

# **Democracy In Okinawa**

## **U.S.-Okinawan Relations In The Cold War**

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In John Patrick's screen play of the Vern Schneider's novel, *Tea House of the August Moon*, Col. Wainright Purdy III declares, "My job is to teach these natives [Okinawans] the meaning of democracy, and they're going to learn democracy if I have to shoot everyone of them."<sup>1</sup> Captain Fisby's first order of business as military governor in the village of Tobiki was to deliver an address to the Okinawan people, explaining democracy to them and that it was now in their hands. Everyone cheered. The captain was delighted until his interpreter, Sakini, explained that during 800 years of foreign occupation the Okinawans had learned to cheer whoever was in charge, no matter what was said.

Col. Purdy and Captain Fisby were to convert the Okinawans to the "American way of life." The American way consisted of organizing a Women's League for Democratic Action, establishing an education program, and setting up a local industry, like bicycle manufacturer. However, eventually both Col. Purdy and Capt. Fisby ended up being converted to the Okinawan way of life. The Okinawan method of living consisted of converting American cloth into fancy kimono pajamas, holding *sumo* wrestling matches, accomplishing industrialization through the construction of a sweet potato distillery, and finally, building up a pentagon-shaped teahouse for *geisha*.

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<sup>1</sup> John Patrick, *Tea House of the August Moon: A play by John Patrick* (New York: Putnam, 1954), p23.

Capt. Fisby was so impressed with the idea that he gradually immersed himself in Okinawan way of life. Attending official meetings in kimono and experiencing romance with *geisha*, the captain came to realize that, in the long run, one could not tell which was the conqueror and which the conquered. While the military occupation of Japan under Gen. MacArthur was one of the most successful in history, the U.S. military occupation of Okinawa was portrayed in the film as poorly planned and executed.

Introducing American democracy in mainland Japan, and teaching American idealism in Okinawa, had a particular meaning in U.S. national security policy and U.S.-Japan relations in the Cold War period. In fact, other than military utility, the United States gained nothing from ruling Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands; lacking economic benefits, they were a nothing but a drain on American resources. Nevertheless, its strategic important location and the intensity of the Cold War in Asia made Okinawa a strategic geographical space for U.S. national security.

American officials had long been interested in Japan's southern-most islands. American anthropologists were hired to study Ryukyuan society and culture as early as 1937.<sup>2</sup> During the late 1940s through the 1950s, the U.S. military government's cultural policy in Okinawa sought to indoctrinate Okinawans about U.S. foreign policy. American idealism was cultivated on the village scale through the person to person contact between natives and G.I.s.

The democratization of Okinawa via culture, however, was promoted very differently from that of mainland Japan. Until 1972, when the United States returned Okinawa to Japanese administration, the islands were under the control of U.S. military government. The U.S. occupation ended on the mainland of Japan with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, while U.S. forces continued to station on Okinawa. An important reason for the U.S.

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<sup>2</sup> From 1937 to 1941, Yale University conducted an extensive anthropological research on Ryukyu society and culture. The results were published as *Civil Affairs Handbook* in 1944.

retention of Okinawa was that U.S. policymakers had doubts about the dependability of the Japanese and worried that the Japanese might adopt a policy of neutrality during the Cold War, abandoning the struggle against communism. Some viewed Japan as an uncertain and unsure ally. The United States needed to keep its bases in Okinawa in case Japan should fail to support the nation in a moment of crisis. A second reason was Okinawa's strategic location along Japan's southern flank. The U.S. air force could hit a number of important targets in the Eurasian from airfields in the Ryukyus. American planners believed that medium bombers in Okinawa gave an effective advantage in that they could reach all important target areas within an arc including all of Southeast Asia, China, the Lake Baikal area, Eastern Siberia, and the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula in the USSR. U.S. bombers based in the Okinawa could also hit targets in the European region of the Soviet Union and land at air force bases in Western Europe. Okinawa also proved to be an important base during the Korean War. Three days after the North Korean Army crossed into South Korea, bombers stationed on the island began flying missions over the peninsula.<sup>3</sup> The New York Times wrote, "Okinawa is for the Air Force what Pearl Harbor is for the Navy."<sup>4</sup>

The War in the Pacific ended on August 15, 1945 and signified the beginning of the American occupation in Okinawa. The "Administration of the Ryukyu Islands" was established by the U.S. Military Government. Its primary goal was civilian relief and rehabilitation. In postwar Japan, while General Douglas MacArthur served as chief policy enforcer at his SCAP headquarters in Tokyo, his association with field personnel in Okinawa remained distant. In Okinawa, William E. Crist commanded the Civil Affairs Teams. As early as April 1946, the

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<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S. -Japanese Relations* (Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 2000), pp.40-91.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, 21 September 1952, p.9.

