

# Legacies of the U.S. Occupation of Japan



# Legacies of the U.S. Occupation of Japan: Appraisals after Sixty Years

Edited by

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## FOREWORD

GLENN HOOK

The year 2012 offered the contributors to this edited volume the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the occupation of Japan six decades after the San Francisco treaty of peace came into effect on 28 April 1952. The volume adds significantly to our appreciation of the complex nature of the U.S. legacy, with chapters by distinguished as well as emerging scholars from a wide range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities shedding a penetrating light on the way not only Japan, but also the United States, has been influenced by the historical conjoining of these two Pacific powers. The book is a cornucopia of fresh analyses, insights and understandings on a range of topics, including transnational and comparative views on the occupation, the influence of Japan on the United States as well as the reverse, international perspectives on this “odd couple”, and the memory of the occupation in both countries. It can be read profitably by all those with an interest in Japan.

Indeed, the publication of *Legacies of the U.S. Occupation of Japan* is perfectly timed. For the decision by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō’s government to commemorate 28 April as Sovereignty Restoration Day for the first time in 2013 has again brought into focus the way the occupation continues to provoke debate as well as to accentuate the deep divisions and discontent in society over the past and present role of the United States. Despite the formal restoration of sovereignty over six decades ago, neither the whole of Japan as we know it today, nor, as far as critics are concerned, full independence, was achieved as a result of the peace treaty. The sovereign borders of the new Japan were inscribed with the exclusion of Okinawa, Amami and the Ogasawara islands. While Amami reverted to Japan in 1953, the Ogasawara islands remained under the control of the U.S. navy until 1968 and Okinawa was governed by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands until 1972.

For critics, meanwhile, the signing of the U.S.-Japan security treaty at the same time as the peace treaty exemplifies how sovereignty was thereby constrained, not only truncated. Their bristling phrases referring to Japan as a “semi-colony” or “dependent state” capture the quintessence of the

unrequited sovereignty expected following the occupation's end. This is nowhere truer than in Okinawa, the site for the location of the vast majority of military personnel and outposts of U.S. power under the treaty. For many in Okinawa, 28 April is a day of national humiliation, not commemoration. Severed from the sovereignty enjoyed on the main islands for a further twenty years, America's Japan is seen as being built on the sacrifice of Okinawa. So not only has the governor snubbed the invitation to attend the 2013 Sovereignty Restoration Day ceremony, sending his deputy instead, but the prefectural assembly, cities such as Naha and Itoman, and local residents have protested against the ceremony as well.

In this way, *Legacies of the U.S. Occupation of Japan* will help you to comprehend the complex relationship between the occupation then and now.



## INTRODUCTION

DUCCIO BASOSI AND ROSA CAROLI

*The Japanese people since the war have undergone the greatest reformation recorded in modern history. With a commendable will, eagerness to learn, and marked capacity to understand, they have from the ashes left in war's wake erected in Japan an edifice dedicated to the supremacy of individual liberty and personal dignity and in the ensuing process there has been created a truly representative government committed to the advance of political morality, freedom of economic enterprise, and social justice.*  
—Douglas MacArthur, 1951

*In the summer of 1945, in our country, now war-torn, only the hills and rivers endured. Food was scarce, people starving. The seven subsequent years were the first and indeed the most profound disconnect and ordeal that Japan had ever experienced in its long history.*  
—Abe Shinzō, 2013

It is hardly surprising that a U.S. Army general, speaking in 1951 before a joint session of Congress, and a Japanese prime minister, speaking in 2013 before the emperor, emphasized different aspects of the same historical events. Such differences are even less surprising when one considers that, at the time of their respective speeches, the U.S. general had just been fired from his position as both commander of U.S. forces in the Korean War and supreme commander of the Allied occupation forces in Japan. The Japanese prime minister, in contrast, was commemorating the sixty-first anniversary of the end of the same occupation – the first prime minister ever to do so – as “Japan's Restoration of Sovereignty and Return to the International Community”. What MacArthur represented as a triumphal march that had remade Japan into a wholly new country, Abe recollected as a problematic seven-year period that merely preceded Japan's return onto the international scene. Nevertheless, the two quotations above render vividly the range of interpretations which have been proposed, over time and across national borders, of the occupation of Japan.

The occupation started with Japan's acceptance of surrender, which was broadcast by Emperor Hirohito to his “good and loyal subjects” on 15

August 1945, and lasted until 28 April 1952. Legally speaking, the occupation was under the auspices of the Allied Powers, but in fact it was the United States that organized, staffed and directed all aspects of the post-war military regime in Japan. 15 August 1945, the day when Japan was “defeated, liberated, and occupied all at once”,<sup>1</sup> soon became, both in Japan and in the U.S., a kind of metonymy, representing both the end of the war and the beginning of the post-war period; the end of Japan’s position as an occupier and the beginning of its role as an occupied country; the failure of Japan’s effort to “emancipate” Asian countries from Western colonialism and the beginning of the American effort to “relieve” the Japanese people of wartime totalitarianism; the death of an old, “feudal” country and the birth of a new, “democratic” Japan. On the other end, 28 April 1952 was not only the day marking the end of the occupation in mainland Japan, but also the day when the Security Treaty between Japan and the United States went into effect, granting the latter the right to maintain military “forces in and about Japan [in order] to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East”.<sup>2</sup> Such ambivalent meanings of these two symbolic dates help explain why the U.S. occupation of Japan has aroused so much interest over time – and why it has been defined as “a rich, complicated, and contradictory human story” and “a difficult period for many Japanese to come to grips with”.<sup>3</sup>

