REGAINING HUMAN LIFE:
U.S. MILITARY BASE WORKERS' MOVEMENT IN OKINAWA,
1945-1972

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This thesis focuses on the economic and political movement engaged by the U.S. military base workers in Okinawa from 1945 to 1972. I have explained the dynamic process the base workers took from silence and submission to militant activism and ultimately to the denial of their workplaces, i.e. the movement to withdraw the U.S. military bases from Okinawa. The Sato-Nixon Joint Communique and the mass layoff that immediately followed it in late 1969 was the turning point, pushing the base workers to militant physical action to demand withdrawal of the bases. When the conditions of the return of administrative rights of Okinawa to Japan set by the governments of Japan and the United States and the subsequent layoff was perceived by the base workers’ union as a threat, the union transcended the boundary of economic struggle and shifted to waging intense struggles of base withdrawal.
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INTRODUCTION

May 2002 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the return of the reversion of administrative rights from the United States to Japan over Okinawa. On May 19th, a Thirtieth Anniversary Ceremony was held, cosponsored by the state and the prefecture. At the ceremony, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō noted that he “understands” the heavy burden of the concentration of U.S. military “facilities” on Okinawa. Governor of Okinawa Prefecture Inamine Keiichi called for a stronger engagement by the nation as a whole in the reduction and consolidation of the military bases in Okinawa. U.S. Ambassador to Japan Howard Baker stressed the importance of Okinawa as a host to the forward deployed U.S. military and thanked the people of Okinawa for their “acceptance” (Ryukyu Shimpo, May 20th; Okinawa Times, May 20th).

Outside the ceremony, objectors protested the reality faced by the people of Okinawa 30 years after reversion, that is, the continuing presence of U.S. military bases against Okinawan voices of opposition. On May 18th, a coalition of citizens’ groups calling for base withdrawal waged a sit-in near the prefectural government building (Okinawa Times, May 18th; Ryukyu Shimpo, May 18th). A woman who participated with her late mother in the island-wide general strike in 1971 that mobilized 100,000 people demanding base withdrawal as a condition of reversion questioned, “I wonder


what my mother would say if she saw today's Okinawa... (Ryukyu Shimpo, May 15th)."

An activist who had demanded withdrawal of the bases upon reversion stated, "The
government should not forget that although reversion was realized, the people’s wish for
removal of the bases were betrayed (Ryukyu Shimpo, May 20th)."

Even after 30 years, the meaning of reversion is still in question. Decades ago
people of Okinawa struggled for reversion, seeing in it an alternative to U.S. military rule
that would make their lives better. But the fact is that people who have lived the postwar
“American Days” and the post-'72 “Japanese Days” are casting a critical eye on the
reversion that they sought as a remedy 30 years ago.

This paper is an attempt to take an analytical look at one of the many paths a
group of people took towards reversion from 1945 to 1972. I have chosen to focus on the
U.S. military base workers because of their unique structural position of working at the
bases. From my point of view, they represent the anguish that people faced under a U.S.
colonial rule they never chose for themselves, anguish arising from having to depend for
their living on an entity they despised, having to work in structurally inferior positions
that denied the workers’ basic rights, and having to live in the culturally humiliating
conditions caused by racism and arrogance. By focusing on their lives and their struggles
to “regain human life,” the underlying motive that penetrated all of their struggles, I have
presumed it is possible to understand an important segment of the history of postwar
Okinawa, that in turn poses a strong question to the postwar history of Japan as a whole,
and that, in the final analysis, poses a strong question to the status quo in Japan today.

Japan today is as such because of its military, and thus economic, alliance with
the United States. This alliance was formed in the Security Treaty signed along with the
Treaty of Peace with Japan in 1951, in which Okinawa was segregated from Japan’s
jurisdiction upon Japan’s consent, including the Emperor’s. In any overarching
discussion of Japan’s postwar history, Okinawa’s postwar history must be discussed, and
in discussing Okinawa’s postwar history, I have chosen to begin with the lives of the base
workers.