Central Okinawan Administration was established, and in August of that year, the Military Government initiated the establishment of the Okinawan Advisory Council. In December 1950 the Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands became the United States Civil Administration in the Ryukyus (USCAR). The position of Civil Administrator was created for the purpose of the “supervision of domestic Okinawan activities and problems.” Then, USCAR’s mission was to stimulate and encourage Okinawans’ participation in such public activities as health, education, safety, and information with the cooperation of the U.S. military government. *The Ryukyu Islands at a Glance*, a pamphlet published by the U.S. military government, stated the objectives of the USCAR clearly. The primary mission of the United States Forces was the prevention of disease and unrest in the land that had been devastated. A second objective was economic recovery up to the prewar level. A third objective was to bring democracy to the islands. Furthermore, the pamphlets viewed Okinawans as incapable of governing by themselves. Many cartoons describing Okinawan farmers, fisherman, and civilians showed how backward they were in terms of technology and modern political systems.<sup>5</sup>

The depiction of Okinawans as more primitive than the Japanese on the mainland was common. Yale University anthropologists’ *Civil Affairs Handbook* (1944) pointed out the strong tensions between Okinawans and Japanese. According to the handbook, the Japanese did not regard Okinawans as equal, and they had a strong racial prejudice. Because of these conflicts, the handbook stated that there was no enthusiastic patriotism toward Japan among Okinawans. Then, as a conclusion, the handbook suggested that it would be a wise idea to use these tensions between Okinawans and Japanese in order to promote the U.S. political agenda. They

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<sup>5</sup> United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *The Ryukyu at a Glance* (United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, Naha, Okinawa, 1954), p.1, p.14, p.16, p.19, p.28, p.33, p.40.

continuously described the differences between Japanese and Okinawans in terms of personality, culture, lifestyle, education, language, and racial identity. For example:

In comparison with the Japanese, the Ryukyu natives are reported to be somewhat shorter, stockier, and darker, and to be characterized by more prominent nose, higher foreheads, and less noticeable cheekbones. Their hair is more often wavy. . . . Despite the close ethnic relationship between Japanese and Ryukyu islanders, their linguistic kinship, the people of the archipelago are not regarded by the Japanese as their racial equals. They [are] looked upon, as it were, as poor cousins from the country, with peculiar rustic ways of their own, and are consequently discriminated against in various ways. The islanders on the other hand, have no sense of inferiority but rather take pride in their own traditions and in their longstanding cultural ties with China. Inherent in the relations between the Ryukyu people and the Japanese, therefore, are potential seeds of dissension out of which political capital might be made. It is almost certain that militarism and fanatical patriotism have been but slightly developed.<sup>6</sup>

Immediately after the war, prisoners were used by the U.S. military government to complete necessary labor assignments. An August 1945 survey revealed that of the 119,839 Okinawans qualified for military government employment, only 337 were considered as adequately skilled.<sup>7</sup> In September 1946, 6,519 Okinawans were employed by the U.S military units in Okinawa. By September 30, 1947, this number increased to 35,078.<sup>8</sup> With the return of

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<sup>6</sup> Office of the Chief Naval Operations Navy Department, Civil Affairs Handbook: *Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands opnav*, 15 November 1944, p.43.

<sup>7</sup> United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *The Ryukyu Islands Prewar and Postwar* (Naha, Okinawa, 1958), p.69.

<sup>8</sup> United States Military Government, Ryukyu Islands, *Military Government Activities, 1945-1951* (Naha, Okinawa, 1954).