The contents and approaches of academic research on the occupation have often been acutely influenced by the coeval political context. MacArthur’s words above might sound emphatic but, as noted by Laura Hein, early scholarship, both in the U.S. and Japan, did tend to interpret the changes undergone by Japanese society as both impressive and positive.<sup>4</sup> In general, early accounts of the occupation emphasized the momentous discontinuity between a discredited imperialistic regime and a democratic and peaceful one. Japanese rearmament itself, including the presence of U.S. bases in post-occupation Japan and the American retention of Okinawa, was generally regarded as a response to the Korean War as well as to a perceived Soviet threat to Asia, while Japan’s rapid economic growth and the political stability under the so-called “1955 system” helped to confirm this positive view of the U.S. role in creating the “new” Japan. In doing so, academic research directly or indirectly supported both the image of Japan’s occupation as archetypical of enlightened “free world” policies and the belief in the exportability of the Western model of democracy beyond the frontier of the “West”.

Since the very beginning, occupation policymakers viewed 15 August as a fissure separating occupied Japan from its previous status. On 2 September 1945, the day of Japan’s formal acceptance of unconditional

surrender, MacArthur declared his commitment “to see [...] the Japanese people [...] liberated from [the] condition of *slavery*”, and remarked that “*freedom* is on the offensive, *democracy* is on the march”.<sup>5</sup> Implicitly, the assumption that 15 August was the beginning of a new era supported the postulation that the U.S. occupation was the sole agent of Japan’s democratization. Most Japanese themselves were inclined to accept the victors’ view of this date as a turning point in their country’s history, although for different reasons. The first and most obvious was their wish to distance themselves from the bloody, devastating, and lost war, which made Japan what could “only be considered a vast concentration camp”.<sup>6</sup> They tried to dissolve the humiliation of defeat into the enthusiasm for “liberation” – liberation from the past – and to dilute their experience of totalitarian rule with the foundational myth of a “new Japan”. Those who had been critical of the past totalitarian regime saw this discontinuity primarily as a means to attain their freedom of thought, speech, and action in order to contribute to building the “new” Japan. Those who instead were found to have been involved with the past regime were disgraced, purged or condemned in the initial phase of the occupation, which corroborated the alleged discontinuity between wartime and occupied Japan.

Yet, the continuity between the periods before and after 15 August was far more real than the early commentators were willing to admit. The “orthodox” view described above has persisted over time, but in the 1970s new scholarship began to emphasize both the continuities between pre-war and post-war Japan, and the inconsistencies of U.S. occupation policy. As far as the continuities are concerned, they were sanctioned “by the relatively simple formula of preserving the existing Japanese Government, and utilizing its normal agencies”.<sup>7</sup> As to the inconsistencies of U.S. policy, the mission of de-militarizing and democratizing Japan took place within the conservative framework of the old regime and produced what John Dower called an “oxymoronic democracy”. Indeed, SCAP (the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers, in practice MacArthur) governed in an authoritarian way through the existing Japanese bureaucracy, endowed the latter with huge power, and made the Shōwa emperor – in whose name Japan’s wars had been fought – the symbol of democracy and pacifism.<sup>8</sup> This inconsistency became even more apparent in the wake of the so-called “reverse course” focusing on the economic rehabilitation of Japan rather than on the original objectives. In early 1947, the change in U.S. policy was announced by an order issued by MacArthur to cancel a general strike organized by the unions, which opened the way for the following backtracking on labor and antitrust policy. The effects of

such change materialized in full between the end of 1949 and the end of 1950. On the one hand there took place a purge that “swept more than 20,000 union members, teachers, journalists, broadcasters, filmmakers and the like out of their job”.<sup>9</sup> On the other, a parallel “depurge” brought those formerly linked to the wartime regime back to public life, and released and rehabilitated those who had been condemned as war criminals.<sup>10</sup> In regard to the purge that should have eradicated all remains of the wartime regime, MacArthur himself later confessed that he “very much doubted the wisdom of this measure, as it tended to lose the services of many able governmental individuals who would be difficult to replace in the organization of a new Japan”.<sup>11</sup> Besides, the reverse course also helped to strengthen the hegemony of conservative politicians, government bureaucrats and large industrialists, who in post-occupied Japan claimed to be both the guarantors of the “economic miracle” and the custodians of the new pacifist and democratic country. The climax was reached upon the outbreak of the Korean War, with the creation of a National Police Reserve (converted into the Self Defense Force in 1954), and the retention of Okinawa under U.S. military rule under article 3 of the Peace Treaty signed in San Francisco in 1951, which made even Japan's post-war pacifism seem oxymoronic.

Contesting the “triumphal narrative of the occupation” as well as a “literature that assumes the whole story can be learned from Washington’s side”, research has progressively put new themes into focus.<sup>12</sup> These include the concerns of occupation policymakers for the role of East and Southeast Asia in the post-war international economic system, the weight of such concerns in the making of the reverse course, the influence of the American and Japanese “middle-echelon leadership” and special interest groups, the Japanese contribution to the developments in occupied and post-occupied Japan, as well as its role in terms of balance-of-power thinking.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the changing perception of the U.S. role made it possible to trace the continuities between mutual perceptions across the Pacific before and after the transformation of the two countries from brutish enemies to close allies.<sup>14</sup> In recent years, new interpretations have come from the use of innovative paradigms, such as post-colonialism and imperial history, providing us with a multifaceted picture.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, six decades after the end of the occupation of mainland Japan (for Okinawa remained under occupation until 1972), several reasons invite us to approach the less investigated theme of the occupation's legacies. This was in fact the subject of a two-day conference held at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice in the spring of 2012, featuring scholars in the fields of Japanese studies, American studies,

international relations, and twentieth century history. In particular, recent debates on issues such as “globalization”, the “rise of China”, and the modes of “Western” intervention in “other” societies (particularly after the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq) provided the breeding ground for a thorough re-examination of several aspects of such legacies, including Japan’s role as an actor during and after the occupation; the evolutions of mutual perceptions across the Pacific; and the reciprocal influence in the creation of innovative cultural genres. The papers presented on that occasion, and the lively discussions that ensued, formed the basis of the articles collected in the three parts of this volume.