The main intent here is to analyze the historical path the base workers took in
order to “regain human life.” The base workers struggled and won workers’ rights
through their own effort by waging struggles against the U.S. military, and they struggled
to realize reversion against both the governments of U.S. and Japan. Reversion was
realized indeed, but not as hoped for by most of the people of Okinawa. More than 30
years later, the consequences of reversion are still evident in the heavy concentration of
U.S. military bases that accounts for 75% of all areas in exclusive use by the U.S. Armed
Forces Japan within a prefecture that accounts for only 0.6% of Japan’s landmass. They
are evident in the suffering local economy that was “locked in” as a result of 27 years of an import-heavy economic structure under U.S. military occupation. They can be traced in the post-'72 soaring rent fees of lands used by the U.S. military and the government subsidies poured into the prefecture by the Government of Japan in its policy of stabilizing the stationing of U.S. military bases in Japan.

In this thesis, I have made an attempt to analyze the significant segment of the bearers of the reversion movement, the base workers’ union. The phrase reversion movement covers a broad array of issues and people involved and, moreover, the variety of issues and people involved showed dramatic change over time, both at the organizational and individual level. Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Kyōgikai (Okinawa Prefectural Reversion Council), commonly referred to as Fukkikyō, is one element of the multifaceted and diverse but collaborative movement for reversion. This umbrella organization, formed in 1960, included of a wide variety of organizations of teachers’ association, political parties, public and private labor unions, women’s group association, young men’s association, and later on in 1966 saw the participation of the base workers’ union. All these groups gathered into one, for they initially shared one goal, reversion to Japan. Thus Fukkikyō succeeded in establishing an on-going process of movement to
achieve reversion, holding annual rallies, sending delegations to mainland Japan, and
waging struggles on domestic political, economic, and social issues in Okinawa.

But Fukkikyō began to diversity internally at a historically significant moment,
i.e., the intensification of the Vietnam War represented by the stationing of B52s at
Kadena Air Base in the mid 1960s and the Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué in November
1969. People now saw that reversion was surely going to happen but the U.S. military
bases were going to be maintained upon reversion. Facing such changing political
conditions, each member organization of Fukkikyō began to reconsider its own position
facing the soon-to-come reality of reversion with U.S. military bases. A majority of the
members of Fukkikyō began to wage a wave of intense anti-war struggles, demanding
withdrawal of the bases upon reversion, whereas some organizations abstained from
waging base withdrawal struggles.

My interest lies in an analysis of the dynamic movement process engaged in by
the base workers until reversion within the above larger context. The base workers made
the drastic shift from a mute and submissive collectivity to a group of leading figures in
the base withdrawal movement. Depending on the bases for work, they came to deny
their workplaces and acted for base withdrawal through a series of base workers’ union
strikes, culminating into two general strikes in 1971 organized by Fukkikyō. My
research questions are as follows: Why did the base workers come to demand withdrawal when the bases were their locale of subsistence? How did the base workers organize themselves in waging such struggles? What were the structural hindrances that held back the base workers from acting for base withdrawal? What were the enabling factors that removed such hindrances?

**Theory**

Theoretical concepts offered by the literature on social movements are used to answer these research questions. There are largely three analytical perspectives in analyzing social movements: resource mobilization, political opportunity, and framing. Resource mobilization theory (McCarthy & Zald, [1977] 1994; Jenkins & Perrow, [1977] 1997; Morris, [1981] 1997; McCarthy, 1987; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996; McAdam, [1982] 1999) emphasize the role organizations play in the success and failure of movement emergence and outcome, vis-à-vis the amount and kinds of resources the organization manages to collect. Resources range from indigenous strength the organization has within to outside support of elites who possess the means to realizing claims of the insurgents. Some of the resources that have impact on movement
emergence and outcome are human resources, monetary support, use of the media, and
outside organizational support.

Whereas resource mobilization focuses on the organizational base, political
opportunity focuses on the nature and change in the alignment of political structure that
enables insurgencies to rise (McAdam, [1982] 1999; Kriesi et al., [1992] 1997; McAdam,
McCarthy and Zald, 1996). This perspective focuses on changes in the superstructure
that result in an opening the movement can occupy. Instabilities caused by revolutions,
mass demographic shifts, economic recession, the appearance of a powerful elite figure,
the decline in the authority's capacity to oppress, and so on are considered as causing
opportunities that may be grasped by insurgents.

The last of the triad is the framing theory that “brought the ideas back in” (Snow
et al., [1986] 1997; Snow & Benford, 1992; Klandermans, 1992; Hunt et al., 1994;
McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996; McAdam, [1982] 1999; Benford & Snow, 2000).
Framing theories focus on the construction of meanings the insurgents engage in and how
those meanings the insurgents attach to the movement, to the people in focus, and to the
structural environment surrounding the insurgents impact the movement’s emergence and
outcome. This perspective, arising from the critique that the prior two perspectives are
too structure-heavy, analyzes how the insurgents interpret reality and act according to such established frames.

