# From Farm to Base: Post-War Economic Rehabilitation and the Emergence of the Base Worker in US-Occupied Okinawa

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**ABSTRACTS**

Militärarbeit auf Okinawa ist das Symbol der US-Besatzung in der Nachkriegszeit. Die bestehende Forschung beleuchtet die Details des Regimes der Militärarbeit, die Beteiligung der lokalen Bevölkerung an diesem Regime und die Auswirkungen der Militärwirtschaft auf die lokale Bevölkerung. Der vorliegende Aufsatz untersucht die Geschichte der Militärarbeit aus einer postkolonialen Perspektive und konzentriert sich dabei auf die Entstehung der Militärarbeit und darauf, wie die USA ihre Bemühungen um einen wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung durch *Shurei no Hikari*, eine im Nachkriegs-Okinawa herausgegebene Gemeindezeitschrift im Sinne einer gelungenen Re-education, propagierten. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Militärarbeit die Kommodifizierung dessen symbolisiert, was man als „überschüssige Bevölkerung" bezeichnen kann, auf die sich die USA während des Kalten Krieges in ihrem Streben nach antikommunistischen Aktivitäten verließen. Ich konzentriere mich auf die Struktur von Militärarbeit und deren Auswirkungen auf die einheimische Bevölkerung und verfolge dabei zwei Argumente. Erstens argumentiere ich, dass die US-Besatzung das Land und die Produktionsmittel der Okinawaner zugunsten einer Ausweitung der US-Militäranlagen enteignete und so eine koloniale Überschussbevölkerung produzierte, die sie als Arbeitskräfte für die militärischen Aktivitäten des Kalten Krieges mobilisierten. Zweitens wird aufgezeigt, wie die Kommodifizierung der einheimischen Arbeitskräfte im Kontext der Militärarbeit durch eine Befriedung der US-Besatzungsaktivitäten gerechtfertigt wurde.

Military work in Okinawa is the symbol of US occupation in the post-war period. Existing scholarship sheds light on the details of the regime of military work, the participation of the local population in this regime, and the impact of the military economy on the local community. This

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paper, however, revisits the history of military work by prioritizing a postcolonial viewpoint with a focus on the emergence of military work and on how the US propagated their efforts towards economic recovery through *Shurei no Hikari*, a community magazine published in post-war Okinawa. It argues that military work symbolizes the commodification of what can be described as "surplus population" that the US during the Cold War relied on in its pursuit of anti-Communist activities. Focusing on the structure of military work and its impact on the local population, my argument is twofold. First, I argue that the US occupation expropriated Okinawans' indigenous land and means of production for the sake of an expansion of US military installations, and thus produced a colonial surplus population that they mobilized as a labour force for Cold War military activity. Second, it reveals how the commodification of the local labour force in the context of military work was justified by a pacification of US occupation activities.

## 1. Introduction

The US occupation of Okinawa from 1945–1972 is a historically distinct period that has attracted considerable scholarly attention over the past several decades. It has mostly been studied by scholars of international relations and military historians, who have paid attention to the nature of the occupational politics of Okinawa under the US military government.[1] The impact of US military bases on host countries and regions has also been researched, especially through a comparative and collaborative perspective that has allowed for mapping the influence of the global hegemony of the US military, past and present.[2] These studies have shown that although Okinawa is a small fraction of the global empire of US bases, the region is worth paying attention to. On the one hand, it shares obvious similarities with other host regions impacted by US military bases. On the other hand, it exhibits distinctive aspects that are unique to Okinawa.

Regarding the former, a long history of protests against US military bases in post-war Okinawa has been well documented by a number of scholars.[3] Regarding the latter, there is a growing interest in the specific circumstances of the equally important aspects of Okinawa's unique history of US occupation. For instance, Koikari has focused on Cold War cultural interaction,[4] specifically on the exchange between Okinawan and US-American women in both countries and has explained how the mobilization of women contributed to the development and perpetuation of both US and Japanese imperialism. Shimabuku

1 C. Johnson, The Failure of Japanese and American Leadership after the Cold War: The Case of Okinawa, in: The Korea Journal of Japanese Studies 10 (1998), pp. 19–37; R. D. Eldridge, The Origins of the Bilateral Okinawa Problem: Okinawa in Postwar U.S.-Japan Relations, 1945–1952, East Asia, New York 2001; Y. Taira, Sengo Okinawa to beigunkichi: Juyōto kyozetsuno hazamade 1945–1972nen, Tokyo 2012.