Part I of the volume is dedicated to the occupation's legacy in Japan's politics, society and culture. In particular, the heavy legacy of the occupation in framing the politics of Japan across sixty years is the subject of Ronald Dore's article, which provocatively claims that the occupation of Japan has in fact not yet come to an end. Based on published sources as well as on personal recollections (he firstly landed in Japan in early 1950 with a fresh B.A. in Modern Japanese at the University of London), Dore highlights the paradoxes for which, on the one hand, U.S. authorities saw “SCAP dictatorship” as “the necessary prelude to the introduction of Japanese democracy”, and on the other, by the 1950s, the strongest supporters of the original U.S.-led reforms, were the Socialists and the Communists. Indeed, by the time Dore first got to Japan, the effects of the “reverse course” were apparent, and concerns about Japan’s position in the Cold War arena widespread among the Japanese: autonomy in foreign policy was an illusion and submission to the United States, Dore claims, the rule ever since. Yet, although the relationship was always characterized by frictions, rapid economic success in the 1960s and 1970s mitigated the popular frustration toward Japan’s subordination. Dore leaves it as an open question whether such a well-established pattern would change should China switch its strategy “from threatening Japan to wooing Japan”. Indeed, the post-Cold War scenario in East Asia is the framework in which Noemi Lanna develops her analysis of recent Japanese foreign policy. Also according to Lanna Japan's main tenet during the second half of the twentieth century has been “bilateralism”, in other words the privileged relationship with the United States inherited from the occupation. The escalation of the Cold War in Asia was the background of such a settlement, which marked the start of the so-called “San Francisco system”. Even when it was no longer an occupying force, the U.S. military continued to be a formidable presence in Japan. Lanna views the early Japanese attempts to conciliate bilateralism with a

recovery of some elements of “Asianism” as rooted in the policy of separating politics from economics (*seikei bunri*) and in the “Fukuda doctrine” of cooperation with Southeast Asian countries announced in 1977 by the then Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo. However, the end of the Cold War and the “rise of China” have recently opened the way for a much greater emphasis on Asia, incorporated creatively into the “bilateral” framework by successive Japanese governments, as shown by the case study of Japan's participation in the East Asia summits. It remains to be seen whether the balancing out of “more Asia and more U.S.” can be feasible in practice, and not only in theory.

Just as the studies on the occupation proper have progressively moved away from pure diplomatic history to embrace new fields of research, also our understanding of the legacies of the occupation would remain limited without enlarging our scope from politics to society and culture. As noted by John Dower, every field in Japan, from *vaudeville* to *feuilleton*, through the pages of yellow press magazines and the languages of journalism, was enriched by a new grammar, strongly “contaminated” by American elements. Indeed, after years of censorship of the use of English language, the occupation led to the enrichment of both *gairaigo* (words coming from abroad) and *wasei eigo* (Japan-made English) with new words and expressions which remained as a – mostly unconscious – legacy of the occupation experience in post-occupied society.<sup>16</sup> Even if the occupiers considered these a part of the trousseau of exported democracy and a symbol of freedom and emancipation, these expressions were often the result of restrictions, impositions and bans imposed by the occupiers themselves. If anything, they contained potential cultural conflict. Hirano Kyoko contributes to our understanding of such processes with her article on U.S. censorship in cinema, which replaced the Japanese pre-war and wartime restrictions with the aim of eradicating “undemocratic” subjects and democratizing movie production. The story of a 1946 documentary by leftist director Kamei Fumio, suggesting that Emperor Hirohito was a war criminal, is considered emblematic of SCAP's policy regarding the emperor. Two films released on 23 May of that same year, a date still remembered in Japan as “*kisu no hi*” (kiss day), is taken instead as emblematic of SCAP's policy toward sexual expressions. The former was banned, turning Kamei into a director censored by both Japan's militarist regime and American occupiers. The latter were the first Japanese movies including kissing scenes ever shown in Japan and came as a result of America censors' encouragement of kissing as a symbol of democracy. However, as Hirano shows, the public performance of *seppun* (literally “the contact of proboscises”) was problematic even in a movie set,

requiring different expedients to perform an act commonly reputed to be indecent, unaesthetic and unhygienic.

While the legacy of the occupation reflected, to a certain degree, the disparity of power between occupier and occupied, the genesis and the semantic creation of post-war Japanese icons and aesthetic values can be understood better in terms of enriched hybridism, melting indigenous and “exotic” elements. Federica Carlotto's essay is a historical-sociological study providing meaningful insights into the nature and the extent of American influence on the development of concepts, models and practices related to clothing in post-war Japan. Whereas several studies have illustrated the topic, Carlotto does not limit the scope of her analysis to the styles that were created. Rather Carlotto uses fashion as a way to investigate the social and cultural factors of the occupation's legacy (democratization of the body, massification of the clothing market, stylistic popularization, widespread neophilia), which were assumed and articulated in Japan both as elements of continuity and rupture with the past, against the background of evolving clothing scenarios at the global level.