Whereas the above three theoretical perspectives have been treated as analytically independent or even antagonistically incompatible, the recent trend in analyzing social movements is shifting towards seeing each of the theories as insufficient if taken independently in grasping the complexity of historically real movements, where multiple causal factors interplay, giving rise to time and place specific outcomes. The triads are taken as models of causal mechanisms that intertwine through time, mutually impacting each other, which makes focusing on a single-factor theory useless in grasping the dynamics of social movement emergence, process, and outcome (McAdam, 1999; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001).

In this paper I have made an attempt to explain the dynamic processes the base workers treaded in their struggles for "regaining human life." The theories are used to understand the movement of the base workers from their emergence to outcome that is embedded in space and time. I have heavily employed narratives to explain the historical specificity of the base workers' struggles.

The social movements theories are taken as tools that explain the specifics through general mechanisms of social movements, not as covering law models that raise
the specific conditions to be fulfilled a priori that automatically give rise to a thus
determined outcome. I am not interested in searching for a theoretical covering law. I
am interested in getting the history right. Then the question is, right for whom? I would
surely be the first to admit that the content of this paper is far from grasping the truths in
its entirety. But grasping the complexity of truths begins with making small and partial
truth claims, building upon what others have claimed as their own truths and negotiating
the results based on rigid methodologies, not by saying “I am right, and so are
you...period.” In this regard, I take the position of historical sociology, and that of realist
sociology.

Method

Of the rich historical resources available, I have used three sets of materials in writing
this paper: secondary materials of general writings on the postwar history of Okinawa
that offered descriptive accounts of the base workers’ history; primary materials
published by the base workers’ union including real time newsletters and autobiographies
written by a union member through recollection; and primary materials of interview notes
obtained by the author from fieldwork in Okinawa, conducting retrospective interviews.
Factual information was available through the secondary historical writings by local
scholars and union publications. The newsletters enabled me to take a look at the base
workers’ intentions and perceptions. I made a trip to Okinawa in July 2003 to meet the
then-union leaders and members to obtain information that was not available through the
published materials. All citations from literatures written in Japanese including the
interview notes were translated into English by the author.

It may be important for the reader to know that the author is an “outsider,” a
person who was born on mainland Japan after reversion, who has never lived in Okinawa,
and who has only read and listened. The results are here disclosed.
CHAPTER 1

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF COLONIAL OCCUPATION

There is an order when one attempts to talk about the how and why of a sociopolitical phenomenon. Before reaching a conclusive analysis, many stories need to be told first.

This chapter covers the timeframe 1945 to 1953. A short narrative is given on how the United States came to control Okinawa as a consequence of the Pacific War. Then the background of how the U.S. military came to occupy Okinawa and how bases were constructed within the context of the Cold War is laid. Last, the structural mode of control employed by the U.S. military government over the people of Okinawa is analyzed to describe the sociopolitical conditions under which the workers at the bases found themselves in.

Concepts introduced in literatures on colonialism are employed to analyze the structural mode of control practiced by the U.S. military government. Three main domains of theories on social movements, namely resource mobilization, political opportunity, and framing are used to answer different pieces of the larger puzzle, the question of the emergence of a social movement.
Arrival of the Next Empire

Okinawa was once an independent kingdom called the Ryukyu Kingdom, engaging in barter trade with other nations in East and Southeast Asia. In 1609, the Kingdom fell to the military of the Satsuma clan and came under its control. In 1879, 12 years after the Meiji Restoration, the Kingdom became a prefecture within the imperial Japanese state. When the end of World War II was thought to establish an international agreement through the United Nations to end the carving of the globe by the major powers and welcome the shift from colonization to decolonization, the United States, the only major power left without much damage from the war, began its swift move to create a structure of dominance in the Asia Pacific. One such move was to maintain the already occupied territory from the war in the Pacific: to continue to occupy Okinawa.