2 C. Lutz, The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts, London 2009; M. Höhn and S. Moon (eds.), Over there: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present, Durham, NC 2010; D. Vine, Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World, New York 2015.

3 L. Hein et al., Islands of Discontent: Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power, Asian voices, Lanham 2003; G. McCormack, Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States (Asia Pacific perspectives), Lanham 2012.

4 M. Koikari, Cold War Encounters in US-Occupied Okinawa, Cambridge 2015.

has examined the ambivalent status of life on Okinawa at the crossroads of militarism and imperialism of the US and capitalism and imperialism of Japan.[5] Focusing on the complex politics surrounding Okinawan women working in the sex industry and their mix-raced children born out of the interaction with the GIs, Shimabuku introduces the idea of the "alegal" to explain a form of life, found in post-war Okinawa, that exists in a state of "unintelligibility" to the biopolitical state of the US and Japan. The growing interest in a relatively small, yet significant, group of the population in scholarship on US-occupied Okinawa demonstrates the importance of more closely considering forms of agency of that specific historical moment. Based on the existing studies of US-occupied Okinawa that focus on the structural level of its history, the analytical lens adopted in this paper follows a recent shift in the field toward including a bottom-up perspective as a means of fostering an understanding of the period.

In a similar vein, this paper tries to revisit specifically the history of military work[6] in US-occupied Okinawa. The concept of military work in the context of this research refers to the civilian work necessary to support the installations and activities of the US military. Military work has been repeatedly registered as an important phenomenon and perhaps one of the most significant characteristics of post-war Okinawa.[7] Several studies have shed light on the details of the regime of military work, the participation of the local population in this work regime, and the impact of the military economy on the local community of post-war Okinawa. Scholars have pointed to the political and historical details of the ties between economic recovery, which the US administration made explicit effort to generate, and the development of a military-centred economy in post-war Okinawa. Another scholarly perspective has been that of social movement studies, which have analysed military workers' participation in the labour movement and the struggle of the Zengunrō (All Okinawan Military Workers' Union).[8] More recent studies on military work attempt to examine the heterogeneity of specific groups, such as transnational identities among military workers. Zulueta,[9] for instance, pays close attention to Filipino workers who were employed in post-war Okinawa by the US military. So far, however, scholarship on the regime of military work in post-war Okinawa has not explored the very detail of experience of those workers and it has failed to prioritize a postcolonial viewpoint in order to explain the meaning of the incorporation and commodification of the local population. Drawing on the postcolonial analytical standpoint of Shimabuku's

5 A. M. Shimabuku, Alegal: Biopolitics and the Unintelligibility of Okinawan Life (Fordham scholarship online), New York 2018.

6 Military work refers to labour directly or indirectly connected to the US military (See Okinawa Daihyakka Jiten 1983, p. 849).

7 I. Namihira, "Gun-Sagyō" no Genkyō: Kyu Koza shi wo Chu-shin ni, in: "Gun-Sagyō" no Genkyō: Kyu Koza shi wo Chu-shin ni, Koza Bunka Box, Okinawa 2010, pp. 26–45; O. Yakabi, Okinawasen, Beigun Senryō-shi wo Manabi Naosu, Yokohama 2009; N. Yonaguni, Sengo okinawano shakaihendō to kindaika : beigunshihai to taishū undō no dainamizumu, Taimusu Sensho. 2 13, Naha 2001.

8 NK. Nagumo, Beigunkichi to rōdo ūndō: senryōkano okinawa, Kyoto 1996; K. Nagumo, Amerika senryōka okinawano rōdōshi shihai to teikōnohazamade, Kobe 2005.

9 J. O. Zulueta, Transnational Identities on Okinawa's Military Bases: Invisible Armies, Singapore 2019.

work and insights that Koikari's work has made available, this paper tries to situate military workers of post-war Okinawa in US Cold War politics and to understand its effects as part of US hegemony.