What Carlotto analyzes in the fashion study case, Roberta Novielli detects in Japanese everyday life: hybridization, rather than passive acceptance of foreign models, was the rule. Focusing on the influence of the U.S. on various layers of Japanese culture, Novielli suggests that the relationship between “the conqueror and the conquered” was altered, in the cultural arena, thanks to an eclecticism that Japan had been experiencing for long time – from the pervasive syncretism of indigenous and foreign worships to the conciliation of the “native spirit” with Western technologies as a tool to modernize the country. Indeed, if the American way of life exerted a deep influence during and after the occupation, economic growth and the rising of living standards gave Japan the confidence to make use of American icons and expressions in order both to give an “exotic” touch to Japanese-made goods and to create and export its “third culture”. As an example of such eclecticism, Novielli refers to the aforementioned *wasei eigo* (Japan-manufactured English), now corresponding to up to ten percent of Japanese daily vocabulary and in large part actually “made in Japan”: here original sounds and meanings – and foreign ideas and concepts as well – are “translated” into signs which are created for the Japanese's own exclusive use and only make sense to them.<sup>17</sup>

Michael Molasky's essay concludes the first group of articles and opens the way for the second. His careful reconstruction of the evolution over time of Tachikawa and Kunitachi, two paradigmatic areas in western

Tokyo, allows us to better grasp the local specificities of both the occupation and its legacy. Molasky's essay focuses on the influence of the presence of U.S. bases in the urban context as well as on the ambivalent interactions of the American military presence with both locals and local movements in shaping the landscape and identity of these spaces. Thus it contributes not only to delineate the geography of occupation and its structural disparities, but also the persistence of the latter in post-occupied Japan. Molasky concludes with a reflection on the absence of any explicit reference to activities connected to the occupation in today's Tachikawa and Kunitachi, convincingly showing that such absence is symbolic of the way in which today inhabitants of these two adjacent towns wish to remember (or forget) the experience of the occupation – ostensibly in line with Abe's reluctance to even mention the word occupation in the speech quoted above.

The second part of the book investigates the legacies of the occupation in identitarian and memory discourses, as well as in the imaginaries of both Japan and the United States.<sup>18</sup> Carol Gluck defined the occupation as “an invasion of one country's national history by another”.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the occupation soon became a filter through which the Japanese started to view, recall and recount the history of their own country. This filter long prevailed in Japan's official history and public memory, thus conditioning all collective reflection on pre-occupied, occupied, and post-occupied Japan. In regard to this, Mire Koikari wrote that for the Japanese “the celebration of the occupation as Japan's new beginning, its rebirth as a democratic and peace-loving nation has resulted in historical amnesia about its colonial violence prior to the occupation”.<sup>20</sup> The Peace Problems Symposium (Heiwa Mondai Danwakai), born in the wake of the oncoming Cold War, was particularly eloquent in this regard. It was formed in the fall of 1948 by academics who gave “the most influential intellectual endorsement” to the Three Principles of Peace soon to be adopted by the Socialist Party, and whose statements were “the best-known manifestos of the Japanese peace movement”.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, their third statement, published in December 1950, criticized both the United States and the Soviet Union and advocated Japan's contribution to peaceful coexistence through an unarmed nonalignment under the United Nations, but also “adopted terms faintly reminiscent of Japan's pan-Asian rhetoric in World War II” and appealed to the wartime sufferings of the Japanese in order “to nurture antiwar sentiments in Japan”.<sup>22</sup> As Dower acutely notes, from “the perspective of Japan's Asian victims”, this “would seem shockingly parochial rather than internationalist”, while in “the Japanese milieu [...] it



tapped an almost instinctual strain of ‘victim instinct’ (*higaisha ishiki*) that cut across the political spectrum”.<sup>23</sup>

The ambiguities of Japan’s double role as “occupier” and “occupied” are the subject of the article by Marcello Flores, which takes the move from the assumption that the occupation was a watershed in both Japanese history and national identity precisely because it was “an experience which changed the interaction between the Japanese and the rest of the world”. Flores focuses on what Alexander Bukh identified as the “distinction between the state and the nation” that prevailed after the end of the war, with the former indicating the military and civilian elites as solely responsible for the war, and the latter a people of both civilians and soldiers considered the only victims of the state’s wartime policy.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, this notion implies that Japanese “victimhood prevailed over victimization” by eclipsing the “other” victims of Japan’s war, and was largely shared – even if for different reasons and with different aims – by both the left and the right.

The idea of the Japanese people as victims of the wartime regime was also crucial in the revival of ethnic nationalism. Indeed, under the occupation, the ethnic nationalism could be presented by its supporters as alien from the machinations of state apparatuses. It could also benefit from the shift of sovereignty from the emperor to the people, and ended up being tolerated by the occupiers themselves. As ironically noted by Kevin Doak, such U.S. tolerance could be ascribed to the fact that by viewing the Japanese as a different race, Americans tended to interpret this form of nationalism as a racial discourse with no political implications.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the riots accompanying the first revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty testified to the shaky bases of such assumption. As Eugenio De Angelis states in his essay on Shinoda Masahiro’s 1984 film *MacArthur’s Children*, the late 1950s and the year 1960 marked a period when “the political environment in Japan radically changed”, with wide-ranging repercussions. In a “climate of protest and defiance against the Authority and State” a new generation of young directors, among whom was Shinoda himself, began to approach “more directly the issues faced in postwar Japan”, including Japan’s submission to U.S. interests and the presence of American military bases. Yet, it was only with *MacArthur’s Children*, released more than thirty years after the end of the occupation, that Japanese cinema came to terms with it. As De Angelis notes, in a period of economic expansion, Japan found the confidence to emancipate itself from “the psychological subjection against the former invaders”, and even to look back at the occupation in a nostalgic and humorous mood.