During the Pacific War, after winning Saipan, the U.S. Armed Forces advanced northward to Okinawa. On March 23rd, 1945, U.S. Forces landed on the Kerama Islands, marking the beginning of the Battle of Okinawa. The Japanese military considered Okinawa as the line of defense in preventing invasion of mainland Japan, and the U.S. considered Okinawa as the major scaffold for the mainland invasion. The Battle, often referred to as the “Typhoon of Steel” by local survivors, caused heavy casualties to both sides of the military, and especially to the civilian population of Okinawa. As the
Japanese military began to surrender, the U.S. Armed Forces swiftly began to take control of the lands acquired and began constructing military bases and camps to establish strategic footholds for waging attacks on mainland Japan. Military bases and airfields constructed by the Japanese military were repaired for American use, and new bases were further constructed.

Okinawa fell into the hands of the U.S. Armed Forces on June 23rd, marking the end of the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan surrendered on August 15th, 1945, marking the end of the war in the Pacific. From the end of the war until the signing of the Treaty of Peace with Japan on September 8th, 1951, in San Francisco, the status of Okinawa, already under occupation by the U.S. military as a possession acquired as a result of the war, remained ambiguous. There was no consensus in the United States about how to deal with the acquired territory. The U.S. Navy wished to maintain their bases for several reasons. The military had sustained high casualties in taking Okinawa, had spent large amounts of money in constructing the bases, and believed the maintenance of security in the Pacific was a U.S. responsibility. But the Department of State, which supported the principle of territorial non-expansion agreed to in both the Atlantic Charter and the Cairo Declaration, spoke against such continuance of control (Miyazato, ed. p.5).
The United States reached a domestic consensus on long-term control over Okinawa in the face of the growing stampede of communism in Asia, with the Communist triumph of China in 1949 and the Korean War beginning in 1950. In late 1948 through '49, massive typhoons hit Okinawa that devastated military facilities there: Miyazato (1975) argues that this was one of the reasons for the decision to construct permanent military bases in Okinawa (21). Through an analysis of the interests the United States held in the region, agreement was reached within the United States to sustain its control over Okinawa, as a consequence practicing imperialism with the expansion of territory through use of military force.

Magdoff (1978) states that the history of the United States is characterized by its almost continuous preoccupation with military affairs with a persistent drive for expansion. He sees a continuous thread in U.S. history “beginning with colonial and revolutionary days, of economic, political, and military expansionism directed towards the creation and growth of an American empire (200).” American acquisition of Okinawa, formerly an independent kingdom annexed into the territory of Japan during its own unique path of expansionism, falls on the same line. The United States could have followed the Atlantic Charter and declined to acquire a territory from the war but did
otherwise and kept Okinawa in its hands. There was a reason to this: the threat of communism to the capitalist economic system. Magdoff (ibid) explains that

Each capitalist nation wants protection for itself preferential trade channels, and freedom to operate internationally. Protectionism, a strong military posture, and the drive for external markets are all part of the same package (120).

U.S. postwar expansion took the form of creating military outposts throughout the globe in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific to contain the expansion of communism that ran against the capitalist economic system of trade and investment, whereas the Soviet Union expanded through creating satellite territories to surround its economic domain.

Imperialism necessarily involves militarism. They feed on each other (Magdoff, 1978: 205). Magdoff states that the trend of U.S. postwar expansionism was the creation of an economic dependency throughout the globe within the framework of political independence, i.e., imperialism without colonies. What was unique about the U.S. acquisition of Okinawa was the establishment of both economic and political control over the island, i.e., imperialism with a colony.

The United States succeeded, with the cooperation of the Japanese government, to administratively segregate Okinawa from Japan without any consideration of the dominant choice of the people of Okinawa whose wish was to stay as part of Japan.
Instead the Americans established a structure of control under the military government of the United States. Amidst the international trend of decolonization, the United States strategically constructed a colony, realizing its continuous urge to expand.

The Cold War

If part of the United States’ history was characterized by its continuous expansionism, the question is then why did the United States occupy Okinawa in particular? What were the historically specific reasons for Okinawa being placed under U.S. occupation while Japan gained independence in 1952? These questions must be answered in the context of the Cold War.