This essay argues in a first step that post-war US occupation caused the emergence of what can be described as a "surplus population" within the local labour economy, and that the occupation mobilized this surplus population to become part of military bases' labour forces. This process began with the incarceration of Okinawan civilians in concentration camps during the Battle of Okinawa, which lasted until the immediate post-war period and dispossessed the Okinawan people of their most basic rights. In a second step, the US occupation forces mobilized interned civilians for work affiliated with the military, offering them food rations in exchange for work in the early years of the occupation. Territorial dispossession in Okinawa by the US military for building military installations produced another group of "surplus population", depriving them, too, of their means of production. The rapid expansion and consolidation of US military facilities was successfully conducted at the expense of indigenous land ownership, coercively expropriating land from civilians. In doing so, the US occupation ironically produced *Ersatz*-employment opportunities for the local population who had lost their means of production, their land *because* of the US occupation. Hence, the military occupation "succeeded" in securing a local labour force for its military operations by abolishing virtually every other alternative.

In the second part, this essay argues that the United States utilized activities to promote economic recovery as an opportunity to propagate an image of the US as a nation of progress, technological advancement, democracy, and freedom. The United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) constantly labelled its efforts in Okinawa as part of endeavours for democratization and social progress. By looking at a series of articles on the economic development in post-war Okinawa, published by the USCAR specifically for the local population, this paper tries to illustrate the US administration's views towards the mobilization of the local labour force in military institutions.

## 2. Modernization and Industrialization

It is generally agreed that processes of so-called modernization and industrialization in Okinawa were strengthened during the US occupation period.[10] Post-war Okinawa experienced quite drastic social changes and the impact was especially evident in its industrial structure. Before the Battle of Okinawa – a 1945 battle during the Pacific War fought on the islands of Okinawa between US and Japanese forces – the most important and established part of pre-war Okinawan economy was agriculture. Precise statistics on

10 Yonaguni, Sengo okinawano shakaihendō to kindaika; M. Kishi, Dōka to tashaka sengookinawa no hondoshūshokushatachi, Kyoto 2013; A. Toriyama, Okinawa:kichishakaino kigen to sōkoku 1945–1956, Tokyo 2013; Yakabi, Okinawasen, Beigun Senryō-shi wo Manabi Naosu.

the social structure of pre-war Okinawa are difficult to find due to the destruction of records during the war, yet sources suggest that the primary sector of industry, including agriculture and fishing, comprised approximately 76 per cent of the entire employed population in pre-war Okinawa. The secondary sector, mostly concerned with manufacturing, comprised 9.8%, and the tertiary sector, the service economy, about 13.5 per cent.[11]

The *Okinawa Taikan* (The Overview of Okinawa), published in 1953 and cited in Yonaguni,[12] provides more detailed numbers on the industrial structure of pre-war Okinawa. In 1940, for instance, 74.22 per cent of the entire employed population in Okinawa was working in the agricultural sector, while 2.07 per cent was employed in the marine industry, 7.55 per cent in the manufacturing industry, 0.89 per cent in the mining industry, 1.32 per cent in the construction industry, 1.86 per cent in the transportation and infrastructure sector, 6.88 per cent in commerce, 3.48 per cent in the public sector and independent businesses, and, 1.36 per cent were categorized as "others". Based on these numbers alone, it can be argued that the economic structure in pre-war Okinawa was predominantly agricultural.

In contrast to this, numbers reported in the immediate post-war period show the emergence of a different form of economic structure. The number of people engaged in primary sector industries rapidly decreased to around 60.4 per cent in the immediate post-war period.[13] The secondary sector economy also shrunk to 7.7 per cent. Yet, the tertiary sector increased to 31.9 per cent in 1950. Another report on the immediate post-war statistics shows that 58.12 per cent of the entire employed population was working in agriculture,[14] 2.58 per cent in the marine industry, 3.38 per cent in the manufacturing industry, 0.06 per cent in the mining industry, 2.3 per cent in the construction industry, 0.87 per cent in the transportation and infrastructure sector, 3.48 per cent in commerce, 15.0 per cent in military work, and 9.03 per cent in the public sector and independent business.[15]

What this comparison shows is that there was a striking reduction in the number of people engaged in the primary sector industry, as it shrank from 74.22 per cent of the entire employed population to 58.12 per cent. Another significant change in the industrial structure from pre-war to post-war is the emergence of a new type of work affiliated with the US military presence in Okinawa. Besides being new, the level of social influence this work garnered is striking, as 15 per cent of the entire employed population had become employees of the US military by 1950.

