai jōsei*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Gendai Shiryō Shuppan, 1998), p. 232.

76. Chong Younghwan, “Nippon haisen chokugo ni okeru ‘keisatsuken’ to zainichi Chōsenjin dantai,” *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 860 (November 2009): 63. See also Miyamoto Masaaki, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no ‘kikoku’: 1945~1946 o chūshin to shite,” in *Nippon teikoku hōkaiki “hikiage” no hikaku kenkyū*, edited by Imaizumi Yumiko, Yanagisawa Asobu, and Kimura Kenji (Tokyo: Nippon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2016), pp. 47–48.

77. Cho Gyeongdal, *Shokuminchiki Chōsen no chishikijin to minshū: Shokuminchi kindaisei ron hihan* (Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2008), p. 269. The massacre of 1923 refers to the mob violence that resulted in an estimated 6,000 deaths, perpetrated by Japanese vigilante groups and police, who falsely accused ethnic Koreans and Japanese socialists of committing malicious crimes by taking advantage of the mayhem caused by the earthquake. Sonia Ryang, “The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Massacre of Koreans in 1923: Notes on Japan’s Modern National Sovereignty,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 731–748. For a more detailed account of the subject in Japanese, see Yamada Shōji, *Kantō daishinsaiji no Chōsenjin gyakusatsu to sonogo: Gyakusatsu no kokka sekinin to minshū sekinin* (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2011).

78. Chang, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō*, pp. 136–137.

79. The full name of this committee was Zainichi Chōsenjin Renmei Chūō Kessei Junbi Inkaï (Preparatory Committee for the Formation of the Central League of Korean Residents in Japan). Tsuboe Senji, *Zainichi dōhō no ugoki: Senzen sengo, zainichi Kankokujin (Chōsen) kankei shiryō* (Tokyo: Jiyū Seikatsusha, 1975), pp. 78–79.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

81. These regional headquarters were located in Aomori, Iwate, Kanagawa, Mie, Nara, Kyoto, Osaka, Tottori, and Okayama Prefectures. Pak, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, p. 51.

82. Tsuboe, *Zainichi dōhō no ugoki*, pp. 89–91.

83. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 453.

84. Ko, *Koria taun ni ikiru*, pp. 37–38.

85. These statistics are from Morita, “Zainichi Chōsenjin shogū no suii to genjō,” p. 98; and Pak, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, p. 322.

86. Pak, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi*, p. 66.

87. This figure includes an estimated 60,000 war evacuees, 30,000 overseas returnees, and another 20,000 young men and women who were mobilized for labor service at munitions factories in Japan proper. Urasaki, *Kieta Okinawa-ken*, p. 75.

88. The Sumitomo steel pipe company was situated in Nishi Mukōjima, Amagasaki City. Okinawa Kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken Honbu, ed., *Koko ni yōju ari: Okinawa kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken honbu 35-nenshi* (Kobe: Okinawa Kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken Honbu, 1982), pp. 78–79.

89. For a good description of the background behind the formation of the Kansai regional branch of the Okinawa Council in Osaka, see Yamashiro, *Hi no sōsōkyoku*, pp. 183–186.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

91. See, for example, Okinawa Kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken Honbu, *Koko ni yōju ari*, pp. 135–136.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

93. Kuwae, *Tsuchi ga aru, asu ga aru*, pp. 42–43.



94. Ibid., p. 45.

95. Miyazato, “*Uchinaa*” *mihatenu yume*, pp. 136; 143–145.

96. To this day, Korean and Chinese victims of Japan’s wartime program of labor conscription have continued to demand compensation for the wages and benefits that should have been paid them at the time they were deported from Japan. For an examination into how American occupation authorities became involved in this issue, see Matthew R. Augustine, “Restitution for Reconciliation: The US, Japan, and the Unpaid Assets of Asian Forced Mobilization Victims,” *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 8, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 5–37.

97. The pro-imperial propaganda was supported by such widely publicized ideas as the “Japan-Korea common ancestry theory” (*Nissen dōsoron*) and “Japan-Ryukyus common ancestry theory” (*Nichiryū dōsoron*). For insightful studies on these ideas and the debates they generated in imperial Japan, see Eiji Oguma, *A Genealogy of “Japanese” Self-Images* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2002); Eiji Oguma, *The Boundaries of “the Japanese,”* vols. 1–2 (Tokyo: Trans Pacific Press, 2014–2017).

98. Beyond the return migration of various groups of people, this also included internal migrations within Japan. For other studies that have drawn attention to the relationship between repatriation and the reemergence of postwar Japan’s discourse on ethnic homogeneity, see Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009); Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

## Chapter 2. Repatriation as a “Privilege” for Non-Japanese

1. American officials in various military and government agencies interviewed Koreans, Chinese, and other minorities who resided in the United States, as well as those serving in the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy who had been captured by US military forces during the war.

2. Office of Strategic Services, “Civil Affairs Guide: Aliens in Japan,” June 29, 1945, p. 16. For further description of this guide, see Mark E. Caprio, “Resident Aliens: Forging the Political Status of Koreans in Occupied Japan,” in *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, edited by Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 181–183.

3. Office of Strategic Services, “The Okinawans of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority Group,” June 1, 1944. This study is reprinted in Okinawa Kenritsu Toshokan Shiryō Henshūshitsu, ed., *Okinawa-kenshi, shiryōhen*, vol. 2 (Naha: Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Inkkai, 1996).

4. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, “Civil Affairs Handbook: Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands,” November 15, 1944. This handbook is reprinted in Okinawa Kenritsu Toshokan Shiryō Henshūshitsu, *Okinawa-kenshi, shiryōhen*, vol. 1. See also David Tobaru Obermiller, “Dreaming Ryūkyū: Shifting and Contesting Identities in Okinawa,” in *Japan since 1945: From Postwar to Post-Bubble*, edited by Christopher Gerteis and Timothy S. George (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 71–72.

5. Higashikuni Naruhiko, *Higashikuni miya nikki* (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1968), p. 245.

6. Check sheet from G-3 to CIC, October 8, 1945 (NDL GHQ/SCAP Records, G3-00046).

7. Pak Gyeongsik, *Kaihōgo zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi* (Tokyo: San’ichi Shobō, 1989), p. 56.

8. Edward W. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan, 1904–1950* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), p. 55. The two rightist organizations were Chōsen Kenkoku Sokushin Seinen Dōmei, or the Youth Alliance for the Reconstruction of Korea, established on November 16, 1945, and the Shin Chōsen Kensetsu Dōmei, or the New Korea Establishment Alliance, formed on January 20, 1946.

9. The inaugural issue of *Minjung sinmun* was published on October 10, 1945, and was briefly renamed *Chosun minjung sinmun* before reverting to its original name. For a concise study on Korean newspapers published during the occupation period, see Kobayashi Sōmei, *Zainichi Chōsenjin no media kūkan: GHQ senryōki ni okeru shinbun hakkō to sono dainamizumu* (Tokyo: Fūkyōsha, 2007).

10. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 452–453. Founded in 1922, the JCP was outlawed in 1925, leading to a series of arrests and defections of party members. The resulting void was gradually filled by Koreans who assumed leadership positions in the 1930s, as the JCP struggled to remain an underground political party. See Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1994), pp. 165–186.

11. Nagasawa Shigeru, “Jōban tanden ni okeru Chōsenjin rōdōsha no tōsō,” *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi kenkyū* 2 (June 1978): 17–28.

12. The Ashio copper mines, primarily known for their major industrial pollution that led to Japan’s earliest environmental movement in the late nineteenth century, were also known to have employed Korean conscript laborers as well as Allied POWs during World War II. Yamada Shōji, Koshō Tadashi, and Higuchi Yūichi, *Chōsenjin senji rōdō dōin* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), p. 235.

13. The Korean YMCA in Tokyo, founded in 1906, was a youth organization known not only for religious and educational activities but also for its great political significance. On February 8, 1919, several hundred Korean students gathered at its assembly hall where activist leaders read out loud their declaration of Korean independence from Japanese colonial rule. This incident inspired a similar public declaration that was made in Seoul on March 1, sparking the March First Movement throughout Korea. For an excellent study on the role of Christianity in these two independence declarations, see Matsutani Motokazu, “2.8 Dokuritsu sengen to 3.1 dokuritsu undō ni okeru Kirisutokyō,” in *Higashi Ajia no naka no 2.8 dokuritsu sengen: Wakamonotachi no deai to yume*, edited by Zainichi Kanjin Rekishi Shiryōkan (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2020).

14. Kim Taegi, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai: SCAP no tai-zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku, 1945–1952 nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1997), pp. 177–178.

15. For further details on SCAP’s initial support for retaining Korean laborers to produce coal in Japan, see Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, pp. 49–50.

16. Chang Jeongsu, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō: Zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi e no shōgen* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1989), p. 143.

17. Arasaki Moriteru, “Haikyo no furusato o omou hitobito no kikanshi,” in *Shukusatsuban Okinawa shinminpō*, edited by Okinawa Shinminpōsha (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2000), pp. 3–4.

18. “Okinawan Federation,” *Weekly Okinawa Times*, August 10, 1968. Reproduced in Watokinsu Bunsho Kankō Iinkai, ed., *Okinawa sengo shoki senryō shiryō*, vol. 8 (Ginowan: Ryokurindō Shoten, 1994), p. 102.

19. Arasaki, “Haikyo no furusato o omou hitobito no kikanshi,” p. 5.

20. Nagaoka Chitarō, “Okinawajin renmei no seikaku ni tsuite,” *Jiyū Okinawa* no. 6, May 5, 1946. See also Tobe Hideaki, “‘Zainichi Okinawajin,’ sono nanori ga terashidasu mono,” in *Senryō to demokurashii no dōjidaishi*, edited by Dōjidaishi gakkai (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2004), pp. 224–225.

21. See “Okinawa-jin Renmei sōritsu taikai hōkokusho,” *Okinawajin renmei kankei shiryō* 1, located in Naha City’s Historical Archives Room.

22. On November 26, six prefectural associations from districts in Osaka, Hyōgo, and Wakayama Prefectures merged to become the League of Okinawans in Kansai. “Kansai Okinawajin renmei sōritsu saru,” *Jiyū Okinawa* no. 1, December 6, 1945.

23. Four prefectural associations, representing an estimated 57,000 Okinawan evacuees and overseas repatriates in the Kyushu region, formed a larger union of Okinawans. Okinawakenjin Kyūshū rengōkai, “Seigansho,” December 1, 1945. A copy of this petition was included in a collection of the Ministry of Health and Welfare records sent to prefectural governors in the year 1945: Kōseishō, ed., *Showa 20-nen Hi-Nihonjin yusō kankei tsūchōtei* (1946), p. 223. This collection was discovered in the Tottori Prefectural Archives, and the Japanese government’s Cabinet Office has made it available online: [https://www8.cao.go.jp/okinawa/okinawasen/document/c/c\\_2.html](https://www8.cao.go.jp/okinawa/okinawasen/document/c/c_2.html).

24. “A Petition to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces.” A copy of the English text of this petition by the League of Okinawans can be found in *Okinawajin renmei kankei shiryō* 1, held in the Naha City’s Historical Archives Room.

25. In addition, Tomiyama also maintains that the appeal of Okinawans as a special category of Japanese nationals and their criticism of the Japanese government must be understood as constituting essential components in a conscientious effort by Okinawans to attain their requests, as seen in the petitions. See Tomiyama Ichirō, *Kindai Nihon shakai to “Okinawajin”* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2006), pp. 257–258.

26. “A Petition to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces,” *Okinawajin renmei kankei shiryō* 1.

27. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation of Okinawans” (SCAPIN 537), January 2, 1946. Reproduced in Takemae Eiji, ed., *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Emuti Shuppan, 1993), pp. 809–810.

28. Tomiyama, *Kindai Nihon shakai to “Okinawajin,”* p. 257.

29. Office of Strategic Services, “Aliens in Japan,” pp. 30–31.

30. “U.S. Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan” (SWNCC 150/4/A), September 22, 1945. The earlier version that was delivered to General MacArthur on August 29 is reproduced in Government Section, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *Political Reorientation of Japan, September 1945 to September 1948*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 423–426.

31. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, pp. xxvii–xxviii.

32. For further details, see General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of the Nonmilitary Activities of the Occupation of Japan, 1945 through 1951*, vol. 6, part 4 (Washington, DC: National Archives, World War II Records Division, 1952), pp. 1–10. (Hereafter *History of Nonmilitary Activities*.)

33. “Basic Directive for Post-Surrender Military Government in Japan Proper” (JCS-1380/15), November 3, 1945. Copy of this document is reproduced in GHQ/SCAP, *Political Reorientation of Japan*, p. 432.