Japan was under occupation by the General Head Quarters after surrender in September 1945 and was being demilitarized following the policy outlined in the Potsdam Declaration. The new Constitution of Japan issued in May 1947 was a sign that the newly born Japan was to become a nation that abandoned its rights to hold any body of armed forces. But change in the international political situation attendant on the rise of communist power in Europe and Asia began to affect the Potsdam Declaration line of demilitarization policy implemented by the GHQ. In October 1949 the communist forces succeeded in establishing the People’s Republic of China. And June 1950 marked the
outbreak of the Korean War. The United States, the major constituent body of the GHQ, began to perceive a clear threat to the security, namely, by the Soviet Union and China (Gallicchio, 2001: 119). The U.S. began seek a way to contain the spread of the influence of communism in Asia and involve Japan in the containment process. Mochizuki (2001) argues,

Containsment meant drawing a clear dividing line between the communist and non-communist states in East Asia, and Japan was to stand equivocally in the latter camp (14).

As the dividing line split Europe between East and West Germany, a similar line was drawn in East Asia, where Japan began the process to settle a compromised condition of independence and end the era of postwar occupation by enlisting itself within the non-communist states.

The People’s Republic of China’s intervention in the Korean War in November 1950 with the backup of the Soviet Union caught the United States by surprise, and hastened the process of ending the occupation and signing the peace treaty. The United States’ interest shifted from maintaining a disarmed Japan to establishing an independent Japan, economically strong, resistant to communism and an active as diplomatic and military ally sharing the regional containment strategy (ibid). The Yoshida
Administration deemed regaining political independence and the revival of the economic prosperity as highest on its political agenda. Both sides recognized the point of concession where each could make compromises to fulfill the other’s interests. Japan by allowing the United States to hold military bases in its territory and promising to make efforts to rearm, gained independence and began to tread the path of economic prosperity. The United States, by offering Japan the path to economic prosperity, succeeded in establishing a forward deployment and containment ground in Japan (ibid, 15).

Where did Okinawa fit in this picture? For Japan at the fringe of gaining independence and a bright future of economic revival, Okinawa’s status, i.e., whether to regain Okinawa within its political boundaries or lose it to United States’ hands was of relatively little importance. In contrast, Okinawa’s strategic geopolitical significance to fill in the “vacuum of power” in the region created after World War II was already understood by the United States (Miyazato, 1986: 43). The military bases already there played a significant role in the containment of communist expansion in the region. B-26 and B-29 bombers flew from Kadena Air Base to Korea in 1951 (Nagamoto, 1997: 245). U.S. acceptance of Japan as a reluctant ally was balanced out by the maintenance of Okinawa where U.S. forces could engage freely in military operations without any of the
restraints outlined in the administrative pact signed along with the Security Treaty in 1951, and then outlined in the Status of Forces Agreement in 1960.

All this led to the signing of the Treaty of Peace and the Security Treaty between the United States of America and Japan both on September 8th, 1951. Japan gained independence while consenting to U.S. control over Okinawa, leaving the issue of administrative rights over Okinawa to be solved by later administrations. Mainland Japan now began its economic and political postwar development through its military alliance with the United States that was enabled by U.S. control over Okinawa. Here also began Okinawa’s 27 years of indignation under the U.S. military government sustained by Japan’s support.

Regarding the status of Okinawa, Article 3 of the Treaty of Peace with Japan signed on September 8th 1951, enforced on April 28th, 1952 read,

Japan will concur in any proposal of the Unites States to the United Nations to place under its trusteeship system, with the Unites States as the sole administering authority, Nansei Shoto south of 29° north latitude (including the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands), Nanpo Shoto south of Sofu Gan (including Bonin Islands, Rosario Island and the Volcano Islands) and Parece Vela and Marcus Island. Pending the making of such a proposal and affirmative action thereon, the United States will have the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of these islands, including their territorial waters. (Department of State, 1955: 3172 3)
Okinawa, noted as “the Ryukyu Islands,” was to be placed under U.S. control until the United States made a proposition to the United Nations to put Okinawa under its trusteeship system. The United States never made such a claim to the UN, continuing its control over Okinawa until the reversion in 1972.