American soldiers, many duties performed by the American military personnel were delegated to untrained Okinawans. One of the earliest needs was training track drivers, telephone operators, and typists. The military government also provided intensive English language training with the establishment of the Foreign Language School in Gushikawa in January 1946. One of the significant problems was a shortage of bilingual instructors. Many Americans who were proficient in Japanese were assigned to McArthur's headquarters in Tokyo. When the war ended, U.S. military police represented the enforcement of law to Okinawans. Early in the Occupation, "able-bodied native Okinawan men" were selected by the military government as civilian police. Less than 20 percent had any previous police training experience. The military government provided hats, motor vehicles, weapons, and by recruiting some experienced Okinawans, established a training facility in Naha by late 1946.<sup>9</sup>

In the field of public services, the U.S. government began funding relief programs to meet the more immediate needs. First, the reconstruction of a water system was necessary, since the war had destroyed most of the water system in central and southern Okinawa. To meet its own urgent need, as well as that of municipalities, the military government began to work on repairing the Naha filtration plant. As early as March 1946, the military Government organized the Department of Agriculture, Industry, Fishers, Finance and Commerce under the direct supervision of the Economic Department and the Military Government. In 1946 the Government and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) Fund was established. Total GARIOA appropriation for the Ryukyus during the ten years from 1947 to 1957 amounted to \$164.5 million.<sup>10</sup> Congressional appropriations in 1946 to build barracks and military installations amounted to

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<sup>9</sup> United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *The Ryukyu Islands Prewar and Postwar* (Naha, Okinawa, 1958) pp.21-98.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

\$35 million. During the same year, approximately \$25 million was used for economic rehabilitation. In July 1949 typhoon Gloria caused an estimated \$80 million damage, with about 50 percent of military buildings, including dependent housing, destroyed.<sup>11</sup> The Ryukyuan Foreign Exchange Fund (RFEF) was established as a depository of revenue derived from sales to U.S. forces. An American style banking system succeeded the Central Bank of Okinawa in May 1948. With political cartoons in which rich Uncle Sam gives a bag full of U.S. dollar to a poor, short Okinawan, *The Ryukyu at a Glance* suggested that such huge economic assistance would be worth U.S. strategic interest in Okinawa.<sup>12</sup>

The cultural reconstruction of postwar Okinawa was started in November 1948 by the Department of Information and Education, abbreviated as Civil Information and Education (CI&E). Its first purpose was the reconstruction of such cultural facilities as libraries, theaters, radio broadcasting stations, and newspaper companies. A second aim was the promotion of democratic concepts and engendering Okinawan support for United States policies and programs through cultural propaganda.

During the first half of 1949, the CI&E Department began to print numerous posters. For example, one of the early posters was entitled “A Bridge to Democracy,” and bore labels and a caption stating that the bridge from a Ryukyu under militarism to a democratic Ryukyu must be supported by pillars labeled freedom of thought, and respect for human rights. Nine thousand posters were produced during May 1949.<sup>13</sup> In support of “Ryukyuan-American Education

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<sup>11</sup> Frederick L. Shiels, *The American Experience in Okinawa: A Case Study for Foreign Policy and Decision-Making Theory* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1977).

<sup>12</sup> United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *The Ryukyu at a Glance*, p.14.

<sup>13</sup> James Tull, *The Ryukyu Islands: Japan's Oldest Colony-America's Newest: An Analysis of Policy and Propaganda* (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1953), p.61.

Week,” during December 4-10, 1949, 390,000 leaflets were distributed to Okinawan students. The five subjects to be studied included “Democracy in the Home,” “Democracy in the School,” “Foundations of Good Government,” “Rights of the Citizen in a Democracy,” and “Responsibilities of the Citizens in a Democracy.” Students were requested to take the leaflets home to their parents and asked to post them on the walls of their homes.<sup>14</sup>

The leaflets also exposed the danger of communism, and encouraged civic pride and awareness of the best in Ryukyuan culture. Particular encouragement was given to promote Okinawan interest in traditional Ryukyuan arts, music, and dance.<sup>15</sup> American art and music enhanced efforts to transmit the “American story.” In 1950, 300 color copies of American paintings were sent to the Ryukyus.<sup>16</sup>