34. Shiroto Teizō refers to this American lieutenant only as “Diitsu,” which is a Japanese pronunciation for the surname Dietz or Deetz. Hakata Hikiage Engokyoku Kyokushi-gakari,

ed., “Furoku: Kaikyoku mae o kataru zadankai,” in *Kyokushi* (Tokyo: Kōseishō Hikiage Engo-in, 1947), pp. 26–27. See also Youngho Choi, “Institutionalizing Japan’s Relief System for Repatriates: Koreans and Japanese at Hakata Port in 1945,” *International Journal of Korean History* 22, no. 2 (August 2017): 174–175.

35. According to Edward Wagner, the urgent need for coal production was not only to supply Japan but to meet South Korea’s minimum requirements. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, p. 49.

36. Kim Duyong and Imamura Hideo were prevented from continuing their public speech because they called for the abolition of the emperor system. *Mainichi shinbun*, October 31, 1945.

37. SCAP’s Monthly Summation in November 1945 reported that an estimated 130,000 Korean and Chinese miners had been repatriated, and the Summation in January 1946 noted that their repatriation was largely accomplished. See General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *Monthly Summation of Nonmilitary Activities in Japan and Korea* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1945–1948).

38. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Signal Corps Message” (SCAPIN 125), October 12, 1945. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 2, pp. 191–192.

39. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Supplemental Instructions Relating to Import and Export Controls” (SCAPIN 127), October 12, 1945. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 2, pp. 194–195.

40. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Medical and Sanitary Procedures for Debarkation and Port Sanitation in Repatriation” (SCAPIN 167), October 20, 1945. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 2, pp. 253–256. See also GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 13.

41. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation of Non-Japanese from Japan” (SCAPIN 224), November 1, 1945. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 2, pp. 340–342. In addition to Senzaki, Hakata, and Kure, Sasebo, Maizuru, and Hakodate were subsequently designated as repatriation centers for repatriating Koreans according to a revised plan: “Repatriation of Non-Japanese from Japan” (SCAPIN 295), November 17, 1945. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 2, pp. 465–467.

42. “Chōsenjin keikaku yusō ni taisuru kinkyū sochi” (November 24, 1945). A copy of this document is available in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Taiheiyō sensō shūketsu in yoru kyū Nippon kokuseki jin no hogo hikiage kankei zakken, Chōsenjin.” This set of official documents relating to the repatriation of Koreans was declassified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the year 2000. For further details, see Miyamoto Masaaki, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no ‘kikoku’: 1945–1946 o chūshin to shite,” in *Nippon teikoku hōkaiki “hikiage” no hikaku kenkyū*, edited by Imaizumi Yumiko, Yanagisawa Asobu, and Kimura Kenji (Tokyo: Nippon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2016), pp. 58, 69, 78.

43. Sixth Army, G-2 Periodic Report No. 45, November 19, 1945 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 34).

44. “Korean Pirates Toss Countrymen into Sea,” *Stars and Stripes*, December 20, 1945 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 33).

45. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation Reception Centers” (SCAPIN 254), November 8, 1945. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 2, p. 403.

46. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation to Ryukyus” (SCAPIN 558), January 5, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 3, pp. 851–852.

47. The main island group of Okinawa, or the Okinawa Islands (Okinawa shotō), include the Iheya-Izena Islands, Ie Island, the Aguni Islands, Kume Island, the Kerama Islands, and Okinawa Island (Okinawa hontō).

48. “Repatriation of Non-Japanese from Japan” (SCAPIN 224), November 1, 1945.

49. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 30.

50. Arnold G. Fisch Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1988), footnote on pp. 93–94.

51. “Repatriation to Ryukyus” (SCAPIN 558), January 5, 1946.

52. The regional repatriation centers also provided repatriates with bedding while awaiting their designated time of embarkation. Kōseishō shakaikyokuchō, “Nansei shotō shushinsha kikan toriatsukai yōryōan” (shahatsu, no. 157), January 24, 1946, in Kōseishō, *Showa 20-nen Hi-Nihonjin yusō kankei tsūchōtei*, pp. 161–166.

53. Central Liaison Office, Imperial Japanese Government, “Election of Members of the Lower House of the Diet in Areas where Navigation of Vessels Is Prohibited” (CLO No. 401), October 29, 1945 (NDL GHQ/SCAP Records, GS[A]-00040).

54. Memorandum from Lieutenant Robert P. Jackson Jr., commanding officer in charge of the Northern Ryukyus Survey Party, to deputy commander for military government, Navy, subject: “Northern Ryukyu Islands, Establishment of USN Military Government in,” December 5, 1945. Reproduced in *Papers of James T. Watkins*, vol. 25, pp. 21–25.

55. This SCAP directive, “Governmental and Administrative Separation of Certain Outlying Areas from Japan” (SCAPIN 677), formally separated the Ryukyus, the Ogasawaras, and other former Japanese territories. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 3, pp. 1041–1042. For a historical study on the borders of occupation that separated the Ryukyus from Japan, and border crossers who resisted the boundaries of isolation, see Matthew R. Augustine, “Border-Crossers and Resistance to US Military Rule in the Ryukyus, 1945–1953,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 6, no. 9 (2008), <https://apjif.org/-Matthew-R.-Augustine/2906/article.html>.

56. The global collapse of sugar prices in 1920 devastated the Amami economy, which, like Okinawa, depended heavily on its brown sugar industry, driving impoverished farmers to the labor markets in mainland Japan. Nishimura Tomiaki, *Amami guntō no kingendaishi: Meiji ikō no Amami seisaku* (Osaka: Kaihūsha, 1993), pp. 43–51.

57. Takano Takeshi, “Amami renmei Amagasaki shibu kessei no kei’i to dōkō,” *Amagasaki shiritsu chiiki kenkyū shiryōkan kiyō: Chiikishi kenkyū* 28, no. 1 (December 1998): 61.

58. *Kobe shinbun*, February 20, 1946. Citation found in Takagi Nobuo, “1946-nen ‘hi-Nihonjin’ chōsa to Amami renmei, Nansei shotō renmei,” *Kyora* 2 (1987): 19.

59. Between January 27 and February 9, 1946, alone, 1,827 people were repatriated to the Miyako Islands, while another 742 were repatriated to the Yaeyama Islands. Okinawa Kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken Honbu, ed. *Koko ni yōju ari: Okinawa kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken honbu 35-nenshi* (Kobe: Okinawa Kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken Honbu, 1982), p. 145.

60. For more details, see Sasaki Tadao’s testimony in Kobe Amami-kai, *Amami: Kobe Amami-kai sōritsu 60-shū-nen kinenshi* (Kobe: Kobe Amami-kai, 1990), p. 145.

61. For displaced persons organizations that were formed in part to claim resources from American occupation authorities, see, for example, Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009); Pamela Ballinger, *The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundations of Postwar Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).



62. The figure 13,675 is based on the numbers recorded by the Uraga and Kagoshima repatriation centers, which were the two ports from which Japanese officials carried out repatriation to the Ryukyus during this period. Kōseishō Engokyoku, ed., *Hikiage to engo 30-nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 1978), p. 151.

63. *Nansei shinpō* no. 3, May 18, 1946. Found in Tomiyama, *Kindai Nihon shakai to “Okinawajin,”* pp. 264, 273.

64. *Jiyū Okinawa* (Kansaiban), no. 1, March 10, 1947. Found in Tomiyama, *Kindai Nihon shakai to “Okinawajin,”* pp. 264, 273.

65. “Displaced Persons in Japan” (SWNCC 205/1), December 5, 1945.

66. “Repatriation and Koreans Affairs in Japan,” a confidential report from Captain Robert L. Beyer to the chief of Foreign Affairs Section, USAMGIK, February 5, 1946 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 33).

67. “Korean Repatriation from Japan,” a message from Captain Robert L. Beyer to Lieutenant Colonel Gordon B. Enders, USAMGIK, February 3, 1946 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 33). See also Matthew R. Augustine, “The Limits of Decolonization: American Occupiers and the ‘Korean Problem,’ 1945–1948,” *International Journal of Korea History* 22, no. 1 (February 2017): 43–73.

68. Beyer, “Repatriation and Koreans Affairs in Japan,” February 5, 1946.

69. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, pp. 59–60.

70. Beyer, “Korean Repatriation from Japan,” February 3, 1946.

71. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 449.

72. Beyer, “Repatriation and Koreans Affairs in Japan,” February 5, 1946.

73. SCAP Memorandum for the Imperial Japanese Government, “Registration of Koreans, Chinese, Ryukyans and Formosans” (SCAPIN 746), February 17, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 3, pp. 1122–1123.

74. March 18, 1946, the last date of the one-month registration period, was designated as the end of “volunteer repatriation” and the beginning of “controlled mass repatriation.” GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, pp. 11, 16.

75. According to SCAP, 646,711 Koreans were registered at this time. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 18. However, this figure does not include large numbers of Koreans who did not register and others who had illegally entered Japan since the end of the war.

76. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation of Chinese, Formosans, and Koreans” (SCAPIN 876), April 13, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 4, p. 1432. The rate of repatriation and target date for completion contained in this directive were subsequently amended several times.

77. The League of Koreans was known to have asked members of one of its rival Korean organizations to be shipped out of Japan by scheduling them for repatriation. *Minjung sinmun*, July 1, 1946. Cited in Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, pp. 51–52.

78. According to Edward Wagner, the League of Koreans negotiated with the Ministry of Finance and secured withdrawals from these accounts of more than ¥100,000,000 in the first four months of 1946. Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, p. 53.

79. Robert Beyer, “Repatriation and Koreans Affairs in Japan,” February 5, 1946.

80. For USAMGIK’s liaison teams, including the Tokyo Liaison Office, see Wagner, *The Korean Minority in Japan*, pp. 78–80.

81. “Repatriation” (SCAPIN 927/2), May 20, 1946. Takemae, vol. 4, p. 1652.



82. Hikiage Engoin, “Chōsenjin sōkan ni kansuru rengōgun saikō shireibu happyō no ken” (no. 316), May 28, 1946. Cited in Morita Yoshio, “Zainichi Chōsenjin shogū no suii to genjō,” *Hōmu kenkyū hōkokusho* 43, no. 3 (July 1955): 64, footnote 20.

83. Such strong measures included forcibly deporting any Korean who interfered with the Japanese government’s implementation of procedures for the mass repatriation program. This was based on the Home Ministry Security Bureau’s order no. 35, issued on June 21, 1946. Reference to this official document is found in Kyoto-fu Keisatsushi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Kyōto-fu keisatsushi* (Kyoto: Kyoto-fu Keisatsu Honbu, 1980), pp. 592–597.

84. Kōseishō, “Nippon seifu gawa tachiai no moto ni okonawaretaru Ma shireibu no Chōsenjin dantai daihyōsha ni taisuru taidan yōshi,” March 6, 1946. This document is reproduced in Pak Gyeongsik, ed., *Chōsen mondai shiryō sōsho*, vol. 1: *Senji kyōsei renkō “Kasen rōmu taisaku iinkai katsudō kiroku”* (Kawasaki: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1990), pp. 155–167. The two Korean organizations represented at this meeting were the League of Koreans and the Youth Alliance.

85. *Daejung sinmun*, June 20, 1946. This Korean language newspaper, like its successor *Hae-bang sinmun*, was censored by SCAP’s Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD). Copies of this and other editions of *Daejung sinmun* are available in the Gordon W. Prange Collection of the University of Maryland and the National Diet Library of Japan.

86. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Termination of Mass Repatriation from Japan” (SCAPIN 1407), December 16, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 9, p. 3612.

87. Among the 9,701 Koreans who registered their desire to repatriate to northern Korea in March 1946, more than 9,000 remained in Japan after the two shipments in March and June 1947. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, pp. 28–29.

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–44.

89. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 30.

90. According to Home Ministry records, 200,784 Ryukyuan registered, of whom 141,369 stated their desire to repatriate. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” p. 18. However, this figure does not accurately reflect the actual number of Ryukyuan in Japan, as a considerable number never showed up for registration.

91. The decision to register Ryukyuan was based on SCAPIN 224, which explicitly stipulated that they were included among other non-Japanese to be repatriated. For the registration of Okinawans and Amamians in mainland Japan as Ryukyuan, see Matthew R. Augustine, “Dividing Islanders: The Repatriation of ‘Ryūkyūans’ from Occupied Japan,” in *Japan as the Occupier and the Occupied*, edited by Christine De Matos and Mark E. Caprio (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 214–217.

92. “A Petition to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces,” December 8, 1945.

93. “Koe—Hi-Nihonjin no imi,” *Asahi shinbun*, July 17, 1946. See also Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the US Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 111.

94. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 30.

95. For the Ministry of Health and Welfare’s Order No. 19, see Takagi, “1946-nen ‘hi-Nihonjin’ chōsa to Amami renmei, Nansei shotō renmei,” pp. 32–33.

96. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 74.

97. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 31.

98. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation of Ryukyans now in Japan” (SCAPIN 1081), July 24, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 5, pp. 2125–2128.

99. *Ibid.*

100. They escorted repatriates to Ujina, Ōtake, Sasebo, and Kagoshima, although they could also board repatriation ships from Uruga and Nagoya as well. For more details, see Okinawa Kenjinkai Hyōgo-ken Honbu, *Koko ni yōju ari*, pp. 147–150.

101. Kagoshima Hikiage Engokyoku, ed., *Kyokushi* (Kagoshima: Kagoshima Hikiage Engokyoku, 1947), p. 18.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

103. SCAP Memorandum for Japanese Government, “Travel from Ryukyus to Japan” (SCAPIN 2038), August 12, 1949. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 14, pp. 6809–6810. See also GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, pp. 42–43.

104. Although SCAP initially treated Taiwanese as it did Koreans, strong pressure from Chinese Mission in Japan led the Government Section to begin recognizing Taiwanese as Chinese nationals—and by extension, Allied nationals—in February 1947. See Kawashima Shin, “‘Deimperialization’ in Early Postwar Japan: Adjusting and Transforming the Institutions of Empire,” in *The Dismantling of Japan’s Empire in East Asia: Deimperialization, Postwar Legitimation and Imperial Afterlife*, edited by Barak Kushner and Sherzod Muminov (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), pp. 37–38.

105. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, pp. 436–437. Mizuno Naoki, “Zainichi Chōsenjin-Taiwanjin sanseiken ‘teishi’ jōkō no seiritsu,” *Sekai jinken mondai kenkyū kikyō* 1 (March 1996): 43–65 and no. 2 (1997): 59–82.

106. Koseki Shōichi, *Shin kenpō no tanjō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1989); Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur’s Japanese Constitution: A Linguistic and Cultural Study of Its Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

107. Press Release, “Koreans Must Report to Reception Center when Called or Forfeit Recognition as Korean Nationals,” November 12, 1946 (NDL GHQ/SCAP Records, CIE-04145).

108. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 26.

109. For a historical analysis of Perry in the Ryukyus, see George H. Kerr, “The Mouse and the Eagle: Perry in Okinawa, 1853–1854,” in *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), pp. 297–341.

110. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, pp. 29–30.

### Chapter 3. Resettlement without Reintegration

1. Iljegangjeomha Gangjedongwon Pihae Jinsang Gyumyeong Wiwonhoe, ed., *Gangjedongwon gusulgirokjip*, vol. 1: *Dangkkō ragoyo?* (Seoul: Gungmu Chongnisil Sosok Iljegangjeomha Gangjedongwon Pihae Jinsang Gyumyeong Wiwonhoe, 2005), pp. 297–299. Many Korean conscript laborers were killed during their period of servitude in Japan. Others repatriated with permanent injuries and illnesses, including those who were employed at munitions factories in Hiroshima and Nagasaki when those two cities were devastated by atomic bombs. Until recently, these Korean repatriates were denied medical treatment and health care benefits provided by the Japanese government. For further analysis on the subject,

see David Palmer, “Korean Hibakusha, Japan’s Supreme Court and the International Community: Can the U.S. and Japan Confront Forced Labor and Atomic Bombing?” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 6, no. 2 (2008): 1–11.

2. This verse is taken from the Chinese poem “Marching On and On” (Xing Xing Chong Xing Xing), the first of the Nineteen Old Poems (*Gushi Shijiu Shou*), which is an anthology of classical Chinese poems dating from the Han Dynasty. The Japanese name for this anthology is *Koshi jyūkyū shu*.

3. *Jiyū Okinawa* (Kyushūban), August 5, 1946.

4. The “space of liberation” and the “three-year history of liberation” were terms of historical periodization, referring to the period between August 15, 1945, and August 15, 1948, and which were popularized by young scholars in South Korea in the 1980s. For a good explanation of these terms and their significance, see, for example, Yang Jeong Sim, “‘Liberation Space’ and Times of Resistance in Visual Records,” *International Journal of Korean History* 19, no. 2 (August 2014): 71–105. For an influential series in Korean that represents critical, revisionist views of this time period, see Song Geonho et al., *Haebang jeonhusa ui insik*, vols. 1–3 (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1979–1980).

5. Harada Dairoku, “Shūsen ni tomonau hikiage jimū shori,” in *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku, shiryōhen*, vol. 1: *Nihon tōchi no shūen*, edited by Morita Yoshio and Nagata Kanako (Tokyo: Gennandō, 1979), p. 146.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 146–155.

7. Chōsen Kankei Zanmu Seiri Jimusho Kōtsūhan, “Shūsen zengo no un’yu jōkyō,” *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku*, vol. 1, pp. 177–178.

8. The distribution of the Government-General’s subsidy provided to the Sewakai branches in southern Korea was as follows: ¥5 million to Seoul, ¥1 million to Busan, ¥400,000 to Taegu, ¥200,000 to Taejon, and ¥200,000 to Gunsan. Harada, “Shūsen ni tomonau hikiage jimū shori,” p. 152.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 156–158.

10. Choe Yeongho. *Jaeilhangugingwa jogukgwangbok: Haebang jikuui bongukgwihwang wa minjokdanche hwaldong* (Seoul: Geulmoin, 1995), p. 105.

11. In northern Korea, the People’s Committees provided the popular basis for building the regime. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1: *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 267.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 270–271.

13. Guksa Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe, ed., *Jaryo Daehanminguksa* (Seoul: Guksa Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe Chulpan, 1968), p. 128. A number of other new social organizations in Korea also dispatched representatives to Japan to assist Koreans who awaited repatriation. See also Choe, *Jaeilhangugingwa jogukgwangbok*, pp. 107–108.

14. Kim Namsik, Yi Jeongsik, and Han Honggu, eds., *Hanguk hyeondaesa jaryo chongseo*, vol. 12 (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1986), pp. 65–66.

15. *Maeil sinbo*, October 1, 1945.

16. *Maeil sinbo*, October 2, 1945.

17. Yi Yeonsik, “Haebang jiku haeodongpoui gwihwangwa Migunjeongui jeongchaek” (MA thesis, University of Seoul, 1998), p. 19.

18. William J. Gane, “Foreign Affairs of South Korea, August 1945 to August 1950” (PhD dissertation, Northeastern University, 1951), p. 10.

19. Those assigned to prepare US foreign policy towards Korea after the war were mid-level officials in the State Department's Far Eastern Area Committee, including John Carter Vincent, H. Merrell Benninghoff, and Hugh Borton, none of whom were Korea specialists. See Hugh Borton, *Spanning Japan's Modern Century: The Memoirs of Hugh Borton* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), pp. 122–124.

20. For more details on official plans regarding displaced persons and their repatriation, see Gane, "Foreign Affairs of South Korea," pp. 17–30.

21. 40th Infantry Division, "Evacuation and Repatriation in Korea" (undated) (NARA RG 332, Box No. 32).

22. US policy initially stipulated that the Bank of Japan yen and the Bank of Chōsen won were to be exchanged on a one-for-one basis. For further details on foreign currency exchange in US-occupied Korea and Japan, see Simon James Bytheway, "Currency Problems in Allied Occupied Korea and Japan, 1945–1952," Conference Paper for the 12th Kyujanggak International Symposium on Korean Studies (Seoul National University, 2019), pp. 375–396.

23. Gane, "Foreign Affairs of South Korea," pp. 20–21.

24. William J. Gane, "Repatriation: From 25 September 1945 to 31 December 1945," p. 55 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 33).

25. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

26. For further details regarding Chong Taehui's ouster from the Central Committee, see Gane, "Repatriation," pp. 61–62.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.

28. For further details on these plans devised by Lieutenant Martin J. Ross, see Gane, "Repatriation," pp. 70, 78–79.

29. USAMGIK requisitioned the Transportation Bureau on September 15, 1945, and replaced all Japanese managers and employees with Koreans by the end of December. Chōsen Kankei Zanmu Seiri Jimusho Kōtsūhan, "Shūsen zengo no un'yu jōkyō," pp. 182–184.

30. The directive also stated that all property belonging to the Japanese government and military was to be treated as public property and controlled as military requirements dictated. Directive from CINCPAC-CINCPOA to CG Tenth U.S. Field Army, subject: "Political, Economic and Financial Directive for Military Government in the Occupied Islands of the Nansei Shoto and Adjacent Waters," March 1, 1945. A copy of this directive is reproduced in Arnold G. Fisch Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), pp. 262–271.

31. A copy of Proclamation No. 1 issued by Admiral Nimitz is reproduced in Gekkan Okinawasha, ed., *Laws and Regulations during the U.S. Administration of Okinawa, 1945–1972* (Naha: Ikemiya Shokai, 1983), p. 38.

32. In addition, Council members included five teachers, one police official, a former president of the Naha bar association, and the former managing editor of a local newspaper. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, p. 105.

33. Okinawan men and women over twenty-five years of age became eligible to vote, a historic event that preceded universal suffrage in Japan by three months. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 108–109.

34. Quoted from Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S.-Japanese Relations* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), p. 34.

35. Most of the twenty-five assemblymen had previously served in the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly. The military government permitted them to serve in the new Okinawa Assembly,

since there was a dearth of Okinawans with administrative experience who had survived the war. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 110–111.

36. As it turned out, the III Amphibious Corps, which advanced north, took in nearly 66,000 refugees by April 20, while the XXIV Corps, moving south and east, had taken in only 20,000 civilians, rather than the 200,000 expected. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 63–64.

37. For example, in late May, the Tenth Army supervised one of the largest enforced relocations when the entire population of Ie Shima was dispersed to other islands, engendering widespread animosity towards the US occupiers. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 57–60.

38. The US military divided the Ryukyus into sixteen Military Government Districts, twelve of them on Okinawa Island. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 89–90.

39. In early September the Okinawa Advisory Council was given permission to go on an inspection tour of the entire island of Okinawa to assess the extent of the damage inflicted by the war. Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Iinkai, ed., *Okinawa-ken shiryō, sengo 1: Okinawa shijunkai kiroku* (Naha: Okinawa-ken Okinawa shiryō henshūjo, 1986), p. 36.

40. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 90–91.

41. To this day some of these people, including former repatriates, have been unable to return to their place of origin in Okinawa. See Okinawa-ken Kyōiku Iinkai, *Okinawa shijunkai kiroku*.

42. This nickname was coined by journalist Frank Gibney after his visit to Okinawa in 1949. See Frank Gibney, “Forgotten Island,” *Time*, November 28, 1949.

43. Dorothy E. Richard, *United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1957), pp. 34–39. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 92–93.

44. The exact figure of 33,075 is based on the official records of the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare. See Aniya Masaaki, “Sengo no kaigai hikiage,” in *Innumi kara: 50-nenme no shōgen*, edited by Okinawa-shi Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinkō-ka (Naha: Naha Shuppansha, 1995), p. 13. In addition, a limited number of Okinawans also returned to the Miyako and Ishigaki Islands from Taiwan during this period.

45. Ishiki Katsumi, “Innumi Yādui ni tsuite,” in Okinawa-shi Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinkō-ka, *Innumi kara*, p. 18.

46. Camp Kubasaki was established to be able to accommodate 6,000 repatriates at one time, while Innumi was set up to hold another 4,000. The three camps in Naze were each set up to accommodate 1,000 repatriates. In Miyako, a sufficient number of tents were erected to care for any overflow of persons that could not locate their homes or relatives. Ryukyus Command, Military Government, “Final Report on the Ryukyuan Repatriation,” p. 2. A copy of this report is reproduced in Okinawa-shi Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinkō-ka, *Innumi kara*, pp. 230–235.

47. Namisato Kamezō, “Tsūyaku kanete kantokukan toshite Innumi e,” in Okinawa-shi Kikakubu Heiwa Bunka Shinkō-ka, *Innumi kara*, pp. 30–41.

48. This was a process that those working on the name lists called *tejimari*. Ishiki, “Innumi Yādui ni tsuite,” p. 19.

49. Namisato, “Tsūyaku kanete kantokukan toshite Innumi e,” pp. 40–41.



50. Joseon Eunhaeng Josabu, ed., *Gyeongje yeongam* (Seoul: Joseon Eunhaeng Josabu, 1949), p. 259.

51. Yi, “Haebang jiku haeoedongpoui gwihwangwa Migunjeongui jeongchaek,” p. 41.

52. In August 1945, the Guomindang drafted a plan to “demobilize the Northeast” of Japanese military rule, including articles stipulating the requisitioning of farmlands and industries, in addition to repatriating Japanese and Koreans. For further details regarding these plans, see Kim Chun-seon, “The Settlement and Repatriation of Koreans in Northeast China after Liberation,” *Korea Journal* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 92–93.

53. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, pp. 394–395, 425. For the Soviet occupiers’ entry into northern Korea and their early decision to work through the local People’s Committees in executing radical reforms, see Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 38–70. See also Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013) for an in-depth account on how ordinary people experienced the social revolution.

54. United States Armed Forces in Korea, *History of the United States Armed Forces in Korea*, part 2, chapter 4, “American-Soviet Relations, The First Year,” pp. 19–21, 44. This is an unpublished manuscript located in the Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington, DC (hereafter HUSAFIK).

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45, 114–123.

56. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, p. 425.

57. Statistics compiled by Korean officials showed a total of 317,182 Koreans were repatriated from Manchuria, in addition to 622,044 Koreans who relocated from northern Korea. U.S. Army Forces in Korea, South Korean Interim Government Activities, no. 34 (July–August 1948), p. 8.

58. Ko Chanyu, *Koria taun ni ikiru: Hon Yopyo raifu hisutorii* (Osaka: Entaitoru Shuppan, 2007), pp. 23–24.

59. Gane, “Repatriation,” p. 57. As of mid-October 1945, thirteen facilities were set up throughout Seoul to accommodate repatriates. Military government teams were using similar facilities in other parts of Korea. Gane, “Repatriation,” pp. 57–58.

60. Handwritten note of recommendations written by Captain Owen S. Mollinger to the Bureau of Health and Welfare, Gyeongsang Namdo Province, December 31, 1945. A copy of these recommendations is reproduced in Francis E. Gillette, *Migunjeonggi jeongbo jaryojip, Jilleteu (F. E. Gillette) bogoseo, jeombeondae jaepangirok, 1946–1948* (Chuncheon: Hallym Daehakgyo Asia Munhwa Yeonguso, 1996) (hereafter Gillette Papers), p. 374.

61. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, p. 152.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

63. Gane, “Foreign Affairs of South Korea,” pp. 153–154.

64. Colonel John K. Cullen, USAMGIK Department of Public Health and Welfare, “Emergency Plan for Provision of Temporary Shelter for Homeless Persons” (undated), to the Provincial Military Governor, Gyeongsang Namdo, Pusan, Korea. Copy reproduced in Gillette Papers, pp. 389–390.

65. Su Yung Dai (Seo Yeongdae), chief of the Busan Branch of the Seoul Committee Meeting, Korean Association of Japan, “A Petition for Rescue of the Refugees,” to the military governor of Gyeongsang Namdo, December 17, 1946. Copy reproduced in Gillette Papers, pp. 411–412.



66. E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (New York: King's Cross Press, 1951), pp. 221–222.

67. Joseon Eunhaeng Josabu, *Joseon kyeongje yeonbo* (Seoul: Joseon Eunhaeng Josabu, 1948), p. 203.

68. From Major J. W. Levenbury, Bureau of Public Welfare, Office of the Provincial Military Governor, Gyeongsang Namdo, "Welfare Fund for Public Works," to Military Governor, USAMGIK, April 22, 1946. Copy found in Gillette Papers, p. 413.

69. From Colonel F. E. Gillette, Provincial Military Governor, Gyeongsang Namdo, "Critical Refugee Situation," to Governor General, USAFIK, December 26, 1946. Copy found in Gillette Papers, pp. 370–372.

70. See Yi, "Haebangjiku haeoedongpoui gwihwangwa Migunjeongui jeongchaek," pp. 43, 54–55.

71. *Jiyū Okinawa* (Kyushu edition), August 5, 1946.

72. This part of Miyazato's story is based on an interview found in Arasaki Moriteru, ed., "Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa no shakaisō," in *Okinawa gendashi eno shōgen*, vol. 2 (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1982), pp. 62–63.

73. In addition, 9,781 Class "C" tents were supplied. Headquarters, Ryukyus Command, Military Government, "Final Report on the Ryukyuan Repatriation," January 9, 1947.

74. Kuwae Chōkō, *Tsuchi ga aru, asu ga aru: Kuwae Chōkō kaikoroku* (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1991), pp. 49–50.

75. Headquarters, Ryukyus Command, Military Government, "Final Report on the Ryukyuan Repatriation," January 9, 1947.

76. "Lack of Shelter." Reproduced in *Papers of James T. Watkins*, vol. 38, p. 64.

77. USMGR recorded a total of 104,070 repatriates from Japan to Okinawa Island between August and December 1946. Ryukyus Command, Military Government, "Final Report on the Ryukyuan Repatriation," p. 4.

78. Kuwae, *Tsuchi ga aru, asu ga aru*, p. 59.

79. The rations authorized to Okinawans were initially set at 1,990 calories per day, but were later reduced to 1,530 calories per day due to food shortages. From the Deputy Commander for Military Government to the Commander, NOB Okinawa and Chief MG Officer, "Final Report of Military Government Activities for Period from 1 April 1945 to 1 July 1946," July 1, 1946 (NARA RG 260, Box 25).

80. Okinawa Taimususha, ed., *Shomin ga tsuzuru Okinawa sengo seikatsushi* (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1998), pp. 32–38.

81. For a short time after the war this currency was used simultaneously with the new yen being circulated in Japan proper. From 1948, however, the circulation of the new Japanese yen was prohibited and the B yen became the only legal currency used in Okinawa. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 146–148.

82. Like the Okinawa Advisory Council, these so-called provisional governments were powerless and strictly controlled by the military governments set up in each of these island groups.

83. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 111–112.

84. Namihira Tsuneo, "Amerika gunseika no sengo fukkō: 1950-nen zengo no Okinawa, soshite Amami," in *Okinawa no senryō to Nihon no fukkō: Shokuminchishugi wa ikani keizoku shitaka*, edited by Nakano Toshio and Yakabi Osamu (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2006), pp. 221–223.

85. Miyagi Etsujirō, *Okinawa senryō no 27-nenkan: Amerika gunsei to bunka no henyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), pp. 11–17.

86. According to Wakabayashi Chiyo, the expression “off limits” held two meanings in symbolizing the American occupation of Okinawa. One was an Okinawa under the exclusive control of the US military, cut off from international society. Another aspect referred to the internal manifestations of this condition by which people were driven out of their villages, which became off limits in their own island. See Wakabayashi Chiyo, “‘Ofu-rimitsu’ no shima,” *Gendai shisō* (March 1999): 24.

87. Murayama Iekuni, *Amami fukkishi* (Naze: Nankai Nichinichi Shinbunsha, 1971), p. 50.

88. According to a military government proclamation on February 3, 1947, unauthorized travel between Okinawa and Amami became a punishable offense. Satake Kyōko, *Gun-seika Amami no mikkō, mitsubōeki* (Kagoshima: Nanpō Shinsha, 2003), p. 222.

89. Kuwae, *Tsuchi ga aru, asu ga aru*, pp. 50–51.

90. HUSAFIK, part 1, chapter 8, “Repatriation of Japanese Civilians and Other Foreign Nationals,” p. 59.

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–61.

93. Gane, “Repatriation,” p. 56.

94. According to this report, a Counter Intelligence Corps investigation showed the Sewakai in Busan “operates openly under the guise of instructing Japanese repatriates in the policies and regulations of the United States pertinent to their shipment to Japan.” G-2, 40th Division, Periodic Report no. 36. See HUSAFIK, “Repatriation of Japanese Civilians and Other Foreign Nationals,” p. 61.

95. USAMGIK, Office of Military Governor, “Ordinance Number 49,” February 19, 1946.

96. Dr. Ernst Frankel, Opinion #859, “Unauthorized Movement of Persons into Korea,” January 25, 1947. United States Army Military Government in Korea, *Selected Legal Opinions of the Department of Justice, United States Army Military Government in Korea*, vol. 2 (Seoul: United States Army Military Government in Korea, 1948), pp. 240–242.

97. USAMGIK, Office of Military Governor, “Ordinance Number 55,” February 23, 1946.

98. Park Chan-Pyo, “The American Military Government and the Framework for Democracy in South Korea,” in *Korea under the American Military Government, 1945–1948*, edited by Bonnie B. C. Oh (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), pp. 131–132, 140.

99. USAMGIK, Office of Military Governor, “Ordinance Number 214,” July 30, 1948.

100. Gane, “Foreign Affairs of South Korea,” pp. 88–89.

101. Nationals of other countries domiciled in Korea who desired Korean status, including stateless persons such as White Russians but excluding Axis nationals, could also be recognized as Korean. USAMGIK, Foreign Affairs Section, “Staff Memorandum Number 11,” January 10, 1946.

102. These included temporary permits valid for a limited duration, and permanent permits for essential personnel, those granted asylum, and Japanese women married to Korean men. Headquarters, USAMGIK, “Repatriation of Japanese,” March 8, 1946. See Gane, “Foreign Affairs of South Korea,” pp. 84–85.

103. South Korean Interim Government, “Provisional Rules Regarding Nationality” (Public Act No. 11), May 11, 1948.

104. Ibid.

105. Chulwoo Lee addresses this question in greater detail in his article: Chulwoo Lee, “‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in Korean Law: The Creation, Accommodation and Exclusion of Outsiders in South Korea,” in *East Asian Law—Universal Norms and Local Cultures*, edited by Arthur Rosett, Luciel Cheng, and Margaret Y. K. Woo (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2003), pp. 106–136.

#### Chapter 4. Smuggling as Resistance to US Military Rule

1. Ko Chanyu, *Koria taun ni ikiru: Hon Yopyo raifu hisutorii* (Osaka: Entaitoru Shuppan, 2007), pp. 19–33.

2. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki notes, knowledge of the Jeju rebellion and subsequent massacre was suppressed within South Korea for nearly half a century; consequently, much of the outside world’s knowledge on the subject initially came from those who fled to Japan. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 75. People from the Jeju Island community in Osaka, led by novelist Kim Seokbeom, began to write the first accounts of the tragic events during the 1960s, then went on to spearhead a reparations movement in the 1980s. For further details, see Mun Gyeongsu, *Saishūtō 4.3 Jiken: “Tamna no kuni” no shi to saisei no monogatari* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2008).

3. Arakaki Seiichi, “Fukuin gunjin to sokaisha no hazama,” in *Naha shishi shiryōhen*, edited by Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu (Naha: Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, 1981) pp. 210–211, 400–403.

4. Kajimura Hideki, “Teijū gaikokujin to shite no zainichi Chōsenjin,” in *Kajimura Hideki chosakushū*, vol. 6: *Zainichi Chōsenjin-ron* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1993). Although Kajimura coined this expression to describe Koreans who remained in Japan after liberation, the concept is applicable to migrants who lived between the imperial metropole and the colonies before 1945.

5. Reports from AFPA-K to GHQ/SCAP (AFPAC/K/27) (NARA RG 331, Box 8547).

6. Ko, *Koria taun ni ikiru*, pp. 22.

7. XXIV Corps, G-2 Section, “A Digest of Information Obtained from Censorship of Civil Communications in Korea,” July 29, 1946. Reproduced in Institute of Asian Culture Studies, ed., *HQ, USAFIK, Juhan Migun jeongbo ilji (G-2 Periodic Report), burok* (Chuncheon: Hallym Daehakgyo Asia Munhwa Yeonguso, 1990), p. 372.

8. Choe Seokui, *Zainichi no genfūkei: Rekishi, bunka, hito* (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2004), p. 42. Choe later became an activist and an independent researcher on issues relating to Korean residents in Japan.

9. Tonomura Masaru, “Nihon teikoku no tokō kanri to Chōsenjin no mikkō,” in *Nihon teikoku o meguru jinkō idō no kokusai shakaigaku*, edited by Araragi Shinzō (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2008), p. 46.

10. This letter was apparently forwarded to the intelligence unit of the US Armed Forces in Korea. USAFIK, “G-2 Periodic Report, No. 248,” June 8, 1946. USAFIK, *G-2 Periodic Report*, vol. 2 (Chuncheon: Hallym Daehakgyo Asia Munhwa Yeonguso, 1988), p. 363.

11. See Yi Yeonsik, “Haebang jiku haoedongpo ui gwihwang wa Migunjeon gui jeongchaek” (MA thesis, University of Seoul, 1998), p. 43.