This change in the industrial structure was also acknowledged by local Okinawan political leaders at the time. The First Round of Five-Year Promotion Plan of Economic Development, an economic recovery plan written by the government of the Ryukyu Islands

11 Y. Kurima, Okinawano nōgyō rekishino nakade kangaeru, Tokyo 1979, p. 57.
12 Yonaguni, Sengo okinawano shakaihendō to kindaika, p. 76.
13 Kurima, Okinawano nōgyō rekishino nakade kangaeru, p. 57.
14 Yonaguni, Sengo okinawano shakaihendō to kindaika, p. 76.
15 Ibid.

(GRI) in 1955, demonstrates that this social change was clearly observed.[16] A subsection of the plan which reviewed the recent economic development, points out that, while normal economic development goes along with the growth of the industrial sector such as manufacturing, post-war Okinawa experienced a drastic expansion of the tertiary sector due to the construction boom of the military establishments. The plan problematizes that this circumstance caused the emergence of an abnormality in the economic development, and it ultimately resulted in producing an unhealthy industrial structure. The plan also draws attention to a change in the income percentage by industry, noting that the income percentage of the combined proportion of the secondary and tertiary industries increased to become the majority, while the income percentage of the primary industry, previously the majority in the pre-war period, drastically decreased.

While local political leaders from the GRI asserted that this development should have included growth of the secondary industry and were critical of the drastic growth of the tertiary industry, the US military government had also been aware of these changing industrial structures. However, the report on the US military government of 1945–1950,[17] written in 1988, shows that the US side did not share the same level of concern about this phenomenon as did the local authorities. A section titled "Changing Employment" in the report starts as follows:

> *Military government figures began to register fundamental changes in Ryukyuan society in the 1940s. The monthly figures for September 1948, for example, show that unemployment within the Okinawa Gunto*[18] *stood at 1,284, while the total number of persons employed, including those working as farmers and fishermen, was 219,588. Of those, 39,579, slightly more than 18 percent, worked directly for agencies of the United States government. A great majority of the rest worked as construction workers, groundskeepers, drivers, domestics, and concessionaries in jobs indirectly, yet closely, related to the American military housing and base construction and operation. Apart from subsistence farmers, relatively few Okinawans were engaged in traditional native trades: 605 in woodworking, 348 in metalworking, and 148 in ceramics. These statistics, typically for the years 1947–1950, underlined the fact that the sustained American military presence was changing the economic life in the islands dramatically from its prewar configuration. Fewer Okinawans made their livelihood in agricultural industry, while more had become employed in light industry and service positions associated with the military facilities. This trend continued well into the 1950s, not merely because it made economic sense to the employees, but also because it made economic sense to the Department of the Army of the United States.*[19]

16 Government of the Ryukyu Islands, Department of Finance, Keizai sinkō daiichiji 5kanen keikakuan (1955), p. 53.
17 A. G. Fisch, Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945–1950 (Army Historical Series), Washington, D.C. 1988.
18 Gunto means archipelago.
19 McArthur quoted in Fisch, Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, p. 144.