For the information and educational programs in the Ryukyus, 16 mm documentary and news films with a Japanese sound track were considered to be a substantial part of the CI&E rehabilitation effort. Examples of the films shown during late 1949 and through 1950 include: *Ryukyuan Legal Chiefs Visit the U.S.*, *Corporal Cornel and Mrs. Cornel’s Welcome to America*, *Ryukyuan Government Leaders Visit Maryland*, *Ryukyuan Exchange Students*, and *Police Mission in the U.S.* The U.S. military government estimated that 20,000 persons saw CI&E films each week. The films with a Japanese language track were loaned through the CI&E Central Motion Picture Distribution Unit to cultural centers, health centers, native labor training sections, the signal center, commercial theaters, amusement parks, agricultural cooperatives, branches of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>15</sup> The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol.1, no.1, 12 December 1952, p.197.

<sup>16</sup> Terry Trafton, *The Reality of Paradox: A Historical Study to Assess the Role of Adult Education in the Democratization Process Administered by Military Government in Okinawa* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1992), p.106.

the Education Department, youth clubs, and the University of the Ryukyus. Cultural Centers, in turn, showed films through the use of mobile units to remote villages, prisons, and leper colonies.<sup>17</sup> During 1953-1954, President Eisenhower's "Atomic Power for Peace" statement before the United Nations Assembly on the Atomic Policy of the United States received favorable response as effective anti-communist rhetoric. The timely production of locally produced films helped a great deal in encouraging anti-communist editorials in the Rykyuan newspapers as well. A Japanese film, *Prewar Okinawa* in 1937 was reproduced with the original Japanese sound track and with an English soundtrack, and it was extensively used by American military and civilian personnel in Okinawa with favorable comments.<sup>18</sup>

The United States military government and the USCAR made continuous efforts through the press release of the *Ryukyu Koho*, a Japanese language newspaper originated under the U.S. military government, to inform Ryukyuan about the story of America and the Free World, and the benefits for the Ryukyuan about rehabilitation programs, GARIOA imports, and security measures as a result of the U.S. occupation. The *Ryukyu Koho* contained articles explaining American government and American educational ideologies. Begun in 1948 by the Okinawa Civilian Administration, their publication had a monthly circulation of 7,000.<sup>19</sup> In 1950, an essay contest conducted by the *Ryukyu Koho* produced 1,253 entries on one of two topics: "How I Can

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<sup>17</sup> The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol.1, no.1, 12 December 1952, pp.199-201.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands, *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol. 1, no.2 June 1953, p.60.

<sup>19</sup> Terry Trafton, *The Reality of Paradox: A Historical Study to Assess the Role of Adult Education in the Democratization Process Administered by Military Government in Okinawa* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1992), p.104.

Best Serve My People,” and “What Democracy Means to Me.” Winners had their essays published in this newspaper.<sup>20</sup>

Paralleling the newspaper enterprise, exchange programs also promoted Okinawa’s ties to the United States. The first National Leader Mission was sent to the U.S. in June 1950. From that time until 1 January 1953, 94 individuals made 90 day tours to the U.S. with GARIOA funds. The aim of the program was to give some orientation to a few influential Okinawans who were to inspect American facilities and advanced technology in their particular fields. A specific purpose was to reorient the individuals who were critical or distrustful of the U.S. and to enhance the knowledge and the prestige of individuals who were pro-American. After their return from the United States, the mission leaders were utilized in various ways. They were expected to write articles for newspapers, make radio address, and conduct information programs at the Cultural Centers. In addition, between 1949 and 1952, 181 students were sent to the U.S. and 69 who had completed their studies returned to the Ryukyus.<sup>21</sup>

During 1953-1954, the Ryukyuan-American Friendship Committee was created as a permanent activity of the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus. The chairman was a member of the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus, although all branches of the United States military units, as well as both Ryukyuan and American businessmen on Okinawa, were represented on the committee. In order to enhance Ryukyuan-American friendship and

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<sup>20</sup> The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands. *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol.1, no.1 31 December 1952, pp.187-189.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.205-207.

reduce Okinawan hostility toward the U.S. military bases, the Ryukyuan-American Friendship Committee sponsored a number of friendship week competitions.<sup>22</sup>