12. Chang Jeongsu, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō: Zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi eno shōgen* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1989), pp. 157–158.
13. Tonomura, “Nihon teikoku no tokō kanri to Chōsenjin no mikkō,” p. 39.
14. This US intelligence report, “Korean Minority Problem in Japan,” was distributed to all Allied occupation forces involved, including the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. BCOF Quarterly Intelligence Review No. 2, June 1948. Original report found at the Australian War Memorial (hereafter AWM) (AWM 114, 423/11/20). For the establishment of the Korean Coast Guard under USAFIK’s command, see Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1962), pp. 17–20.
15. Okuno Shūji, *Natsuko: Okinawa mitsubōeki no jo’ō* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 2005), pp. 138–139. Trafficking *senka* became so common that from February to September 1946, 1,200 out of the 1,260 cases handled by the Okinawa civil courts involved *senka* and trespassing. Namihira Tsuneo, “Amerika gunseika no sengo fukkō: 1950-nen zengo no Okinawa, soshite Amami,” in *Okinawa no senryō to Nihon no fukkō: Shokuminchishugi wa ikani keizoku shitaka*, edited by Nakano Toshio and Yakabi Osamu (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2006), p. 221.
16. For further details, see Matthew R. Augustine, “Border-Crossers and Resistance to US Military Rule in the Ryukyus, 1945–1953,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 6, no. 9 (2008), <https://apjif.org/-Matthew-R.-Augustine/2906/article.html>.
17. Ibid. Satake Kyōko, *Gunseika Amami no mikkō, mitsubōeki* (Kagoshima: Nanpō Shinsha, 2003), pp. 211–229, 231–232.
18. Okinawa Taimususha, ed., *Okinawa no shōgen: Gekidō 25-nenshi*, vol. 1 (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1971), pp. 205–206.
19. The story of Kinjō Natsuko, the “queen of the Okinawan smuggling trade,” is recounted by Okuno, *Natsuko*.
20. Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, ed., *Naha shishi shiryōhen*, vol. 3, part 7–8: *Shimin no senji-sengo taikenki* 2 (Naha: Naha-shi Kikakubu Shishi Henshūshitsu, 1981), p. 211.
21. Ishihara Masaie, *Dai mitsubōeki no jidai: Senryō shoki Okinawa no minshū seikatsu* (Tokyo: Banseisha, 1982).
22. Morita Yoshio and Nagata Kanako, eds., *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku, shiryōhen*, vol. 2: *Minami Chōsen chiiki no hikiage to Nihonjin sewakai no katsudō* (Tokyo: Gennandō, 1980), p. 271.
23. XXIV Corps, G-2 Section, “A Digest of Information Obtained from Censorship of Civil Communications in Korea,” July 29, 1946. Reproduced in USAFIK, *G-2 Periodic Report*, p. 372.
24. Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1: *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 60–61.
25. For further details concerning this association’s political inclinations, especially that of its publicity director, Cheong Taehui, see William J. Gane, “Repatriation: From 25 September 1945 to 31 December 1945,” pp. 61–62 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 33).
26. See Richard E. Lauterbach, *Danger from the East*, translated and republished as Lauterbach, *Hanguk migunjeongsa* (Seoul: Dolpegae, 1983), p. 45.
27. See David W. Conde, *An Untold History of Modern Korea*, translated and published as *Gendai Chōsenshi*, vol. 1: *1945–50 nen kaihō Chōsen no rekishi* (Tokyo: Taihei Shuppansha, 1971), p. 45.

28. Yun Seonja, “Haebanghu Jeonnam jiyekoekuro gwihwanhan haeoehanin ui hyeonhwang,” *Yeoksahak yeongu* 22 (May 2004): 90.

29. These three measures were promised by Kang Byeongdong of the KPR’s internal affairs section. See Kim Namsik, ed., *Namnodang yeongu*, vol. 3: *Jaryopyeon* (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1988), p. 72.

30. Minjujuui minjok jeonseon, ed., *Joseon haebang yeonbo* (Seoul: Munu inseo, 1946), pp. 87–89. A copy of this original booklet can be found in Kim Namsik, Yi Jeongsik, and Han Honggu, eds., *Hanguk hyeondaesa jaryo chongseo*, vol. 12 (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1986).

31. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, p. 270.

32. This description of the participation of League of Koreans representatives in the national conference of the People’s Committee representatives in Seoul is based on a report that was subsequently submitted to the League: Zai Nippon Chōsenjin Renmei Sōhonbu, “Hongoku tokuhain hōkoku—Nisshi.” Excerpts of this report are reproduced in Chang, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō*, pp. 247–253.

33. Chang Jeongsu published a copy of a photograph taken together with Yo Unhyeong; Chang Jeongsu, “Osaka no Chōsenjin renmei to watashi,” in *Taiken de kataru kaihōgo no zainichi Chōsenjin undō* (Kobe: Kobe Gakusei Seinen Sentaa Shuppanbu, 1989), p. 53.

34. Chang, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō*, pp. 156–158.

35. Headquarters, USAFIK, Office of the Military Governor of Korea, Ordinance Number 33, December 6, 1945.

36. Headquarters, USAFIK, Office of the Military Governor of Korea, Custody Order Number 2, December 26, 1945.

37. Other categories of “traitors” included those who attempted to assassinate leaders of democratic organizations, those who attacked patriotic leaders and their families through the radio and publications, police who arrested and imprisoned democratic leaders, and those who brought about disgrace by slandering the military government. Kim, *Namnodang yeongu*, vol. 3, p. 281.

38. Kim et al., *Hanguk hyeondaesa jaryo chongseo*, vol. 12, pp. 163–164.

39. Yi, “Haebang jiku haeoedongpoui gwihwangwa Migunjeongui jeongchaek,” p. 58.

40. For an in-depth study on the range of problems relating to the disposition of formerly Japanese-owned property that was held by USAMGIK’s Office of Property Custody, see Tingting Li, “The Making of the Postcolonial Economy: The Disposition of Formerly Japanese Owned Enterprises in South Korea, 1945–1960” (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014).

41. Yi, “Haebang jiku haeoedongpoui gwihwangwa Migunjeongui jeongchaek,” pp. 59–60.

42. For details on the autumn harvest uprisings, see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1, pp. 351–381; Gi-wook Shin, “The Historical Making of Collective Action: The Korean Peasant Uprisings of 1946,” *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 6 (May 1994): 1596–1624.

43. G-2 Weekly Report, no. 90, May 25–June 1, 1947.

44. For further details on the Northwest Youth Corps, see Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2: *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947–1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 198–203.

45. John Merrill, “The Cheju-do Rebellion,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 2 (1980): 153–155.

46. Joseon Eunhaeng Josabu, ed., *Joseon kyeongje yeonbo* (Seoul: Joseon Eunhaeng Josabu, 1948), p. 203.



47. Daehanminguk Gukbangbu Jeonsa Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe, *Hanguk Jeonjaengsa I: Haebang gwa geongun* (Seoul: Daehanminguk Gukbangbu Jeonsa Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe, 1967), p. 438.

48. Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, p. 255.

49. G-2 Weekly Summary, no. 116, November 23–30, 1947.

50. Merrill, “The Cheju-do Rebellion,” p. 196.

51. Ko, *Koria taun ni ikiru*, p. 31.

52. After the US military invaded Okinawa, military government officials initially had difficulty finding qualified Okinawans who could help administer the islands. Out of necessity, they had to rely on local officials who had supported the Japanese war effort, many of whom served in the Civil Administration. See Arnold G. Fisch Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), pp. 103–104.

53. Yamashiro has described the details of this meeting, referred to as the *Okinawa kensetsu kondankai* in Japanese, in a series of articles published by one of the leading newspapers in Okinawa, *Ryūkyū shinpō*. See Yamashiro Zenkō, “Araya no hi,” *Ryūkyū shinpō*, March 27, 1982.

54. Lim Chuan-Tiong, “*Henkyō Higashi Ajia*” no aidentiti poritikkusu—Okinawa, Taiwan, Honkon (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2005), pp. 78–79.

55. Aharen Yukitomo, for example, was a labor union organizer and member of the leftist Okinawan organization called the Sekiryūkai in the Kansai region in the 1920s. He repatriated to Okinawa in 1946 and was subsequently selected as a central committee member of the People’s Party. Arasaki Moriteru, “Shakai undō no teihen o sasaeru mono,” in *Okinawa gen-dashi eno shōgen*, vol. 1 (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1982), pp. 121–46.

56. Ota Masahide, “The American Occupation of Okinawa and Postwar Reforms in Mainland Japan,” in *Essays on Okinawa Problems* (Uruma: Yui Shuppan, 2000), pp. 191–192.

57. See, for example, Higa Kōbun, “*Okinawa dokuritsu*” no keihu: *Ryūkyūkoku o yumemita rokunin* (Naha: Ryūkyū Shinpōsha, 2004); Taira Koji, “Miyako Shakaitō: Kizoku no huan to dokuritsu no shichō o haikeni ni ‘Beikoku Okinawa-shū’ o kōsō,” and Ōta Shizuo, “Huhatsu no Dokuritsuron,” *Shin Okinawa bungaku* 53 (1982).

58. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, p. 114.

59. United States Military Government Special Proclamation No. 23, “Political Parties,” October 15, 1947. A copy of the proclamation is reproduced in Gekkan Okinawasha, *Laws and Regulations during the U.S. Administration of Okinawa 1945~1972* (Naha: Ikemiya Shokai, 1983), pp. 78–80.

60. The US military retained over 12,000 Japanese POWs in postwar Okinawa for their labor until they were finally repatriated in October 1946. For further details, see Toriyama Atsushi, “Fukkō eno maishin: Gunsagyō o meguru hitobito no ugoki,” in *Sengo o tadoru: Amerika-yū* kara “Yamato-yū” e, edited by Nahashi Rekishi Hakubutsukan (Naha: Ryūkyū Shinpōsha, 2007), pp. 92–93.

61. According to Arnold Fisch, RYCOM initially felt it was easier to import Filipino supervisors who spoke English and were already trained to operate military installations than it was to train Okinawans. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 144–145.

62. Okinawa Taimususha, ed., “Kokuba Kōtarō,” in *Watashi no sengoshi*, vol. 1 (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1980), p. 84.

63. This protest letter is a translation from the Japanese original, which is quoted in Senaga Kamejirō, *Senaga Kamejirō kaisōroku* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha, 1991), p. 69.



64. Miyume Tanji, *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006), p. 58.

65. Mori Yoshio, *Tsuchi no naka no kakumei: Okinawa sengoshi ni okeru sonzai no kaihō* (Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu, 2010), p. 192.

66. Nankai Nichinichi Shinbun, ed., *Gojūnenshi*, p. 109. Cited in Robert D. Eldridge, *The Return of the Amami Islands: The Reversion Movement and U.S.-Japan Relations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 67, footnote 29.

67. For a study on newspapers published by Okinawan migrants in mainland Japan, see Nōtomi Kaori, “Zaihondo Okinawa-kenjinshi ni tsuite: *Osaka kyūyō shinpō*, *Kyūyō shinpō*, *Naihō*, *Jiyū Okinawa* mokuroku,” *Shiryō henshūshitsu kiyō* 26 (March 2001): 153–204.

68. Yamashiro Zenkō, “Araya no hi” (31), *Ryūkyū shinpō*, April 15, 1982.

69. By the end of the month, RYCOM arrested, imprisoned, and interrogated Yamashiro and Kuwae before putting them on trial in a provost court for publishing the newspaper without an official permit. Yamashiro Zenkō, “Araya no hi” (35–40), *Ryūkyū shinpō*, April 19–24, 1982.

70. Senaga Kamejirō used his influence as the editor-in-chief of the *Uruma shinpō* to help establish two other newspapers, the *Okinawa mainichi shinbun* and the *Okinawa taimusu*, along with the journal *Jinmin Bunka*, all of which gave coverage of the mass rallies that these political parties organized. For further details, see David John Obermiller, “The U.S. Military Occupation of Okinawa: Politicizing and Contesting Okinawan Identity, 1945–1955” (PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 2006), pp. 220–226.

71. Okinawa Jinmintōshi Henshū Kankō Iinkai, ed., *Okinawa jinmintō no rekishi* (Naha: Okinawa Jinmintōshi Henshū Kankō Iinkai, 1985), pp. 69–70. See also Mori, *Tsuchi no naka no kakumei*, p. 192.

72. Wakabayashi Chiyo, “Dai niji sekai taisengo no Okinawa ni okeru seiji soshiki no keisei,” *Okinawa bunka kenkyū* 28 (2002): 318.

73. Senaga, *Senaga Kamejirō kaisōroku*, p. 70.

74. Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands, “Codified Penal Law and Procedure” (Ordinance No. 1), June 28, 1949. A copy of this ordinance is reproduced in Gekkan Okinawasha, *Laws and Regulations during the U.S. Administration of Okinawa, 1945–1972*, pp. 233–259.

75. Kojima Yoshio, “Saikin no mikkō jōkyō to sono torishimari ni tsuite,” *Keisatsu jihō* 7, no. 11 (1952): 97–98.

76. British Commonwealth Occupation Forces, CSDIC (Combined Services Detailed Interrogations Center), “Certified Official Translation: Control of Illegal Entry into Ehime Prefecture,” October 25, 1948 (AWM 114, 423/10/42).

77. *Mikkō Ginza*, or “stowaway Ginza,” referred to the coastal village of Sunohama on the northern island of Tsushima because of the prosperity it derived from the thriving smuggling trade. Ogasawara Muneaki, “Mitsuyu mikkō hakusho: Hisoka ni kokkyō o ōrai suru hitobito,” *Mainichi jōhō* 6, no. 11 (1951): 51.