Yet, the use of the occupation as a lens through which to view Japan's history did not completely eclipse the many "other" histories and stories that could have been told about occupied Japan. Indeed, many dissonant memories and histories of occupation as seen in the eyes of the occupied have been written and continue to appear. An emblematic case is Okinawa's "other occupation" which reveals the different ways in which the Okinawans remember, recollect and narrate their own history. Rosa Caroli's essay examines the American wartime propaganda insisting that Okinawans were not Japanese, as part of a strategy aimed at transforming the archipelago into a base for attacking the homeland. After the end of the war, the same tactic was used first with the aim of placing Okinawa under the exclusive military control of U.S. forces, and then of preventing the spread of Communism in this so-called "keystone of the Pacific". The "reverse course", coinciding here with the victory of the Communists over the nationalists in China, produced a massive militarization of the islands – and created problems similar to those plaguing Tachikawa during the 1950s, as described by Molasky. Okinawans who had previously seen Americans as democratizers and liberators from Japan's oppression and discrimination, came soon to be disenchanted and began to reclaim the reunification with mainland Japan, also by emphasizing their Japaneseness. As Caroli notes, the persistence of Okinawans' vivid memories of the occupation can be explained in the light of the disproportionate burden carried by the archipelago under the U.S.-Japan security agreements until reunification in 1972 and beyond.

Japan was not the only country where the experience of the occupation brought deep challenges to established ways of thinking. In recent years, in line with the "new international history" of the United States, the occupation of Japan has been fruitfully approached also for its influence on American culture. Indeed, Shibusawa Naoko's work has explained brilliantly how U.S. Cold War imperatives during the 1950s required and promoted a new image of Japan for the U.S. public. The occupation hence provided novelists, movie directors and magazine commentators with the basic setting for Japan's rapid shift from mortal enemy into "Geisha ally" – and an excellent example of how "citizens of a powerful nation can unwittingly or subconsciously perpetuate their nation's foreign policy".<sup>26</sup> The three essays that conclude this part of the volume problematize various cultural and political consequences of such a shift in Japan's representation. By analyzing some of the main works of literary fiction on the occupation published in the U.S. in the 1950s, Alide Cagidemetro shows how American writers used the "exoticized" representation of occupied Japan not only as "a shortcut to transform the Japanese from

previous enemies into friends”, but also as a shortcut to deal with issues of race and gender that were growing problematic at home. Most American writers, indeed, reproduced well-established stereotypes on the “Orient”, which appears overpopulated by “Butterflies” in search for American-brought happiness. Also an early manifestation of doubt, concerning the U.S.’s “particular way of spreading democracy among the ruins”, can be found, namely in Donald Richie’s *This Scorching Earth*. Yet, emblematically, the novel was one of the least successful on the occupation, while the author spent most of his life afterward in Tokyo.

In turn, Hollywood expressed few doubts on the official triumphalist view of the “new Japan” remade from scratch by MacArthur. Alan Nadel analyzes two major blockbusters of the 1950s on the occupation, *Sayonara* and *Teahouse of the August Moon*, coming to conclusions not dissimilar from Shibusawa on Hollywood’s intent to re-form the American cultural imaginary about Japan during the Cold War. As Nadel notes, the transformation of Japan into a friend came with a sort of trade-off which catered to the official view of the occupation as a complete break with Japan’s past: both movies in fact acknowledged “admiration for Japan in exchange for Japan’s farewell, in its own words, to its own past”. It goes without saying that notions of the U.S. possessing the power “to begin the world over again” (and even a “manifest destiny” to fulfill such a mission) were not inoculated into U.S. culture by the occupation of Japan. Nevertheless, there was always a deep interconnection between the westward expansion of the country and the elaboration of such concepts. As noted by historian Bruce Cumings, it was in the continental west, and then in the Pacific, after all, that the U.S. could act unilaterally “with allies absent and little concern for what the people in the way of that advance had to say”: if seen from this perspective, not only can the U.S. seven-year rule in Japan be seen as the quintessential expression of such American “Pacificism”, but also as the model for more recent American policy toward the entire world.<sup>27</sup> As Federico Romero shows in his essay, after the end of the Cold War U.S. neoconservative intellectuals unsurprisingly elected the “Japanese analogy” to their favorite instance to prove the exportability of American democracy at the point of gun. As the occupation of foreign countries and “state building” came to be considered again as usable foreign policy options by U.S. policymakers (particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq), the triumphalist view of the occupation thus re-emerged forcefully in the public discourse, virtually unscathed by the problematic findings of historiography. The “lesson” drawn by the neoconservatives was possibly one of the most influential among the intellectual legacies of the occupation. In turn, the “nightmarish failure” of

the occupation of Iraq, which ended in much less triumphalist tones in 2011, eventually contributed to the renewed attention with which historians have been looking at the occupation of Japan in recent years.

The three essays of the third and final section undertake the study of occupations through a set of approaches which have come forth in recent years. Iriye Akira opens this section treating the history of the U.S. occupation of Japan from the standpoint of transnational history, that is a history concerned with “individuals, communities, themes, and movements that exist outside formal state apparatus, establish their networks, and even become part of shared experiences across national boundaries”.<sup>28</sup> The focus on individuals, indeed, has greatly contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the occupation since the publication of Sodei Rinjirō's study of a selection of the more than half million letters sent by ordinary Japanese to General MacArthur.<sup>29</sup> However, according to Iriye, a focus on stories of business and educational exchanges testifies to “a sense of interconnectedness” between Japan and the United States that might be a fundamental legacy of the occupation.