These competitions included a number of groups. For example, the Fishermen's Contest was held in 13 October 1953, during the annual Ryukyuan Fisheries Conference in Hirara City, Miyako. Awards were made to the fishermen who had made the largest catches during the year. Judging was done by the local fishing associations, the government of the Ryukyu Islands, and the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus. The U.S. military government estimated that 2,500 fishermen participated.<sup>23</sup>

Ryukyu-American Friendship Week activities in 1955 were highlighted by a two-day bicycle race, performances of the "Symphony of the Air," as well as a rodeo, and various "open house" events sponsored at the Information Centers, libraries and service clubs. The huge Naha Air Base maintenance hanger was packed for each of the two performances of the "Symphony of the Air" with a total attendance estimated at 15,000 persons. The week's activities were concluded with two rodeo performances witnessed by approximately 18,000 Ryukyus and Americans. The "Open House" events at the Cultural Centers were featured by speech contests, native songs and dances, athletic activities, and motion picture programs.<sup>24</sup>

The full use of radio as an information device was realized with the inauguration of the "USCAR Hour" over KSAR, the Japanese language station of the Ryukyu Broadcasting Company. Since KSAR was the sole Japanese language outlet reaching the entire Ryukyus, the programs were assured of a wide audience. A Ryukyus-wide media survey taken in June and

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<sup>22</sup> The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands. *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol 3, no.1, 30 June 1954, p.115.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.116-117.

<sup>24</sup> *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, 30 June 1955, vol.3 no.1, p.103.

July 1956 by the Office of Public Information (OPI) showed that between thirty five and thirty seven percent of the population consistently listened to the radio between 1900 and 2000, making the hour peak listening period. Programming for the “USCAR Hour” consisted of selected U.S. Information Service (USIS) and Psychological Warfare’s taped material that covered international and U.S. affairs. Local programming for the “USCAR Hour” included commentaries, special event programs produced on a fairly regular basis, and a continuing series of interviews with the personnel of the USCAR and the military command explaining the U.S. position on the local project in Okinawa.

Besides building a positive image of America and promoting U.S.-Okinawa friendship, American officials portrayed communism and totalitarianism. During 1956-57, some 130 pictorial displays were completed and circulated throughout the Ryukyus. These included photographs provided by the United States Information Services and other U.S. government agencies. Many of the exhibits drew attention to the world unrest caused by communism, such as the Hungarian Revolt. Other exhibits drew attention to the gains made through Free World cooperation, also to the U.S. scientific efforts in developing the peaceful use of atomic energy for the benefit of all mankind. In November 1957, around 3,000 persons attended a photo exhibit in the Okinawa Teachers Association Hall in downtown Naha showing the communists’ record of imperialism, brutality and duplicity in Russia, Hungary and other parts of Eastern Europe. Photos used were from the files of USCAR’s Office of Public Information (OPI) and private sources. The press branch also distributed a mimeographed factual chronology of the events and the individuals playing leading roles in the Soviet record.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Civil Affairs Activities in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol. 6, no.1, 31 March 1958, pp.102-103.

*Konnichi-no Ryukyu (Ryukyus Today)*, a USCAR-sponsored magazine, which was initially published with the November 1957 issues, gained public acceptances from the fact that its writers were mainly Ryukyuan and that the cover and interior art work, as well as photographs, were also done by the Ryukyuan. In general, those writers warned against communist aggression, speaking effectively as former Russian prisoners of war, or warned that Ryukyuan Communist groups often misused “democracy” to their advantage, agitating the people under the guise of “freedom of speech.”

One writer, a leading Okinawan novelist, urged the importance of teaching English to Okinawan children as early as primary school from the standpoint of enabling them to make a better living, presumably for many, as the employees of the U.S. Forces. Another writer pointed out the economic decline of Amami after the reversion of Amami Oshima to the Japanese control, and warned that the reversion of Okinawa would lead to the inevitable change, which would not be beneficial to Ryukyuan. Contributors expressed Ryukyuan desires for improvements, in such fields as agriculture, fishing, communications, education, public health, labor and trade. A member of an economic mission returning from Taiwan declared that the country’s economic development was made possible by large U.S. financial aid and that Ryukyuan should study how to make the best of U.S. aid to promote the development of the Ryukyu Islands.<sup>26</sup>