78. Kanemoto Atsuo, *Umi no kokkyōsen: Tsushima no hyōjō* (Tokyo: Fuji Shoen, 1954), pp. 72–73.

79. Piracy became such a problem for Korea that King Sejong deployed expeditionary forces that briefly occupied Tsushima in 1419. See Lee Jee Kyoung, “The Aggressive National Defense Posture Taken during the Reign of King Sejong of the Joseon Dynasty,” *Review of Korean Studies* 9, no. 3 (September 2006): 153–180.

80. The village of Sasuna on the northern island of Tsushima was so closely integrated with Busan that it was sometimes referred to as “Sasuna of Busan City.” Shimamura Hatsuyoshi, *Tsushima shinkō: Nikkan kōryū “takara no shima” o hiraku* (Fukuoka: Azusa Shoin, 2004), p. 13. See Saitō Hayato, *Kokkyōsen Tsushima* (Nagasaki: Tsushima Shinbunsha, 1972), pp. 13–15; Kami Agata-chōshi Hensan Iinkai, ed., *Kami Agata-chōshi* (Tsushima: Kami Agata-chō, 2004), pp. 544–546.

81. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Governmental and Administrative Separation of Certain Outlying Areas from Japan” (SCAPIN 677), January 29, 1946. Reproduced in Takemae Eiji, ed., *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Emuti Shuppan, 1993), pp. 1041–1042. The “Liancourt Rocks” refers to the Takeshima in Japanese, or Tok-do in Korean, which are embroiled in a territorial dispute between Japan and the Republic of Korea that continues to the present. See Sung-hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea: Japanese-South Korean Relations under American Occupation, 1945–1952* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 35–45.

82. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Area Authorized for Japanese Fishing and Whaling” (SCAPIN 1033), June 22, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 5, pp. 2013–2014.

83. Shortly after the signing of the peace treaty with Japan spelled an end to the MacArthur Line, on January 18, 1952, President Yi Seungman unilaterally declared a “peace line,” using it as a justification for continuing to arrest Japanese fishermen crossing into the ROK’s maritime sovereignty. Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea*, pp. 24–25, 108–110.

84. The report also described revised plans for smuggling operations and the struggle for ethnic liberation as two other topics discussed at the liaison conference. Military Intelligence Section, SCAP, “Liaison Conference of the Korean League and the Japanese Communist Party Held at Kechi-machi, Tsushima Island,” June 30, 1948 (NARA RG 338, Box 35).

85. In April 1948, Pak Heonyeong attended a meeting in Pyongyang between Korean leaders from both sides of the divided peninsula, and is generally believed to have remained in North Korea afterwards. Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 13–14.

86. Military Intelligence Section, SCAP, “Secret Meeting of Korean Communist Leaders in Tsushima,” June 17, 1948 (NARA RG 338, Box 35).

87. SCAP’s G-2 Section began frequently reporting on the liaison activities between pro-communist organizations on the Korean peninsula and the League of Koreans in Japan from the spring of 1948, though many of its intelligence reports admitted that the evidence was inconclusive. Kobayashi Tomoko, “GHQ no zainichi Chōsenjin ninshiki ni kansuru ichikōsatsu: G-II minkan chōhōkyoku teiki hōkokusho o chūshin ni,” *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 32 (October 1994): 165–192.

88. Investigative report, “Tsushima Island,” August 8, 1951 (OD, JO, No. 656) (NARA RG 331, Box No. 2133). Neither US military intelligence reports nor official histories of the JCP have verified the validity of this report. As Robert Ricketts has argued, the problem of corroborating intelligence reports on such sensitive issues as communist infiltration from Korea is that the Japanese government has failed to declassify official records related to the subject. See Robert Ricketts, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no minzoku jishuken no hakai katei: 1948–1949 o chūshin ni,” *Seikyū gakujuutsu ronshū* 6 (March 1995): 271.

89. Jeon Gapsaeng, “6.25 jeonjaengjung Sseusimaro milhanghan saramdeul: ‘Urineun ppalgaengiga anida,’” *Minjok* 21, no. 107 (February 2010): 112–119.

90. On the concept of transnational families and the important role they played in linking Okinawa with various parts of the world, see Edith Kaneshiro, “‘Our Home Will Be the Five Continents’: Okinawan Migration to Hawaii, California, and the Philippines, 1899–1941” (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1999).

91. Wakabayashi Chiyo convincingly argues that one of the major transformations of postwar Okinawan society was that residents were prevented from maintaining such transnational links with overseas Okinawans. Wakabayashi Chiyo, “Jeepu to sajin: Senryōshoki Okinawa shakai no henyō to henyi,” *Okinawa bunka kenkyū* 29 (2003): 244–245, 254.

92. Okinawa Taimususha, *Okinawa no shōgen*, pp. 205–206.

93. Yakabi Osamu, “Kokkyō no kengen: Okinawa Yonaguni no mitsubōeki shūsoku no haikai,” *Gendai shisō* 31, no. 11 (September 2003): 187–188.

94. Koike Yasuhito, *Ryūkyū rettō no “mitsubōeki” to kyōkaisen, 1949–51* (Tokyo: Moriwasha, 2015), pp. 15–16.

95. The Itoman City’s official website provides a detailed explanation on historical development of its fishing industry. See [www.city.itoman.okinawa.jp/english/ayumi/index.html#6](http://www.city.itoman.okinawa.jp/english/ayumi/index.html#6).

96. The Itoman residents of Kagoshima had to compete with those from the Amami Islands, who had an equally well-organized base for their smuggling network. Ishihara Masaie, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi: Senka to mitsubōeki no jidai* (Tokyo: Banseisha, 2000), p. 238.

97. *Ibid.*, pp. 233–234.

98. Satake, *Gunseika Amami no mikkō, mitsubōeki*, pp. 210–213.

99. Koike, *Ryūkyū rettō no “mitsubōeki” to kyōkaisen*. pp. 247–280.

100. Ishihara, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi*, pp. 234–235.

101. During the same period, RYCOM’s export of scrap metals also increased dramatically until it surpassed sugar as the number one export product from Okinawa in 1951. Okuno, *Natsuko*, pp. 337–338.

102. For a detailed account of this incident, see Satake, *Gunseika Amami no mikkō, mitsubōeki*, pp. 87–133.

103. The Okinawa Youth Alliance had published the original version of this book, which was the culmination of Iha’s lifelong work on Okinawan studies, in November 1946. Ishihara, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi*, pp. 219–228.

104. See Ishihara, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi*, p. 218.

105. As David Obermiller argues, the protest movements that preceded the reversion movement reveal the core impulse that propelled the reversion movement, namely, “popular resistance to foreign occupation and Okinawa’s neo-colonial status.” Obermiller, “The U.S. Military Occupation of Okinawa,” p. 201.

## Chapter 5. “Blockade Runners” and the Making of “Aliens”

1. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. xxvii–xxviii.

2. Rajendra Singh, “History of the Indian Contingent in Japan, 1945–1947,” December 25, 1948, pp. 167–168 (AWM 114, 130/3/18).

3. Daniel Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 4–5.
4. For details, see USAFIK, *G-2 Periodic Report*, especially those reports from November 1945 onwards.
5. “Smuggling of Koreans into Japan,” from Lieutenant James C. Graham to the Director, Office of Foreign Affairs, USAMGIK, May 4, 1946 (NARA RG332, Box No. 33).
6. USAFIK, “G-2 Periodic Report, No. 319,” September 3, 1946, USAFIK, *G-2 Periodic Report*, vol. 2.
7. Weekly Report, April 23–29, from Lieutenant James C. Graham of the Senzaki Liaison Office, USAMGIK, to Chief Liaison Officer in Tokyo, April 29, 1946 (NARA RG 332, Box No. 34).
8. USAFIK, “G-2 Periodic Report, No. 678,” November 6, 1947, USAFIK, *G-2 Periodic Report*, vol. 5. Other sources cited in the same report note that the Ulgi lighthouse near Busan, where a Korean Coast Guard detachment was stationed, was commonly known as “Little Moscow,” because leftist meetings were held there and Coast Guard members were accused of confining and terrorizing rightists in this lighthouse.
9. “Illegal Immigrants,” from HQ 2 NZEF to HQ BCOF, July 4, 1946. Original report located in Archives New Zealand (WA-J 68/26).
10. “Illegal Entry of Koreans into Japan,” from BCOF Military Government Liaison Section to HQ BCOF, July 11, 1946 (AWM 114 130/1/34).
11. “Report on Illegal Entry of Korean Immigrants to Japan,” from C. H. Clifton, Lieutenant General and Commander in Chief, BCOF, to Eighth US Army, July 29, 1946 (WA-J 68/26).
12. “Prevention of Illegal Entry of Koreans,” from BCOF to Eighth US Army, April 19, 1947 (AWM 114 130/1/34).
13. “Illegal Immigrants” (Intelligence No. 3/48), from 5/1 Punjab Regiment, Tottori Prefecture, to the Headquarters of the 268th Indian Infantry Brigade Group, May 14, 1947 (WA-J 66/2).
14. “Sending Back of Koreans Who Do Not Possess Ration Tickets,” from Tateo Sawada, Director of the Police Department, Yamaguchi Prefectural Government, to Yamaguchi Military Government Team, August 31, 1946 (WA-J 68/26).
15. BCOF Monthly Intelligence Review No. 6, October 20, 1946 (AWM 114, 423/11/6).
16. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Control of Population Movements” (SCAPIN 563), January 8, 1946. Reproduced in Takemae Eiji, ed., *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Emuti Shuppan, 1993), p. 857.
17. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 132.
18. The Shibuya Incident of July 19, 1946, was first reported by *Asahi shinbun* two days later, then received widespread coverage in the leading daily newspapers, which continued to follow the story through the public trials, which lasted until December. For a detailed account of the Shibuya Incident in Japanese, see, for example, Nanao Kazuaki, *Yami’ichi no teiō: Ō Chōtoku to fūin sareta “senjo”* (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2011).
19. David Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan,” *Far Eastern Survey* 16, no. 4 (1947): 42.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.
21. *Asahi shinbun*, September 3, 1946.
22. Conde, “The Korean Minority in Japan,” p. 45.
23. Memorandum from Headquarters I Corps to Commanding General, Eighth Army, “Registration of Koreans,” November 13, 1946 (NDL GHQ/SCAP Records, AG[A]-00042).

24. *Chōsenjin seikatsu yōgo tōsō iinkai nyūsu*, November 29, 1946. Cited in Kobayashi Sōmei, “Kikan, mikkō, sōkan: GHQ senryōka ni okeru zainichi Chōsenjin no idō to media,” *Higashi Ajia kindaiishi* 10 (March 2007): 68.

25. See Yang Yeonghu, “Ōsaka-fu Chōsenjin tōroku jōrei seitai: 1946 no tenmatsu ni tsuite,” *Zainichi Chōsenjin-shi kenkyū* 16 (1986): 104–126; Fukumoto Taku, “Amerika senryōka ni okeru Chōsenjin ‘Huhō nyūkokusha’ no nintai to shokuminchi shugi,” in *Nippon teikoku o meguru jinkō idō no kokusai seijigaku*, edited by Araragi Shinzō (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2008), pp. 157–161.

26. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Post-war Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 90.

27. Based on Ōnuma Yasuaki’s interview of Hata Shigenori on November 15, 1976. Ōnuma Yasuaki, *Tan’itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete: Zainichi Kankoku-Chōsenjin to shutsunyūkoku kanri taisei* (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 1986), p. 41.

28. A notable difference between the Japanese and American statutes was that the original 1947 Alien Registration Ordinance in occupied Japan did not require fingerprinting, although this was later made mandatory in 1952. See Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 450.

29. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, pp. 108–109.

30. Itō Kazuo, “Mikkō mitsuyu anote konote,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō, bekkā* 5 (November 1951): 82.

31. Investigative report, “Tsushima Island,” August 8, 1951 (NARA RG 331, Box No. 2133).

32. BCOF Daily Intelligence Report No. 125, based on 9 NZ Infantry Brigade Report, August 11, 1946 (AWM 114, 130/1/8); “Report on Illegal Entry of Korean Immigrants to Japan,” from C. H. Clifton, Lieutenant General and Commander in Chief, BCOF to Eighth US Army, July 29, 1946 (WA-J 68/26).

33. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 136.

34. SCAP Memorandum for Imperial Japanese Government, “Repatriation” (SCAPIN 927), May 7, 1946. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 4, pp. 1537–1650.

35. 2 NZEF (Japan) Quarterly General Reports No. 1, October 15, 1946 (WA-J 2/46).

36. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 134.