At the crucible between transnational and comparative history, the essay by George Blaustein approaches the interactions between academic American Studies and occupation. By comparing the Salzburg seminar created by American non-state actors in occupied Europe with similar Japanese institutions, Blaustein highlights the inherent ambivalence of endeavors that can represent “the better angels of American internationalism” as well as “exquisitely subtle manifestations of American hegemony and cultural imperialism”. In turn, by focusing on the pre- and post-war histories of American Studies in Japan, Blaustein also brings to the fore the continuities between pre- and post-war American studies in Japan, which differentiates the Japanese condition from the German and Austrian ones.

This volume on the legacies of the U.S. occupation of Japan ends, with what only apparently could seem a paradox, with an essay on the recent “Americanization vs. Westernization” debate among the historians of post-war Germany, which represented a collective attempt at reappraising the legacy of the American influence in Germany. As in a photographic negative, Giovanni Bernardini's article allows us to better visualize the “national specificity” of Japanese reflections on the legacies of the occupation. Indeed, even if largely questioned, in the German case the “westernization” paradigm – with its emphasis on a “Transatlantic community of values” being restored in Western Europe after World War Two – has emphasized the traces of a “usable past”, which was nurtured

by the occupiers themselves and in turn has made the collective reflection on the reach of the American influence easier. The Japanese instead could not count on another Walter Lippmann – either American or Japanese – postulating their long-term contributions to an hypothetical “Transpacific” community of values. Had there been one, we cannot dismiss the possibility that Prime Minister Abe would have been able to give a name to those problematic “seven subsequent years”.

Rather than just being a matter of administrative practices and international relations, the consequences of the U.S. occupation of Japan transcended both the seven years of its formal duration and the bilateral relations between the two countries. This volume aims at providing a greater understanding of the transtemporal, transnational and transcultural legacies of one of the crucial events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Gluck, “The Past in the Present”, in *Postwar Japans as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> The U.S.-Japan Security Treaty is reproduced in Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 157-9.

<sup>3</sup> Quotations respectively from John W. Dower, “Foreward”, in *Dear General MacArthur: Letters from the Japanese during the American Occupation*, ed. Sodei Rinjirō (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001), p. xxi; and Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2002), p. xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> Laura Hein, “Revisiting America's Occupation of Japan”, *Cold War History* 11, no. 4 (2001), pp. 579-599: 581.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), p. 276, emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> These words, used in a report sent by MacArthur's to the former President Herbert Hoover in May 1946, are quoted in Richard B. Finn, *Winners in Peace: MacArthur, Yoshida, and Postwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 173.

<sup>7</sup> *Reports of General MacArthur: MacArthur in Japan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1999), pp. 27-8. MacArthur's adviser William Sebald described the general's authority as follows: “Never before in the history of the United States had such enormous and absolute power been placed in the hands of a single individual”. See Sebald, quoted in Toshio Nishi, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945 to 1952* (Stanford: Hoover

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Institution Press, 1982), p. 34. Emphasizing the “the shift of power from the Emperor to MacArthur”, Nishi also states (p. 82) that MacArthur “perpetuated more than he erased the prevalent attitude of obedience among the Japanese people toward authority”.

<sup>9</sup> Dower, “Foreward”, p. xxii.

<sup>10</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 272.

<sup>11</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, p. 298.

<sup>12</sup> Quotations respectively from Mire Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy: Feminism and the Cold War in the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), p. 5; and Bruce Cumings, “Korean-American Relations: A Century of Contacts and Thirty-Five Years of Intimacy”, in *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations: Essays Presented to Dorothy Borg*, ed. Warren I. Cohen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 237-82: 272. In this respect also see Carol Gluck, “Entangling Illusions. Japanese and American Views of the Occupation”, in *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations*, ed. Warren I. Cohen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Dower, “Occupied Japan and the cold war in Asia”, in *The Truman presidency*, ed. Michael J. Lacey, (Washington, D.C. and Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 366-409.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Hein, “Revisiting America's Occupation of Japan”.

<sup>16</sup> See Tanikawa Takeshi, *Senryōki no kīwādo 100: 1945-1952* [One hundred keywords of occupation: 1945-1952] (Tōkyō: Seikyūsha, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> James Stanlaw, *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), p. 4

<sup>18</sup> Mark Caprio and Sugita Yoneyuki defined the occupation as a “watershed in Japanese history”: Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, “The U.S. Occupation of Japan. Innovation, Continuity, and Compromise”, in *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, eds. Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Gluck, “The Past in the Present”, p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Koikari, *Pedagogy of Democracy*, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> John Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflicts”, in *Postwar Japans as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*. The statement was published in the magazine *Sekai* in December 1950.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Bukh, “Japan’s History Textbooks Debate. National Identity in Narratives of Victimhood and Victimization”, *Asian Survey* 47, no. 5 (2007), p. 691.

<sup>25</sup> Kevin M. Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan. Placing the People* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 250-1. For a stimulating analysis of the role of the “nation” (*minzoku*) in post-war Japan's nationalism, see pp. 250-64.

<sup>26</sup> Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea. Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) p. 402.

<sup>28</sup> On transnational history: Akira Iriye, “The Making of a Transnational World”, in *Global Interdependence*, ed. Akira Iriye (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 681-847.

<sup>29</sup> Sodei Rinjirō, ed., *Dear General MacArthur*.