Okinawa’s status as a territory under U.S. military government occupation thus became de jure with the signing of the Treaty of Peace with Japan. Maintenance of U.S. military bases in Okinawa already existing in 1952 and further creation of new bases was carried out based on political agreement under the above clause as the “right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation and jurisdiction.” Military alliance with the United States was continued with the signing of the renewed Mutual Security Treaty in 1960 and its extension in 1970. Continuance of the military alliance between Japan and the United States meant continuing U.S. administrative rights over Okinawa. Not until the mid-1960s did the issue of Okinawa become a national concern for both U.S. and Japan governments. Until the reversion to Japan of administrative rights over Okinawa in 1972, control of Okinawa by the United States was continued as a national policy of both countries serving both countries’ interests. The United States, with its strategy of forward deployment and engagement, held interest in Okinawa as one of its...
main forward deployment grounds in the Asia Pacific, a ground where the U.S. military could freely engage in military affairs without any restraints. The United States, now endowed with the power to control Okinawa upon Japan's agreement to let it use Okinawa freely, began to establish a long-term structure of control that would allow the U.S. military stationed in Okinawa to engage smoothly in its military operations.

Colonial Structure of Control

Colonial Rule over the People of Okinawa: Indirect Rule

Regarding colonialism, Magdoff (1978) states that, although he agrees that the attempt to make all colonialism fit into a single model is bound to be unsatisfactory, "there is, to be sure, a common factor in the various colonial experiences; namely, the exploitation of the colonies for the benefit of the metropolitan centers (119)." He states that the immediate objectives in the acquisition of colonies were not uniform, but there can be seen a commonality in the fact that "the administration of colonies was aimed at, or led to, the adaptation of the periphery areas to serve the economic advantage of the metropolitan centers (145)." Okinawa was acquired by the United States for its strategic military value during the process of construction of a global network of military bases. The next question is, what was the structural form of adaptation Okinawa experienced under U.S.
control? How was the administration of Okinawa as a colony practiced by the U.S. military?

The distinction between direct rule and indirect rule practiced by the colonizer is one of the points of departure offered by literatures on colonialism in analyzing the structure of control (Mamdani, 1999; Hechter, 2000). Characteristic of direct rule is administration done solely by the colonizing country, a centralized despotism, with the exception of a few “native elites” who are detached from the mass, often through education in the colonizing country that thus considers them to be “civilized men.” Establishment of a single legal order (“modern” law) or complete dismissal of local “tradition” and “custom” as backward, non-recognition of “native” institutions, assimilation, exclusion of the mass that are often racially distinct from the colonizer from civil institutions, appropriation of land and destruction of communal autonomy (Mamdani, 1999) are some of the many conditions of direct rule. A clear distinction between “us” and “them,” the colonizer and the colonized is drawn.

On the other hand, indirect rule is characterized by autonomy practiced by the selected local authority within the arena permitted by the colonizer. Colonial rule over the mass is mediated through rule by the local people. The head of the local people works within the confines of the colonial power, which the head is often appointed,
promoted, and dismissed by the colonial power. Institutions created by the local people govern the relations among the colonized population only. There is therefore a legal dualism: "modern" law imported and imposed by the colonizer that regulates relations among the colonizer or between colonizer and the colonized; customary law, selectively recreated by the colonizer based on preexisting traditions among the colonized that is implemented to regulate relations amongst the colonized only (ibid). Indirect rule is the divided rule that renders power to the local authority to the extent that such power does not exceed that of the colonizer and so long as local rulers remain allies for the colonizer. This mode of control is strategically intended to ease the economic burden to the colonizer, to ease the discontent among the colonized by legitimizing the local institutions, to evade united resistance by creating distinctions among the local population and setting them against each other, and to obtain information from the local authority about the local population in order to smoothen the process of control (ibid; Hechter, 2000: 51-2).

The structure of control established on Okinawa by the U.S. military forces was a mixture of both indirect and direct colonial rule. While the U.S. military did not dismiss communal autonomy but did establish administrative, legislative, and judicial institutions run by local authorities, it did engage in the creation of a top-down structure of control.
that made the U.S. military government the ultimate power with the local institutions below the military government and within its confines. The military government laid the structure of power inequality, and local custom was condemned and dismissed when it ran against the interest of the military government. Legal dualism was established, and “modern” law was forced upon the people when local custom could interfere with the smooth operation of military affairs, especially labor laws regarding the rights of the base workers.

The structure of control over Okinawa by the United States took the form of issuance of proclamations, ordinances, and directives by the local controlling body called the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR). Proclamations laid the legal foundation and denoted general principles, and ordinances were used to denote the specifics in the implementation of proclamations (Miyazato, ed. 296). This mode of control was already established prior to the establishment of USCAR during the years when Okinawa’s status was still ambiguous. To establish and maintain social order in Okinawa in the post war chaos, the U.S. military government had exercised its power by issuing proclamations, ordinances, and directives. These included the establishment of the Military Government made up of active members of U.S. military, the creation of a
civillian administration constituted of the people of Okinawa, and setting commodity prices.