37. BCOF Monthly Intelligence Review No. 7, November 20, 1946 (AWM 114, 423/11/7).

38. Letter, “Repatriation of Koreans from Japan,” from Lieutenant General John Hodge to SCAP, August 27, 1947 (NARA RG 331, Box No. 382, Folder No. 11).

39. Memo, “Korean Repatriation,” from G-3, SCAP to C/S, September 27, 1947 (NARA RG 331, Box No. 382, Folder No. 11).

40. Letter from GHQ/SCAP to CG USAFIK, October 1947 (NARA RG 331, Box No. 382, Folder No. 11).

41. For the ongoing debate over the term “reverse course” and what it signified for postwar Japanese history, see, for example, John W. Dower, “Reform and Reconsolidation,” in *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, edited by Harry Wray and Hilary Conroy (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1983), pp. 343–351; Takano Kazumoto, “Nihon senryō kenkyū ni okeru ‘gyaku-kōsu,’” *Chūō daigaku daigakuin kenkyū nenpō* 15 (March 1986): 105–116.

42. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, pp. 165–166.

43. I Corps, G-2 Summary, No. 19, September 1947 (NARA RG 407, Decimal File 108 Series. Located at Washington National Records Center [WNRC]). See Robert Ricketts, “Zainichi



Chōsenjin no minzoku jishuken no hakai katei: 1948–1949 o chūshin ni,” *Seikyū gakujiyutsu ronshū* 6 (March 1995): 226.

44. See *Haebang sinmun* articles from late 1946, including October 10 and 15, December 1. These articles are reproduced in Pak Gyeongsik, ed., *Kaihōgo no zainichi Chōsenjin undō*, vol. 3 (Kawasaki: Ajia Mondai Kenkyūjo, 1984), pp. 47, 50, 59.

45. For further details regarding the Hanshin educational struggle, see Inokuchi Hiromitsu, “Korean Ethnic Schools in Occupied Japan, 1945–1952,” in *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*, edited by Sonia Ryang (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 140–156.

46. For a firsthand account of this incident in Osaka, see Chang Jeongsu, *Zainichi rokujūnen, jiritsu to teikō: Zainichi Chōsenjin undōshi eno shōgen* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1989), pp. 196–202. See also Yang Yeonghu, “Osaka ni okeru 4.24 tōsō oboegaki (2),” *Zainichi Chōsenjin-shi kenkyū* 7 (1980): 41–75.

47. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, pp. 463–464. A more incisive treatment of the violent incident in Kobe, including General Eichelberger’s view of Korean rioters, is Ara Takashi, “Senryōka no chian taisaku to ‘hijō jitai,’” in *Nihon senryōshi kenkyū josetsu* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1994), pp. 67–100.

48. *Haebang sinmun*, October 27, 1948. Pak, *Kaihōgo no Zainichi Chōsenjin undō*, vol. 3, p. 156. For further details concerning these incidents, see Son Mungyu, “Kokki o mamori nunita hitobito: Chōsen Minshushugi Jinmin Kyōwakoku kokki keiyō jiken no shinsō,” *Tōitsu hyōron* 60 (April 1978): 66–73.

49. 1st Interim Report by Special Agent Frank J. Barth Jr., Tokyo-to Area 441st CIC Department, “Korean League Liaison Personnel to North Korea,” October 18, 1948 (NARA RG 338, Box 35).

50. Jack Napier had worked in Government Section’s Korean Division, helping to coordinate the mass repatriation program with USAMGIK, and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel. According to Takemae Eiji, Napier also developed a close working relationship with Home Ministry officials with expertise on Koreans in Japan, and continued to cultivate those ties after the ministry was dissolved in December 1947. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 450.

51. Nine of the JCP’s executive members refused to turn themselves in to the police, including Tokuda Kyūichi, who fled to China and formed an underground resistance movement. For the Red Purge in occupied Japan, see, for example, John W. Dower and Hirata Tetsuo, “Japan’s Red Purge: Lessons from a Saga of Suppression of Free Speech and Thought,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 5, no. 7 (2007); Hirata Tetsuo, *Reddo Paaji no shiteki kyūmei* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha, 2002).

52. Sodei Rinjirō, *Yoshida-Makkāsā ōfuku shokanshū, 1945–1951* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppanyoku, 2000), pp. 147–148.

53. Kim Taegi, *Sengo Nihon seiji to zainichi Chōsenjin mondai: SCAP no tai-zainichi Chōsenjin seisaku, 1945–1952 nen* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1997), pp. 561–563. See also Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 481.

54. Conference Report, “Suppression of Illegal Korean Entry,” July 15, 1949 (NARA RG 331, Box 2190).

55. For the diplomatic negotiations between SCAP and the Japanese government that led to the revised Alien Registration Ordinance, see Ōnuma, *Tan’itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete*, pp. 65–77.

56. CLO No. 2835, “Proposed Control of Illegal Entry,” June 12, 1946.

57. GHQ/SCAP, “Treatment of Foreign Nationals,” *History of Nonmilitary Activities*, p. 132.



58. *New York Times*, March 2, 1949, quoted in John W. Dower, “Occupied Japan and the American Lake,” p. 170.
59. Arnold G. Fisch Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), pp. 127–128.
60. U.S. Military Government, Ryukyu Islands, Directive No. 30, October 1, 1949.
61. Yakabi Osamu, “Kokkyō no kengen: Okinawa Yonaguni no mitsubōeki shūsoku no hai-kei,” *Gendai shisō* 31, no. 11 (September 2003): 193–194.
62. *Shiitsu zensei* in Japanese. The Japanese word *zensei* means “good governance.”
63. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 513.
64. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 162–163.
65. See Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 167.
66. Headquarters, 526th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, Ryukyus Command, “Third Year of Ryukyuan Politics, Part I, Okinawa” August 15, 1949, pp. 143–145 (NARA RG 338, Entry 34179, Box 1).
67. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
68. Ichiro Inamine, “Report on Observation Trip to Ryukyu,” an enclosed document of Cloyce K. Huston, Acting Political Advisor, “Political Condition(s) in the Ryukyu Islands,” to the Department of State, March 18, 1950, p. 13 (NARA RG 59, Box 4260).
69. For further details on the JCP’s policy shift and Tokuda Kyūichi’s ideas for Ryukyuan independence, followed by a reunion with Japan, see Mori Yoshio, *Tsuchi no naka no kakumei: Okinawa sengoshi ni okeru sonzai no kaihō* (Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu, 2010), pp. 84–89.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 205.
71. Inamine, “Report on Observation Trip to Ryukyu,” p. 13.
72. 526th Counter Intelligence Corps, “Third Year of Ryukyuan Politics, Part I,” p. 72.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 145–146.
74. Okuno Shūji, *Natsuko: Okinawa mitsubōeki no jo’ō* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 2005), pp. 87–88.
75. As a result of these new measures, an *Okinawa taimusu* article reported that the number of captured smuggling vessels jumped from nineteen in 1949 to 109 ships through August of 1950. *Okinawa taimusu*, December 13, 1951. Cited in Okuno, *Natsuko*, p. 271.
76. This was part of a larger plan for deployment of a broad range of US Navy cruisers to the Japanese Coast Guard, the Ryukyu Coast Guard, and the South Korean Navy. Gabe Masaaki, *Nichibei kankei no naka no Okinawa* (Tokyo: San-ichi Shobō, 1996), p. 84.
77. Ishihara Masaie, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakai-shi: Senka to mitsubōeki no jidai* (Tokyo: Banseisha, 2000), pp. 236–238.
78. 526th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, Ryukyu Command, “Fourth Year of Ryukyuan Politics,” December 5, 1950, p. 139 (RG 338 Entry 34179, Box 1).
79. Senaga Kamejirō, *Senaga Kamejirō kaisōroku* (Tokyo: Shin Nippon Shuppansha, 1991), p. 75.
80. “Repatriation,” December 19, 1947, from Henry B. Joseph, Lieutenant Colonel CAC, Senior Military Government Officer, Headquarters, Military Government, Northern Ryukyu Islands: Naze, Amami Oshima to Deputy Commander for Military Government, Ryukyus Command (NARA Box 286, Folder No. 8). Copies are available at the Japanese National Diet Library as “Records of the U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands” (hereafter USCAR Records).

81. From J. M. Ebitt, Captain, AGD, Assistant Adjutant General, by command of General MacArthur, General Headquarters, Far East Command, to Commanding General, Ryukyus Command, February 19, 1948 (NDL, USCAR Records, Box 286, Folder No. 8).

82. From Charles H. Andrews, Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry, Director, General Affairs Department to the Legal Department, “Immigration and Customs Control,” August 6, 1949 (NDL, USCAR Records, Box 286, Folder No. 8).

83. From R. M. Levy, Colonel, AGD, Adjutant General, for the Supreme Commander, General Headquarters, SCAP, to Military Governor, Ryukyus Command, August 12, 1949 (NDL, USCAR Records, Box 286, Folder No. 8).

84. The fare for commercial transport from Naha, Okinawa, to Sasebo in Nagasaki Prefecture was initially fixed at ¥1,200, while the cost from Naze, Amami, to Sasebo was ¥800. Likewise, the rate from Naha to Yokohama in Kanagawa Prefecture was fixed at ¥2,370, and the Naze–Yokohama route was ¥1,920. From SCAP to Commanding General, RYCOM, “Passage Fares of Ryukyuans for Compassionate Reasons,” September 17, 1949 (NDL, USCAR Records, Box 286, Folder No. 8).

85. From J. R. Sheetz, Major General USA, Military Governor, Office of the Military Governor of the Ryukyu Islands, to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Far East Command, “Entry and Exit of Persons into the Ryukyu Islands,” undated (NDL, USCAR Records, Box 286, Folder No. 8).

86. Headquarters, Eighth Army, Operational Directive No. 58, “Travel to Ryukyu Islands for Compassionate Reasons,” December 7, 1949 (NDL, USCAR Records, Box 286, Folder No. 8).

87. For further analysis of these travel regulations, see Edith Kaneshiro, “‘For Compassionate Reasons’: Okinawan Repatriations during the American Occupation of Japan,” in *Sengo Okinawa to Amerika: Ibunka sesshoku no sōgōteki kenkyū*, edited by Yamazato Katsunori (Nishihara-chō: Ryukyu University, 2005), pp. 322–331.

88. Interview with Kinjō Isamu in Ōta Jun’ichi, *Osaka no Uchinaan-chu* (Osaka: Burein Sentaa, 1996), p. 91. See also Steve Rabson, “Memories of Okinawa: Life and Times in the Greater Osaka Diaspora,” in *Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power*, edited by Laura Hein and Mark Selden (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), p. 108.

89. The Japanese government’s Ordinance No. 85 issued on April 27, 1947, officially recognized the family registries in Okinawa as Japanese family registries.

90. For Foucault’s concepts on biopower and biopolitics, see Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975–1976* (London: Picador, 2003) and *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College of France, 1978–1979* (London: Picador, 2010).

91. Okuno, *Natsuko*, p. 62.

92. Asato Chōyū, “Chekku kuguri dōdō tokō,” in *Shomin ga tsuzuru Okinawa sengo seikatsushi*, edited by Okinawa Taimususha (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1998), pp. 152–153.

93. SCAP Memorandum for Japanese Government, “Establishment of Immigration Service” (SCAPIN 2019), June 22, 1949. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 14, pp. 6760–6762. Japanese Government, “Shutsu nyūkoku kanri ni kansuru seirei” (Cabinet Order No. 299), August 10, 1949.

94. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 114.

95. Ōnuma, *Tan’itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete*, p. 69.