This passage indicates that such changes to the Okinawan employment structure were supported by the US Department of the Army for economic reasons. The report continues as follows:

> *In November 1948, General MacArthur advised the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations of employment realities on Okinawa. Noting that "labor was all the Ryukyuans had to sell," he continued: "*[…] *there are at present several thousand nonindigenous civilians, mostly Filipinos,*[20] *employed in the construction, maintenance and operation of military installations at a heavy dollar cost to the U.S. far in excess of native labor costs.* […] *if most of these foreign employees were replaced with native labor paid in yen purchased with appropriated funds, it would not only result in substantially lower dollar outlay by the U.S. but would enable the purchase of necessary consumer goods with dollars thus stimulating all branches of the economy and within a few years, it will reduce the substantial necessity for support under the GARIORA program.*"[21]

This passage shows that the US military government recognized the change of industrial structure in post-war Okinawa and, more specifically, understood that it was the catalysts of that change. It appears that the US military government attempted to hire more local workers, but, according to General MacArthur's comments, his intention in doing so was to decrease the US's own economic burden in the occupation of Okinawa.
There was tension between local leaders and US officials as to how these industrial changes should be conceived. Local leaders saw these changes as a threat to Okinawa's post-war economic recovery. US officials, on the contrary, argued that such changes were fundamental for recovery and claimed that the US administration was vital to its "success".

## 3. Early Mobilization of Civilians for Military Work

When did the local population begin to participate in military work? The beginning of military work can be traced to the US administration's control of the local population through incarceration and the dispossession of indigenous landowners both during the war and in the immediate post-war years. Most of the Okinawan civilians who survived the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 were interned in camps on the island.[22] Among those camps, the one in the northern area of Okinawa Island held the largest number of civilians, interning about 206,700 people by July 1945. The population of the north camp increased to 249,000 three months later.[23] This increase was the result of the construc-

20 The United States Occupation Government in Japan and the occupation possibilities offered on the US bases during the immediate post-war years played a significant role for the migration to Okinawa from the Philippines. Zulueta (2020) argues that the migrations between Okinawa and the Philippines that started in the immediate post-war period and continue up to this day were triggered by continuing US hegemony in the region and the need to perpetuate this status quo.

21 MacArthur quoted in Fisch, Military government in the Ryukyu Islands, p. 144.

22 Toriyama, Okinawa:kichishakaino kigen to sōkoku 1945–1956, p. 14.

23 Taira, Sengo Okinawa to beigunkichi: Juyōto kyozetsuno hazamade 1945–1972nen, p. 24.

tion of a US military base in the central area of the island. Civilians who were captured in this area were thus forced to relocate to the north. Not only did these camps function as a way of isolating civilians from war zones, but the construction of concentration camps also aimed at securing the labour power needed to efficiently support US military activities.[24]

At these concentration camps, the US military appointed a mayor and civil police force from among the captured civilians. The selection process prioritized one's ability to speak English, a cooperative attitude toward the US military, and social influence. Such appointees were in charge of informing captured civilians of the US military's plan to rebuild the social system torn down by the war. The arbitrary reconfiguration of social relationships in the concentration camps which ignored the social system that existed before the war resulted in the construction of a new social system among the locals and disrupted the traditional value system. Not only did the US military built the social order in a new way, but it also narrowed the gap between rich and poor by controlling access to and possession of resources, including food, at the camps. It was supposedly a new beginning, that of the "American era", and it was to start from the hour zero.[25] Four different administrative groups were created to support the camp mayors appointed by the US military. Activities that civilians engaged in within those groups demonstrate how in the early occupation period civilians were recruited for work on and around bases. A social work section organized US military rations, and an agriculture section took care of farming lands, preparing farming goods, and harvesting. A labour section worked on allocating workers, consisting of captured civilians, to wherever they were demanded by the US military and other administrative groups. A sanitation section took care of cleaning bathrooms and drains to eradicate mosquitos and flies.

Work generally started at 9 a.m. every morning, and if workers did not arrive on time or neglected their duties, they did not receive their food rations.[26] In this way, the US military disciplined and controlled civilians through employment in the military labour force. Civilians often had no choice but to be engaged in military work in order to get access to food. Captured civilians did not become part of the labour force only for the construction of US military installations and other infrastructure, which had already begun to be built during the Battle of Okinawa; they were also recruited to dispose of dead bodies and retrieve the belongings of those killed during the war. One war survivor testified that these activities risked civilians' lives as they worked while bullets were fired by US and Japanese forces above their heads.[27] Civilians who engaged in US military work were forced to face an additional risk: that is, their lives were threatened by the Japanese military, as they were perceived as potential spies.[28]

24 Namihira, "Gun-Sagyō" no Genkyō: Kyu Koza shi wo Chu-shin ni, p. 33.
25 Okinawa Taimususha, Okinawanoshōgen: Gekidō25nenshi jō, Naha 1971, p. 80.
26 Ibid., p. 82.
27 Okinawaken shōkōrōdōbu (ed.), Okinawaken rōdōshi Volume 1 (1945–55nen), Naha 2005, p. 131.
28 Ibid., p. 132.