## EDITORS' NOTE

Following the standard convention of academic, English language publications on Japan, Japanese names are given in the text in East Asian name order, namely family names preceding given names, with the exception of Japanese who write their names in reverse order when writing in English. This also applies in the endnotes for Japanese language sources. When English-language sources by Japanese authors are referred to, their names are given as published. The romanization of Japanese follows the modified Hepburn system. Macrons over elongated vowels in well-known place names, such as Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, have been dropped. In quotations, the original spelling has been retained.

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**PART I:**  
**POLITICS, SOCIETY AND CULTURE**

# JAPAN AND THE U.S.:

## AN ODD COUPLE

RONALD DORE

### **The beginning, relief, resignation, deference**

Old age is my only excuse for offering to a serious academic publication a mixture of reminiscence and personal prejudice. The occupation of Japan began in September 1945. It will probably end before it has lasted a century. Looking at those 1945 photographs of the surrender ceremony on the battleship *Missouri*, it is hard not to feel sympathy for the, otherwise personally far from simpatico, Foreign minister Shigemitsu Mamoru. Despite all the bravura of his top hat and tails, the sense of personal and national humiliation must have been intense. At least, he was not required to kneel, which would have been difficult for him with his wooden leg, the result of some crazed ultranationalist's bomb in the 1930s.

One wonders how his sense of humiliation would measure up against that of Hatoyama Yukio, Japan's prime minister between September 2009 and June 2010, forced out of office by the jeers of a Japanese establishment, and the Japanese media, scorning his naïve belief that he could somehow stand up to Washington and negotiate the departure of the U.S. Marines from the Futenma air base in the Okinawa prefecture. Having earned further enmity by loose talk of an Asian union that excluded the U.S., he was left with no way of expressing his resentment at the United States except by visiting Iran, thereby being disowned by the party he had helped create and exaggerating his reputation as a maverick “man from outer space”.<sup>1</sup>

It all began much more happily as John Dower describes in his *Embracing Defeat*.<sup>2</sup> The sense of enormous relief at no longer having to fear those B29s; later, the discovery that the victorious occupying troops were distributors of chewing gum to kids, not rapists endangering every Japanese woman – all that helped to create a lot of goodwill.

There are doubtless many descriptions of the mood in those ten days between the dropping of the Hiroshima bomb and the surrender. A friend

who was covering the Naval Headquarters in Osaka for the *Mainichi* newspaper wrote a diary which his grandson has recently edited. News from Tokyo made everyone in the newspaper world aware of the struggle between the army and its die-hard supporters on the one hand and those who wanted Japan to surrender and cut its losses on the other. He remarks on 10 August 1945, that there are hardly any genuine last-ditchers among his colleagues on the *Mainichi* newspaper: "Yet the newspaper we produce is full of exhortations to fight to the end. Empty words dancing on the page with no conviction behind them". By 14 August "the issue is already settled, the Emperor had the deciding word and it was for surrender".<sup>3</sup>

I was just about to arrive at the station to go to the office when the sirens went. No trains so I went back home. Heavy thuds that went to the bottom of your stomach coming from the direction of Osaka. And there in that lovely blue sky a couple of B29s, doubtless going home, sailing along in a leisurely fashion as if it were their sky. Got train after lunch but that was stalled three times by machine-gunning light aircraft, and in the end I had to thumb a ride in a navy truck and didn't get to the office till 6 which was when I heard the news about tomorrow's announcement. No papers to appear on the streets till the Emperor had done his speech. We got the full text of the Potsdam declaration at midnight. [...]

Great air of excitement in the office, aided by sake and beer. S, N and H had taken over the guest room and a drunken S insisted I should join them. The room still had black-out curtains. "Tear 'em down! There's no war any more!". "The last night. Historic night! OK!". The boisterous shouts gave way to battle marching songs. Much stamping of feet until word came from the Directors' room below us to let up.<sup>4</sup>

A couple of weeks of anxious consultation as to whether nubile daughters should be hidden away in the countryside and then the Americans actually arrived. Careful preparations had been made. Within three days after the surrender, two weeks before the first troops arrived, the Home ministry had already instructed local police to be prepared to set up brothels and recruit comfort women for the Americans.<sup>5</sup>

As the occupation began there was a surprising amount of goodwill. And a lot of deference. Shigemitsu is credited with having negotiated the Americans out of an original plan to establish direct military rule, and got them to agree to rule through existing structures, but for the next few years it was generally accepted that nothing could be done by the Japanese government without the explicit approval of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, that is General Douglas MacArthur and the authoritarian military government which he commanded. Just as, in America's Cold War competitor, Leninism was the dictatorship of the

proletariat as a necessary prelude to the introduction of socialism, so SCAP dictatorship was the necessary prelude to the introduction of Japanese democracy. And there was censorship. British diplomat Hugh Cortazzi and I tried sending the left-wing *New Statesman* to Japanese friends, but the Post Office would accept only Bibles and sales catalogs. We complained in a letter to the *Times*, were summoned to the Foreign Office and told that that was how life was.

So every government and political organization needed its *shōgai-kyoku-bu-kakari-kan*, its “liaison office” to deal with the Liaison Section of SCAP which was the channel through which SCAP authority was exercised. Self-confident Japanese who were *perapera* (fluent) in English were in great demand, though often regarded with a mixture of envy and suspicion by their tongue-tied colleagues. They were a sort of shaman, people with special, somewhat occult and powerful talents, to whom you had to have recourse in order to defend yourself against the unpredictable powers that decided men’s fate.