As we have seen above, by borrowing the power of culture, the U.S. military government in the Ryukyus tried numerous means to attract Okinawans’ attention and to build up their friendship with natives. Establishing cultural centers, importing and translating books, holding numerous contests and pictorial exhibitions, exchanging persons, showing films and

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<sup>26</sup> *Civil Affairs in the Ryukyu Islands*, vol.6, no.2, 30 September 1958, pp.118-120.

musicals--all these cultural activities were promoted with the purpose of developing Okinawans' understanding of U.S. foreign policy in Asia.

At the height of the Cold War, the United States was building a chain of military bases stretching from Korea and Japan through Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand and Australia, to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Greece in order to contain the Soviet Union and China. In Japan alone at the end of the Korean War, there were six hundred U.S. installations and 200,000 troops. Then, in the 1960s, when Okinawa was directly administered by the Pentagon, there were 117 bases. The United States controlled twenty nine areas of the surrounding seas and fifteen district air spaces over the Ryukyus. As a prefecture of Japan, Okinawa occupied only 0.6 percent of Japan's total land area, however, about 75 percent of facilities used by the American armed forces stationed in Japan were concentrated in Okinawa.<sup>27</sup>

The position of Okinawa for the U.S. government was clear. During the Korean War and later in the Vietnam War, the U.S. heavily depended on its military bases in Japanese territory. Okinawa, Thailand, Hong Kong, and the Philippines also offered places for the U.S. troops for "rest and recreation."<sup>28</sup>

Another important factor was to determine whether such attempts to indoctrinate Okinawans about the communist threat and America's Free World policy was really successful or not. The *Scientific Investigation of Ryukyu Islands* (SIRI) report by anthropologist, Haring Douglas, investigated Okinawans understanding of communism and capitalism at that time and stated:

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<sup>27</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: the Cost and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), p.36.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

What ideas do Amamians discuss? The range of their knowledge is limited by sketchy, meager news service. The outside world is psychologically remote, even though Amami fishermen occasionally glimpse Russian submarines. But their interests transcend the tidbits of news that trickle over the cables; topics commonly discussed include communism, democracy, science, movies, Amami traditions, capitalism V.S. socialism and again communism. In general their anti-communist, but communism presents the one vivid idea that has burst into their world since the war. They can no more evade the topic than a New Yorker can ignore street traffic. . .

Despite much discussion among Americans, both Communism and Capitalism continues to be understood vaguely and inaccurately. As long as Communism continues its onward sweep in Asia, its ideology commands general interest and the issue cannot be avoided. Communism may be less prevalent in Amami Gunto than in Japan Proper, but it is understood better than capitalism is understood; the latter is presented most ineffectively. . .

The opposition to Communism on Amami Ohima, in my opinion is not the spontaneous fruit of belief in democracy and free enterprise; it is a combination of peasant indifference to politics and the persisting influence of the aristocratic-plutocratic minority that formerly dominated Amami society. Inept U.S. propaganda, abetted by America commercial movies, identifies democracy with material luxury and irresponsible license. . . . In general democracy is presented in an alien tongue and appears to be something for rich America that could not work in poor Amami; Communist, however, comes from fellow villages in their own language, in the guise of an extension of familiar patterns of living.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Douglas G. Haring, "The Island of Amami Oshima in the Northern Ryukyus," *SIRI Report* no. 2, (Pacific Science Board, National Research Council, Washington D.C., 1953), p.18, p.19, p.20, p.21, p.83 and p.84. (mimeographed).

As this report showed, U.S. democracy was not voluntarily spread among the individual Amamians' daily life, rather it was promoted artificially by the U.S. military government. Furthermore, few Amamians had deep knowledge about the ideology of democracy and communism. In addition, Haring pointed out that not even a dozen people in Amami Oshima could read English fluently and easily. There was a shortage of intellectually stimulating reading materials. Such magazines imported from Japan were of the cheap sensational type—"Women's home reading" typically featuring articles such as "How to Make Love, by a Man Who Had Slept with Three Thousand Women," was one of the examples.<sup>30</sup>

Anthropologist Clarence J. Glacken, who lived and studied in different villages on Okinawa, also wrote that, in reality, U.S. cultural propaganda was insufficient in such remote villages as Hanashiro, Minatogawa, and Matsuda.:

There are virtually no radio sets in any of these villages, except in the schools and sometimes in a village office. . . . In Hanashiro, which has no electricity, there were 3 radios, two of which did not work. There were 4 in Minatogawa, with one at least not working, and six in Matsuda, three of which were in the primary school, one in the village office. . . .