Early civilian recruitment for US military work involved labour that was fundamentally connected to the people's life. Civilians were literally kept alive through their labour for the US military: which at the same time dispossessed them of their way of life. Civilians were kept alive by having to clean the dead bodies of their fellow Okinawans, whose deaths were caused by the US and Japanese military. Civilians were forced to risk their lives while working under the US military as a means of survival. Ultimately, the labour that civilians provided while jeopardizing their own lives profited US military expansion, which yet further dispossessed civilians of their means of production.

It is important to note that recruitment of non-American labour forces for US military activities was rather common: the labour force needed by the US had already been supplemented by 12,000 captive Japanese soldiers in the early stages of the post-war period. After Japanese soldiers had been repatriated to mainland Japan in October 1946, the lack of labour power was compensated by local Okinawans.[29]

Only one month into occupation, due to the increasing costs of retaining civilians in camps, the US military government began to give interned Okinawans permission to either move to areas in the vicinity or to return to where they had previously lived. It was, however, the US military that held the right to decide which areas were to be released back to the people. Basically, the US military only released land that in their view was useless, while keeping the central part of the island for military expansion. By 1949, the land that had been seized by the US military government amounted to roughly 14 per cent of Okinawa Island. It is also important to point out that the central area of Okinawa Island, where the intensive construction of military bases took place, had previously been the most populated area of Okinawa Island and was the region with most agricultural properties prior to the Battle of Okinawa.

## 4. Mobilization of Civilians for Military Work Along with Intensification of Military Base Construction

In 1950, the US military administration issued a policy proclamation that indicated the long-term possession of US military installations in Okinawa, in the context of the intensification of Cold War tensions in Asia. Before and after 1950, Cold War tensions in Asia had been intensifying following the division of Korea after World War II and the subsequent establishment of two separate nation-states in 1948. The division between North and South Korea further escalated when North Korean forces crossed the 38th line, which led to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

In addition to the political conflicts on the Korean Peninsula, the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and subsequent political tensions played key roles in transforming the landscape and lives of Okinawans as both events spurred an influx of US military personnel and equipment. The time immediately before and after 1950

29 Taira, Sengo Okinawa to beigunkichi: Juyōto kyozetsuno hazamade 1945–1972nen, p. 25.

constituted a crucial period for post-war Okinawa that brought myriad structural, political, and social changes.[30]

Because of the island's geographical location, the US military readily acknowledged Okinawa's geopolitical value. Not only did they maintain existing US military facilities on Okinawa with a long-term perspective, but they also planned new ones to conduct anti-Communist activities. This additionally caused increased demand for civilian workers to construct military installations and brought about the so called "military construction boom" from 1950–1953.[31]

In order to encourage enlisting the local population, the US military government issued a proclamation in 1950 stating that they intended to raise the salary for Ryukyuan workers. In 1949, 15 per cent of the Okinawan workforce, about 40,000 people, were engaged in military work. These employees were former farmers whose land had been seized and who were thereby forced to give up farming. Some Okinawans also voluntarily quit farm work due to the associated economic hardships, and they decided to work directly for the US military or take on other jobs related to the military in order to receive regular income.[32]

Yet, there were also workers who quit military work. Apparently about 7 per cent of the Okinawan military workers, 2929 people, quit their jobs just within the month of December 1949.[33] To secure and increase the sufficient labour force for expansion of US military facilities to prepare for Asian Cold War politics, the US administration needed to employ a new strategy to mobilize the local population for work. They therefore decided in 1950 to triple the salary compared to the previous amount.[34] As the US had hoped, there was a sharp increase of job applications within the first month after the salary increase was issued. In 1950, more people left their agricultural work and many of them transferred to either construction work or work at military installations.[35] Following its salary increases, the US military government succeeded in mobilizing people and convincing farmers to switch to military-related work. While this policy provided financial stability for local workers, it also helped the US to secure a labour force for the expansion and consolidation of their military presence on the island. It can be argued that the US-led economic recovery policy in Okinawa functioned as a means of disciplining civilian local Okinawans and gaining their acceptance of the US occupation. At the same time, it enabled US military expansion, along with simultaneously reinforcing their global imperialistic ideology.