The word *shōgai* retains something of that same aura today. *Shōgai bengoshi* in later decades, was a common word (a category with no formal, legal, definition) for the richer stratum of lawyers who dealt in contracts with foreign, largely American, corporations. More recently, the five prefectural governors with Osprey bases formed a joint *shōgai* committee to deal with the American forces.

## The mold of post-war politics set

By the time I got to Japan in March 1950, the deference accorded to SCAP was attenuating. A certain degree of self-confidence was returning, though there was still a sharp division between those who were confident that Japan would soon be able to become its old self, suppress those subversive labor unions, give landlords back their land, rebuild a decently powerful army, etc., and their opponents on the left. The latter were rather less confident that the freedoms of speech and association, the right of unions to bargain with employers were now so deeply rooted that they could not be gainsaid. But they believed that their protests – their street demonstrations as well as their election performance – could prevent the conservatives’ reactionary *gyaku kōsu* – reverse course – from going too far in undoing the post-war reforms.

It was, of course, something of a paradox that by 1950, the chief defenders of what were universally seen as the American-inspired reforms of the early years of the occupation, including and especially the Constitution, were the Socialist Party, though split into left and right

factions during the early 1950s, and the Communist Party after it recovered from the occupation's purge and then prosecution of its leaders. They were, at the same time, the chief opponents of any Cold War line-up with the United States, and urged the need to maintain decently friendly ties with her new enemy, the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup>

This was the issue which preoccupied public opinion from the summer of 1950 to the final signing of the twin treaties in September 1951. Should Japan remain neutral, or take sides, in the Cold War?

It was obvious by the summer of 1950, that those who were opposed to Japan being integrated into the American camp in the Cold War had finally lost the battle. The Communist Party leadership had been formally purged. The Socialists and a large proportion of the university intellectuals rallied around the slogan *zenmen kōwa* —i.e. a peace treaty that included the Soviet Union as a signatory, as opposed to a *tandoku kōwa* with the U.S. and her allies alone. Yoshida Shigeru, the prime minister, taunted them with confident scorn: “Those who talk about a comprehensive peace treaty or permanent neutrality are just spinning fantasies”. He called one of the leaders of the *Zenmen kōwa* movement, Nanbara Shigeru, the President of Tokyo University, a degenerate pseudo-scholar (*kyokugaku asei*).<sup>7</sup>

Three days later Nanbara made a speech in which he replied that “degenerate pseudo-scholar” was precisely the sort of insult with which the pre-war military right hounded Minobe Tatsukichi and the other liberal scholars out of universities.<sup>8</sup> Under Yoshida, learning and scholarship were being defiled, and freedom of speech replaced by an oppressive authoritarianism.

But Nanbara's was obviously a losing battle. There was a growing mood of celebration through 1951. In the spring, General MacArthur, sacked by his president because he wanted to polish off the Korean War by using an atomic bomb on China, was cheered by school-children all the way to Haneda airport.<sup>9</sup> The International Christian University had plans to build a MacArthur Gate by way of memorial.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after, however, MacArthur, giving evidence to Congress, said: “Measured by the standards of modern civilization, [Japan] would be like a boy of twelve as compared with [the Anglo-Saxon] development of 45 years”. Translated into newspaper headings as “Japanese: mental age of 12 – MacArthur” these remarks led to a certain cooling of naïve Macartholatry, and no more was heard of ICU's memorial gate.<sup>11</sup>

The *Zenmen* proponents had some sympathizers among supporters of the conservative parties but not enough to make an impact. In December 1949 an opinion poll which offered a straight choice between a *Zenmen*

and a *Tandoku* peace treaty found the former much preferred – 59 to 21 percent. By September 1950, after the Cold War became a hot war on the neighboring Korean peninsula, and after a barrage of propaganda by the Yoshida government, the balance was reversed – 21 to 46 percent.<sup>12</sup> And when the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in September 1951 there was enough relief at the formal ending of the occupation and the disappearance of those carriages reserved for Americans on the Yamate line of the Tokyo metro, for the defeated *Zenmen* opposition to be muted.

Meanwhile, the memories of the fascist-militarist state of the 1930s were fading and by 1951 the process had already begun which has today given Japan, with an unamended Constitution which renounces the possession of military forces, the sixth largest defense budget in the world and prompted its reborn chauvinists of 2012 to talk tough to a quickly catching-up China. The embryo of Japan's armed forces was called the National Police Reserve and was created at MacArthur's insistence, to take on the Communist threat in Japan while all his troops were committed in Korea. (Though without any signs of unwillingness on the part of the conservative establishment, which had similar views about communist subversion). Within three years the Police Reserve was expanded into the Self-Defense Forces, also a move initiated by the U.S., which offered substantial aid and military equipment under its Mutual Security Act.

### **Settling in to subordination**

But of course the arrival of autonomy as far as foreign policy was concerned, was an illusion. The Security Treaty, which accompanied the Peace Treaty was the instrument by which the occupation was *de facto* prolonged while nominal sovereignty was returned to Japan. Japan became what the nineteenth century called a protectorate. U.S. President Harry Truman summed up the situation well when he said, in his speech in San Francisco:

Japan, today, has no army. But in the light of the naked aggression which has taken place in its vicinity, the Japanese government has asked the United States to sign a Mutual Obligation Treaty as a means of guaranteeing the security of Japan. Under this treaty, the United States will continue to station its army in Japan in order to contribute to world peace and to protect Japan from attack.<sup>13</sup>

There were, indeed, many Japanese who argued that Japan, having made an historic contribution to mankind's progress by being the first country to renounce war and armies, had a right to military protection in