Newspapers are more important media. But in late 1951 and early 1952, there were 5 newspaper subscribes in Hanashiro, one going to the village officer where it could be read by all, 14 in Minatogawa, and about 20 in Matsuda. . . . [these] newspapers are read consistently only by the village officials, school teachers, and the regular subscribers.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Clarence Glacken, "Studies of Okinawan Village Life," *SIRI Report* no. 4, (Pacific Science Board, National Research Council, Washington D.C., 1953) Mimeographed.

Other U.S. attempts to exchange Okinawan students also did not necessarily bring about positive results as the U.S. government expected. As a matter of fact, many Okinawan students in America received unfavorable impressions of American life. One of the Okinawan exchange students, Ken Kiyuna, wrote his honest skepticism about American society in his report:

To an oriental like myself, the American civilization as a whole might be called a higher Mechanical Civilization. Many things mechanical have deeply impressed me here in America, but one of the most impressive things is the wonderful mechanization of the kitchen in the typical American house. It is a kitchen wonderful to me, because everything is operated by controls and switches. . . . However, I must admit that I was concerned that under the oppression of keeping peace with power production, workers seemed to be forced to become machines also, and hence lose some of their inherent ability to act as humans who reason and feel.

As a result of mechanical civilization, the American's point of view and way of thinking, as well as his solutions of problems, seem all to be influenced by the accustomed mechanization in his daily life. As an example, some Americans in my opinion, seem to be like machines where their thinking is systemized and formal, and their feeling is to all appearances business like not sincere. They are machines of creatures of habit that fit into a mechanized life.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, while CI&E was busy promoting the cultural program through KASAR radio, *Ryukyu Koho*, and cultural centers, Okinawans in 1952 elected socialist mayor Senega Kamejiro. Immediately, USCAR cut their support for the Okinawan civic administration and tried to pass a no confidence vote for Senega. As a result, the USCAR succeeded on depriving

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<sup>32</sup> Jane Kluckhohn and Edward G. Lurders eds., *Through Okinawan Eyes* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1951), pp.51-55.

Senega of his eligibility and the city council passed a nonconfidence vote for him. Such USCAR pressure on the Okinawan civic administration brought about strong controversy not only among Okinawans but also in the international world itself. An article from *Weekly Sankei* called America's conduct as equal to the assassination of Senega, then strongly criticized contradictory U.S. "democratic" foreign policy:

The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands changed a requirement for non-confidence in a mayor from two thirds to a majority of the full number of the assemblymen. Because the full number of assemblymen of Okinawa City is thirty and also because the number of Naha City Mayor Senega's government control party is twelve, it was impossible to resolve non-confidence in the mayor on the condition that these twelve government controlled party assemblymen will not attend. This is because the number of pro-American not of the government party assemblymen was seventeen whereas more than twenty assemblymen in favor are required.

If the United States desires to purge Mayor Senega with whom it has found difficulty in dealing without resorting to such an illegal means like assassination, what it can do is to change the requirement for non-confidence from more than two thirds to a majority of the full number of the Assemblymen and if does so, it can surely and legally purge Mayor Senega. This is because the number of pro-American and non-governmental party assemblymen are seventeen which is two more than the majority number of fifteen.

. . . the case this time becomes a very queer example when the United States people explain the real nature of democracy which is always advocated by them. I cannot but worry about the benefit according to the great United States if this should be used as material for teaching what democracy is in Japanese primary and junior high schools. I believe that it will go more smoothly if the

United States will abandon the administrative power. Furthermore, it is understandable from the Hungarian case that it's impossible to oppress the real intention of the people forever."<sup>33</sup>

Later in 1958, the election of Kanji Saichi mayor, who succeeded in implementing Senega's political agenda came as a big shock to the U.S. government again. In particular, in this election, two of the candidates were very critical of the U.S. occupation and advocated reversion to mainland Japan. Moreover, the conservative power, which was friendly to the U.S. occupation, could not even elect their own candidates.