When domestic agreement within the United States was reached over the quasi-permanent control over Okinawa and Japan's consent of U.S. exclusive control was realized, two proclamations were issued that set the structure of colonial rule. The first was on December 15th, 1950 when the proclamation titled "Establishment of the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands" was issued. It reads as follows:

Whereas, by the order of the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, there is established the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands superseding and assuming the powers and functions of the United States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands.

And Whereas, General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur, has assumed the position of Governor of the Ryukyu Islands with responsibility and authority for the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands,

Now therefore, I, Robert S. Beightler, Major General, Major General, United States Army, do assume all powers and duties of the deputy Governor of the Ryukyu Islands and do proclaim as follows:

Article 1.

The proclamations, ordinances and directives issued previously by the Military Governor of the Ryukyu Islands will continue in force and effect; however, wherever the words "Military Government" and "Military Governor" appear they will be interpreted to mean "Civil Administration" and "Governor" respectively...(Gekkan Okinawa Sha, Vol. 1: 90).
Here the name of the body in power changed from military government to “civil administration,” and the mode of top-down control over the people of Okinawa was sustained. All previously issued proclamations and ordinances were to be held legitimate and in effect. The people of Okinawa, who followed the orders after the complete devastation of the prewar administrative structure, again were made to follow orders issued from the top without being guaranteed any means to voice an alternative.


The USCAR established a governing body of the people of Okinawa and outlined the limitation of power held by them. A quick look at some of the articles of the proclamation and ordinance reveals the subordinate position of the people of Okinawa themselves.

Proclamation 13, after noting the establishment of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands and its legislative, judicial, and executive bodies, continues as follows:

Article 2.

The Government of the Ryukyu Islands may exercise all powers of government within the Ryukyu Islands, subject however, to the Proclamations, Ordinances, and Directives of the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands....
Article 5.

...The Deputy Governor [of USCAR] may, in his discretion, review, approve, remand, suspend, commute, remit or otherwise modify or set aside any decision, judgment or sentence of any court [of the judicial organs of the GRI]....

Article 7

The Deputy Governor reserves the right, in the event of necessity, to veto, prohibit, or suspend the operation of any laws, ordinances or regulations enacted by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands or any civil government or agency of any such government; to order the promulgation of any law, ordinance or regulation he may deem advisable; and to resume, in whole or in part, the exercise of full authority, in the Ryukyu Islands.

(Gekkan Okinawa Sha, Vol. 1: 112-14)

This Proclamation, issued without any incorporation of local voices of the people of Okinawa, clearly posited their administrative, legislative, and juridical power below that of proclamations, ordinances and directives issued by the Deputy Governor of USCAR. The Deputy Governor, later renamed as the High Commissioner, had the capacity of control regardless of the people's will. Although the GRI was given the right to administer over the people of Okinawa, it was within the capacity the USCAR allowed. USCAR had the capacity to overrule the laws established by the legislative body of GRI. Decisions reached in courts were subject to approval and could be overturned by the Deputy Governor. All this shows the inequality of power distribution within Okinawa,
where the USCAR created a controlling structure that would give itself the power to oppress, and the people of Okinawa were left without legitimate means to balance their structurally subordinate position. The above orders were the rule in Okinawa that set the power inequality, and there were no means outlined in these orders that gave the people of Okinawa appropriate means to incorporate their wills and intentions in these orders. GRI was the representative of the local opinion, but the function of the GRI was limited by the orders issued by the USCAR.

Ordinance 68 outlined the people of Okinawa’s basic rights that

Article 5-2
All of the people shall be respected as individuals and held equal under the law. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration of in legislations and in other governmental affairs.

Although the above article asserts that the people of Okinawa’s basic human rights are to be guaranteed, and states that the GRI legislature “shall” function in consideration of people’s rights, its function is restricted by the orders issued by the USCAR that fixed GRI’s subordination to it. The above article, and moreover all of the orders, did not in fact guarantee the people’s basic rights, and because in fact the people’s rights were structurally posited below that of USCAR’s political interest in Okinawa, that is, the
structure that allowed the U.S. forces stationed on Okinawa to engage in military affairs freely without obstructions at the local level.