The US administration increasingly relied on local labour power in order to prepare for an intensification of military operations as part of their anti-Communism strategy. The

30 P. Iacobelli, The Other Legacy of the Korean War: Okinawa and the Fear of World War III, in: T. Morris-Suzuki (ed.), The Korean War in Asia: A Hidden History, Lanham 2018, pp. 109–28, at p. 109.

31 Okinawaken shōkōrōdōbu (ed.), Okinawaken rōdōshi, Vol. 1 (1945–55nen), p. 309.

32 Ryūkyū Ginkō Chōsabu (ed.), Sengo Okinawa Keizaishi, Naha 1984, p. 270.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., p. 271.

35 Ibid.

enlistment of the local population could be seen as proof of the US occupation's aim to help the local economy recover through military infrastructure; yet it is important to pay attention to who actually benefited from this development. Civilians' supply of labour power allowed for a US military expansion that furthermore rested on the US administration's racist ideology which was employed to justify a hierarchical wage order. Considering the fact that Okinawan workers were still paid lower wages than all other workers, their mobilization did not only secure US hegemony on the island, but also garnered profits for the US military.

## 5. Publicizing America's Re-education Efforts

In this section, I illustrate how the US administration presented their efforts towards economic recovery in Okinawa in a positive light. *Shurei no Hikari* ("The light in the land of courtesy"), a magazine published by the US administration in occupied Okinawa, shows how the recruitment of local citizens for military work was portrayed as an American philanthropic activity that enabled progress and advancement in post-war Okinawa.

The US administration framed its effort in a publicity campaign for their occupational activities in Okinawa through a variety of media formats. Publishing a magazine was one of the core cultural strategies. One example is *Shurei no Hikari*, a magazine published by the High Commissioners' office from 1959 to 1972. It was written in Japanese and targeted at a broad public in post-war Okinawa. According to Kano, the magazine received considerable reception in the local community. By 1968, *Shurei no Hikari* had a circulation of 92,000 copies – almost the same as the *Okinawa Times*, one of the two major local newspapers in post-war Okinawa.[36] *Shurei no Hikari* was published for civilians working for military installations, as well as general households.

The common rhetoric concerning military workers in a number of articles was that US military installations provided employment opportunities and advancement to local citizens. For example, *Shurei no Hikari* featured a special issue on labour in Okinawa in September 1962 and explained the current conditions.

> *The majority of the labour force in prewar* [Okinawa] *was projected toward agriculture and forestry industry, and marine industry. A very small part of the labour force in urban areas was allocated to a few factories at that time and most of them were not in skilled jobs. Today, the whole labour population is about 410,000 people and from those, 346,000 are on Okinawa island. 187,000 of the whole labour population are working in agriculture or marine industry. The number of workers in other industries reaches up to 220,000. As of December 1961, 54,983 of Ryukyuans are employed in US military*

36 M. Kano, Sengōkinawano shisōzō, Tokyo 1987, p. 164.

> *installations and a couple of thousands of them are learning various kinds of skills from Americans.*[37]