Thus, examining the U.S. attitude toward Okinawans and their foreign policy to justify their behavior in the countryless land of Okinawa, which belonged neither to Japan nor to the U.S., illustrates the hypocritical and contradictory ideology of U.S. foreign policy in the world. Behind the Ryukyuan-American friendship cultural activities, the conflict between the U.S. military forces and Okinawans has a long history. More recently, sexual assault, environmental pollution, traffic accidents, and land property issues are some of the controversial problems. The protest movement against these issues began in 1952 and continues until today.

While SCAP and McArthur were praised for their democratization policy of Japan at home, among G.Is in Okinawa, the word: "States Side" was commonly used in order to mean "like the United States." As the reconstruction program developed, several entertainment facilities for U.S. G.Is, such as club houses, golf courses, bowling alley, and pools were constructed. Within the military bases, "Little America" was born.<sup>34</sup> An article from *Time* magazine called the U.S. military base as a "Levit Town," referring to the luxurious living town in New York, designed by William Levit. "Levit Town" in Okinawa, facilitated theaters,

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<sup>33</sup> Yoshitaka Takahashi, "Deserted Land and People," *Weekly Sankei*, 15 December 1957.

<sup>34</sup> *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 21 September 1952.

backyard and park entertainment. Enjoying upper middle class life with Okinawan maids, American soldiers and their families tended to have leisure and enjoyed "racialized privilege" in southern Asian islands. Dancing party was also held every weekend at clubs.<sup>35</sup>

Although the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952 formally ended the U.S. occupation of Japan, it did not end of the occupation by the U.S. military government of Okinawa. While the mainland was allowed to regain political autonomy, the situation in Okinawa was totally different. The Japanese-American Security Treaty allowed the concentration of American military bases on a small Southern island on Okinawa, located far off the mainland. Realistically, it was the real beginning of the U.S. colonization of Okinawa.

Sexual assault was one of the most controversial issues, although it did not become a public issue until 4 September 1995, when two American marines and a sailor were arrested for raping a twelve-year-old Okinawan girl. According to an article from *Nation*, while the incidence of reported rape in the United States was forty-one for every one hundred thousand people, at the military bases in Okinawa, according to at least public official record, it was eighty-two per one hundred thousand.<sup>36</sup> The article concluded that covering up sexual assault was Pentagon policy and just the tip of the iceberg.<sup>37</sup>

Besides rape problems, there were thousands of auto accidents each year in Okinawa involving U.S. service personnel, and it was typical that American drivers normally did not have insurance and have often left Japan by the time Okinawan victims could catch up to them in court. A third issue is environmental problems, caused by American military forces. The

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<sup>35</sup> *Time*, 15 August 1955, pp.18-20.

<sup>36</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), pp.34-65.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

constant noise of landing of U.S. military air planes, and the construction of highways caused great environmental damage as well as economic damage to Okinawa. Additionally, the most spectacular documented environmental outrage was a barrage of some 1,520 depleted uranium shells fired in December 1995 and January 1996 into Torishima Island, located about hundred kilometers west of the main island of Okinawa.<sup>38</sup>

Both the film and play of the *Tea House of the August Moon* described the harmonious relations between G.I.s and Okinawans through American military officials' Okinawanization. Okinawans succeeded in teaching American military officials about the Okinawan way of democracy, not American democracy. In reality, however, as neither American nor Japanese citizens, Okinawans in the early 1950s had no place to turn for help and were at the mercy of the power of the U.S. military government. None of the claims made by Okinawans produced any results at that time. The American way of life and democracy were pushed in order to indoctrinate Okinawans about U.S. national security policy in Asia during the Cold War. The conflict between the conquerors and conquered continues to the present.

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<sup>38</sup> Bill Gertz, "U.S. Slow to Inform Japan of Accident; Hundreds of Radioactive Bullets Were Fired in Training Exercise Near Okinawa," *Washington Times*, 10 February 1997.