96. SCAP Memorandum for Japanese Government, “Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Operations” (SCAPIN 2083), February 20, 1950. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 15, pp. 6967–6969.
97. Memorandum, “Development of Reform of Procedures for Deporting Illegal Entrants,” undated (NARA RG 331, Box 1503).
98. Kawakami Iwao, “Shutsunyūkoku kanri no ayumi (12),” *Gaijin tōroku* 100 (1965): 26–27.
99. Ōnuma, *Tan’itsu minzoku shakai no shinwa o koete*, p. 80.
100. Memorandum, “New State of Affairs in Korea and the Treatment of Illegal Entrants,” July 3, 1950 (NARA RG 331, Box 1503).
101. Kawakami, “Shutsunyūkoku kanri no ayumi (12),” p. 28.
102. SCAP Memorandum for Japanese Government, “Immigration” (SCAPIN 2122), September 15, 1950. In Takemae, *GHQ shirei sōshūsei*, vol. 15, pp. 7109–7112.
103. Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 236–237.
104. Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan*, pp. 107–108; Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 498.
105. Takemae Eiji and Robert D. Ricketts, “Robaato Riketto shimon ōnatsu kyohi jiken kankei shiryō (1),” *Tokyo keidai gakkaiishi* 161 (June 1989): 38–39.
106. Napier worked closely with the Japanese attorney general in drafting a revamped version of the Organization Control Ordinance, which was passed in July 1952 as the Subversive Activities Prevention Law, largely based on the Smith and McCarran Acts of the US government. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 493.
107. Nick D. Collaer, Informal Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel R. T. Benson, June 12, 1951 (NDL GHQ/SCAP Records, LS-26003); “Proposed Law for the Regulation of Immigration,” undated (NDL GHQ/SCAP Records, LS-11808–11809). See also Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan*, p. 108.
108. Satō Katsumi, ed., *Zainichi Chōsenjin no shomondai* (Tokyo: Dōseidō, 1971), p. 295. See also Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan*, p. 110.
109. For further reading on the persistence of smuggling and illegal immigration between Korea and Japan, see, for example, Cha Cheoluk, “1950 nyeondae Hanguk-Ilbonui milmuyeok gujowa sangpum,” *Yeoksawa gyeonggye* 74 (March 2010): 221–250; Fukumoto Taku, “‘Mikkō’ ni miru zainichi Chōsenjin no posuto shokuminchisei,” *Ajia yūgaku* 145 (2011): 56–65; Hyun Moo-Am, “Mikkō, Ōmura shūyōjo, Saishūtō: Osaka to Saishūtō o musubu ‘mikkō’ no nettowāku,” *Gendai shisō* 35 (June 2007): 158–173.
110. Satō, *Zainichi Chōsenjin no shomondai*, p. 295. For US laws relating to deportation, see also Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation*, pp. 201–202.
111. The full text of Civil Administration Ordinance No. 68, “Provisions of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands,” dated February 29, 1952, is reproduced in Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, pp. 320–329.
112. Kano Masanao, *Sengo Okinawa no shisōzō* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1987), pp. 104–105.
113. Civil Administration Ordinance No. 93, “Control of Entry and Exit of Individuals into and from the Ryukyu Islands,” January 7, 1953.
114. Civil Administration Ordinance No. 125, “Control of Entry and Exit of Individuals into and from the Ryukyu Islands,” February 11, 1954.

115. Civil Administration Ordinance No. 147, “Control of Travel to Japan by Residents of the Ryukyu Islands,” August 13, 1955.

### Conclusion

1. Kōseishō Engokyoku, ed., *Hikiage to engo 30-nen no ayumi* (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 1978), p. 55.

2. For a discussion on how SCAP’s customs restrictions led Japanese repatriate organizations to demand compensation from the Japanese government after the occupation period, see Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), pp. 173–178.

3. Jansen notes that this isolation was “the more striking and total after a decade of Japan’s Asian orientation.” Marius B. Jansen, *Japan and China: From War to Peace, 1894–1972* (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing, 1975), p. 453.

4. John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 22–23.

5. William E. Stacy, *US Army Border Operations in Germany, 1945–1983* (Washington, DC: US Army Military History Office, 1984), p. 6.

6. For an insightful discussion of this exodus, see Iain MacGregor, *Checkpoint Charlie: The Cold War, the Berlin Wall, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth* (New York: Scribner, 2019).

7. Stacy, *US Army Border Operations in Germany*, pp. 8–9.

8. According to Tony Judt, the first to be sent home were Allied, or UN, nationals liberated from concentration camps; then came UN nationals who had been prisoners of war, followed by UN nationals who were forced laborers and foreign workers, then displaced persons from Italy, and finally the nationals of former enemy states. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 29.

9. Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), p. 80. Cited in Ian Buruma, *Year Zero: A History of 1945* (Penguin Books, 2013), p. 150.

10. Judt, *Postwar*, pp. 30–31.

11. For a regional breakdown of the millions of Asians mobilized to support the Japanese war effort, see, for example, Paul H. Kratoska, ed., *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005).

12. In contrast, the Chinese Communist Party offered citizenship rights to dispossessed Koreans, including at first landownership rights, gaining the support and cooperation of over 1.4 million Koreans who elected to remain in Northeast China. Kim Chun-seon, “The Settlement and Repatriation of Koreans in Northeast China after Liberation,” *Korea Journal* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 85–110.

13. For comparisons between German expellees and Japanese repatriates, see Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, pp. 200–208.

14. Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 7.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

16. Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, pp. 12, 200.

17. See, for example, Daqing Yang, “Resurrecting the Empire? Japanese Technicians in Postwar China, 1945–49,” in *The Japanese Empire in East Asia and Its Postwar Legacy*, edited

by Harald Fuess (Munich: Iudicium, 1998), pp. 185–205; Barak Kushner, *Men to Devils, Devils to Men: Japanese War Crimes and Chinese Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

18. For historical examples of Japanese migrants as agents of Japanese expansionism, see Barbara J. Brooks, “Reading the Japanese Colonial Archive: Gender and Bourgeois Civility in Korea and Manchuria before 1932,” in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, edited by Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 295–325; Ei-ichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan’s Borderless Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

19. On May 15, 1948, USAMGIK drafted a thirty-page study entitled “Claims of the Korean Government, Government Departments, Bureaus and Agencies, Korean Individuals and Juridical Persons against the Japanese Government, Japanese Individuals and Juridical Persons” (NARA RG 332, Box 34). For further details, see Matthew R. Augustine, “The Limits of Decolonization: American Occupiers and the ‘Korean Problem,’ 1945–1948,” *International Journal of Korea History* 22, no. 1 (February 2017): 60–62.

20. For an incisive study of the idea and process of Ryukyuanization under US military rule, see David Tobaru Obermiller, “Dreaming Ryūkyū: Shifting and Contesting Identities in Okinawa,” in *Japan since 1945: From Postwar to Post-Bubble*, edited by Christopher Gerteis and Timothy S. George (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 69–88.

21. For the decolonization of Algeria and subsequent repatriation of the *pidé noir*, see Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). For decolonization and Italian repatriation, see Pamela Ballinger, *The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundations of Postwar Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).

22. Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization: Making of the Contemporary World* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2004), pp. 78–87.

23. Taking advantage of these and other new rights, combined with Britain’s postwar need for labor, an estimated 400,000 people migrated from the colonies to Great Britain between 1946 and 1962. Todd Shepard, *Voices of Decolonization: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2015), p. 29.

24. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” December 18, 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

25. An estimated 87,000 Koreans in Japan were shipped out to North Korea through the 1980s. For an in-depth study of this repatriation program, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan’s Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

26. According to records of the Ministry of Justice, 19,775 Koreans and 797 Chinese, including an unknown number of Taiwanese, were naturalized through 1960. Ōmori Kazuhito, “Kokuseki jimu no sūsei to kongo no dōkō,” *Minji geppō* (October 1969): 86–87. For a pioneering study on the subject, see Kim Yeongdal, *Zainichi Chōsenjin no kika* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1990).

27. Beyond postwar Japan, repatriation and naturalization had failed to resolve the problem of stateless refugees in other parts of the world during the first half of the twentieth century. See Hannah Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man,” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), pp. 267–302. For further reading on the history of statelessness, see, for example, Mira L. Siegelberg, *Statelessness: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).



28. A more comprehensive status called “special permanent residency” (*tokurei eijū*) replaced the “treaty permanent residency” in 1991. Kim Ilhwa, “Zainichi Chōsenjin no hōteki chi’i,” in *Zainichi Chōsenjin: Rekishi, genjō, tenbō*, edited by Pak Chongmyeong (Tokyo: Asahi Shoten, 1995), p. 210.

29. See Tanaka Hiroshi, *Zainichi gaikokujin: Hō no kabe, kokoro no kabe* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1995).

30. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 530–531.

31. The complicity of American occupiers in passing exclusionary nationality laws that denied citizenship rights to minorities was, in fact, following a familiar pattern established in southern Korea and in the Philippines. For an incisive account of the passage of nationality laws in the Philippines under American rule, see Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr., “Between the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Ethnic Chinese and Philippine Citizenship by Jus Soli, 1899–1947,” *Southeast Asian Studies* 49, no. 3 (December 2011): 431–463.

32. Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, p. 67.

33. Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 399–400.

34. See, for example, Gavan McCormack, *Client State: Japan in the American Embrace* (New York: Verso, 2007).

35. Sonia Ryang, “The Rise and Fall of Chongryun—From Chōsenjin to Zainichi and Beyond,” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 14, no. 15 (2016): 1–15. See also Sonia Ryang, *North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology, and Identity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

36. Robert Ricketts, an American resident in Japan, joined a growing number of foreigners in Japan who were arrested for refusing to be fingerprinted. Takemae Eiji served as a witness in Ricketts’ trial, providing detailed testimony on the establishment of the alien registration system during the occupation period. See Takemae Eiji and Robert D. Ricketts, “Robaato Riketto shimon ōnatsu kyohi jiken kankei shiryō (1),” *Tokyo Keidai Gakkaishi* 161 (June 1989): 1–75.

37. See Arnold G. Fisch Jr., *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), p. 128.

38. Nakayoshi, former mayor of Shuri in Okinawa, resettled in Tokyo after the war and began petitioning SCAP and the Japanese government for the reversion of Okinawa. Nakayoshi Ryōkō, *Nippon fukki undōki: Watashi no kaisō kara* (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1964). Nakayoshi was joined by Yoshida Shien, a former civil servant in the Okinawa Prefectural Government, who dedicated his public life to supporting the reversion movement. Okinawa Taimususha, ed., “Yoshida Shien,” in *Watashi no sengoshi*, vol. 3 (Naha: Okinawa Taimususha, 1980).

39. Nakayoshi Ryōkō, “Okinawa ni sainen suru jichi seishin,” *Kyūyū shinpō*, July 11, 1951. For further details, see Nōtomi Kaori, “Nakayoshi Ryōkō ron: Okinawa kingendaishi ni okeru ‘fukki otoko’ no saikentō,” *Shiron* 57 (2004): 44–62.

40. Nōtomi, “Nakayoshi Ryōkō ron,” pp. 56–57.

41. Robert D. Eldridge, *The Return of the Amami Islands: The Reversion Movement and U.S.-Japan Relations* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), pp. 34–35.

42. 526th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, Ryukyus Command, “A Monograph of Ryukyuan Politics,” April 15, 1948, p. 42 (NARA RG 338, Entry 34179, Box 1).



43. 526th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, Ryukyus Command, “Analysis of Communist Influence on Ryukyuan Politics,” August 17, 1948, p. 12 (NARA RG 338, Entry 34179, Box 1).

44. In December 1946, JCP member and Amami native Hisadome Yoshizō made an unauthorized journey from Japan, having received Tokuda Kyūichi’s blessings to establish a communist party in Amami. Hisadome then returned to Japan in June to serve as a liaison between the ACP and the JCP headquarters in Tokyo. For further details, see Katō Tetsurō, “Aratani hakken sareta ‘Okinawa/Amami higōhō kyōsantō bunsho’ ni tsuite,” in *Okinawa no higōhō kyōsantō shiryō* (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2004).

45. For further details concerning the formation of the Amami Rengō in Japan, see Oikawa Eiho, *Kusetsu hachinen ni omou* (Osaka: Amami Oshima Fukki Taisaku Iinkai Osaka Honbu, 1954), pp. 5–15.

46. Mori Yoshio, *Tsuchi no naka no kakumei: Okinawa sengoshi ni okeru sonzai no kaihō* (Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu, 2010), p. 110.

47. For further details involving this incident, see Murayama Iekuni, *Amami fukkishi* (Naze: Nankai Nichinichi Shinbunsha, 1971), p. 219.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 248. According to Eldridge, while the total figure of 139,348 signatures was probably exaggerated, it nevertheless demonstrated the residents’ overwhelming support for returning the islands to Japan. Eldridge, *The Return of the Amami Islands*, p. 71, footnote 88.

49. The delegates of the Reversion Council were able to meet with Prime Minister Yoshida, Japanese Diet members, and SCAP officials. See Satake Kyōko, *Gunseika Amami no mikkō, mitsubōeki* (Kagoshima: Nanpō Shinsha, 2003), pp. 137–144.

50. USCAR, CI&E Department, “The Reversion Movement on Amami Oshima, Final Report,” *Scientific Investigations in the Ryukyu Islands (SIRI)*, March 1952; Douglas G. Haring, “The Island of Amami Oshima in the Northern Ryukyus,” *SIRI* (Washington, DC: National Research Council, October 1952), p. 86. Copies of these reports are available in the Amami Branch of the Kagoshima Prefectural Library.

51. For further details regarding USCAR’s repeated attempts to inaugurate a Ryukyuan flag, see Gabe Masaaki, *Nichibei kankei no naka no Okinawa* (Tokyo: San-ichi Shobō, 1996), pp. 98–104.

52. David Chapman, “Different Faces, Different Spaces: Identifying the Islanders of Ogasawara,” *Social Science Japan Journal* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 204.

53. Miyume Tanji, *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006), pp. 5–6.

54. Gavan McCormack and Satoko Oka Norimatsu, *Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), p. 9.

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