This passage demonstrates clearly that the US administration acknowledged that they intended to change the industrial structure of post-war Okinawa: from an agricultural economy to one focused on other industries. This change, however, did not follow the common process of modernization or industrialization, which usually involves the development of a strong manufacturing industry. The significant point to make here is that a great proportion of "other industries" that emerged in post-war Okinawa were related to the military work that the US administration emphasized throughout the article. Instead of developing manufacturing to build a robust post-war industry in Okinawa as part of the economic recovery process, the US administration built a military infrastructure at the expense of other economic sectors and ultimately turned farmers into (base) workers.
Another story emphasized in *Shurei no Hikari* is that the US administration made efforts to protect Okinawan workers by securing employment opportunities for them on military installations. The US administration explained that it was inevitable to hire a certain number of Americans, as well as third-country nationals, for jobs that required special skills Okinawans could not provide, as follows: "The US military needs some special skills that Ryukyuan workers do not know yet, so we have hired 2966 Americans and 1507 third-country nationals."[38] Considering this situation, the US administration aimed at encouraging private companies in Okinawa to have their local workers trained for skill advancement. The US administration emphasized the importance of replacing foreign workers with local workers to ultimately reduce the number of foreign workers hired for military work at US military installations. This protection policy of the US administration, which was projected on local workers, was turned into a discourse of philanthropy by the US administration who argued that the US military presence in Okinawa was "helping" the local population.
There is a series of articles titled "Growing Ryukyus", beginning in the January 1963 issue, that talks about "a great progress that the Ryukyu Islands accomplished under the US occupation since 1945".[39] This feature article once again emphasized US efforts to provide opportunities for the advancement of the local community by establishing an institution for vocational training for workers.
The 1962 special issue of *Shurei no Hikari* on labour in post-war Okinawa concluded ensuring that "there is absolutely no need to be pessimistic about the labour situation in the Ryukyus and the actual circumstance of local workers." The article mentioned that the payment roll had increased by 38.5 per cent compared to that of 1955 and the unemployment rate was only 0.7 per cent.[40] By highlighting the precise statistical num-

37 Ryukyu Islands (United States Civil Administration, 1950–1972). Office of the High Commissioner, Shurei no hikari, Special Issue on Labor (1962) September, p. 12.
38 Ibid. (1963), January, p. 10.
39 Ibid., p. 5.
40 Ibid. (1962), p. 12.

bers, the US administration once again stressed their efforts to stimulate the economic recovery and bring about the betterment of Okinawa's life.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that the US occupation of Okinawa led to the emergence of a "surplus population" which was robbed of its land and its traditional work in agriculture, and that the local labour force was instead utilized for US military operations. The successful expansion of US military installations came at the expense of local civilians whose indigenous lands were coercively expropriated in the course of Cold War geopolitical considerations. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that these activities were operated under the name of economic recovery. Following the narrative of the US military government, they created employment opportunities for locals and the change in industrial structure brought about by the US occupation meant an advancement for Okinawa. By skilfully disseminating the message of the US occupation as a philanthropic project that put its efforts into improving Okinawans' lives though labour projects and vocational training, the US military government succeeded in strengthening its global hegemonic ideology by extending military operations in Asia.

Although it goes beyond the scope of this paper, it is critical to note that paying attention to the actual experiences of local workers at military bases reveals a more complicated and ambivalent situation, as two different interviews with former military workers, conducted by a sociologist and a local newspaper company in Okinawa, demonstrate.[41] The experience of working at the military bases with and for US soldiers cannot simply be framed as a story of "economic recovery", "freedom", or "technological advancement" as the US administration claims in *Shurei no Hikari.* While some recalled their experience of military base work as pleasurable – as illustrated by Kiyuna Makato's memory of having a Christmas party with her colleagues and receiving American gifts from them – others remembered the discriminatory treatment they received from their US, and even Filipino, colleagues. Chinen Tadafumi, who was hired as a garage organizer by the Supply Management Department of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, remembered that his Filipino boss maintained a blunt manner toward Okinawan workers. He also recalled that Okinawan workers were assigned a bathroom separate from that of the US and Filipino workers, located several hundred metres away. These stories contradict what had been described by the US administration. Thus, to more fully understand the effects of US occupational policy on Okinawan society, it remains necessary to apply a postcolonial lens to the historical narrative of Okinawa's post-war economic recovery.

41 M. Ishihara, Sengo okinawano shakaishi-gunsagyō-senka-daimitsubōekinojidai, Naha 2012; Okinawa Taimusu Chūbushisha Hensyūbu (ed.), Kichidehataraku gunsagyōin no sengo, Naha 2013.