The people of Okinawa were left without legitimate means to liberate themselves from USCAR control because there were no political procedures that included the people and their intent to question the fact that Okinawa had been put under U.S. control. The peace treaty signed in 1951 was the bilateral agreement that fixed Okinawa’s status, and people’s opinion was not included in the decision making process and such process was still lacking under the orders issued by USCAR subsequently.

Executive Order 10713 “Providing for Administration of the Ryukyu Islands” is one of the most clearly stated orders that set the people of Okinawa’s subordinate position under USCAR control. The Order, issued on June 5th 1957, by President Eisenhower restated the absolute power the United States held in administrative, legislative and jurisdictional rights over Okinawa. After stating that the High Commissioner of the USCAR (who is the active member of the U.S. Armed Forces taking the highest seat in the USCAR) is to be appointed by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Order delineates the powers the USCAR hold over the people of Okinawa. Section 8 of the Order states that the Chief Executive, who holds the executive power of the GRI, shall be appointed by the High Commissioner of...
USCAR (Gekkan Okinawa Sha, Vol. 1: 2). The Chief Executive was not elected by public vote until late 1968 when the first public election was held. The highest official in Okinawa, that is the High Commissioner, who was appointed by the Secretary of Defense, appointed the highest official among the people of Okinawa. The United States created a structure of top-down control over Okinawa, in which its people were denied power to influence from the bottom up unless they employed unconventional means of resistance, i.e., social movements. Sections 9 and 11 endowed total power of control over the legislature of GRI to USCAR.

Section 9.
Every bill passed by the legislative body shall, before it becomes law, be presented to the Chief Executive. If the Chief Executive approves a bill, he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it... If the High Commissioner approves it, he shall sign it. If he does not approve it, he shall return it to the legislative body so stating, and it shall not be law...

Section 11.
The High Commissioner may, if such action is deemed necessary for the fulfillment of his mission under this Order, promulgate laws, ordinances or regulations, with due regard to the provisions of Section 2 hereof. The High Commissioner, if such action is deemed by him to be important in its effect, direct or indirect, on the security of the Ryukyu Islands, or on the foreign relations of the United States, or on the security, property or interests of the United States or nationals thereof, may, in respect of Ryukyuan bills, laws, or officials...a) veto any bill or any part or portion thereof, b) annul any law or any part or portion thereof within 45 days of its enactment, c) remove any public official
from office. The High Commissioner has the power of reprieve, commutation and pardon.
(Gekkan Okinawa Sha, Vol. 1: 2-3, 6)

The High Commissioner, an appointee by the Secretary of Defense, was endowed with full capacity to create and annul all laws established by the legislature, whose members who were elected by the public. The Chief Executive had the power to approve or return the bill to the legislature, but again, the Chief Executive was an appointee who until the first public election held on the Chief Executive in 1968, was a person in favor of U.S. control over Okinawa. The High Commissioner had the capacity to create a puppet government, controlling all laws established and appointing a favorable official in the local governing body.

Section 10 of the Order outlines the power the USCAR held over the judicial organ of GRI. Courts were divided into two, that of the GRI and the USCAR. The former’s boundary of jurisdiction was limited to criminal cases that did not involve the members of the United States Forces nor its civilian component hired by and serving the U.S. Forces nor their dependents. Moreover, cases the High Commissioner designated to affect the “the security, property, or interests of the United States” were to be withdrawn from the courts of the GRI. This meant that, for example, crimes committed by U.S. military personnel against the people of Okinawa were out of GRI jurisdiction and the
people were without the means to punish them. Other cases could also be terminated
upon the High Commissioner’s decision. Any civil cases the High Commissioner
deemed to be important to the security of Okinawa, regarding foreign relations or security,
property or interests of the United States or nationals could be transferred to the court of
the Civil Administration at any time in the proceedings (ibid: 4). Moreover, the court of
the Civil Administration was endowed with the jurisdiction to review “any case, civil or
criminal, decided by the highest court of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands having
jurisdiction thereof in which is involved (ibid: 4-5).” Not only did the judicial organ of
GRI not have the right to try U.S. military personnel, its civilian component and their
dependents, all court decisions reached by it could be overturned by the court of the
USCAR. The USCAR gave itself the power to try and sentence or not sentence all of its
own people and the people of Okinawa according to its own interest.

The inequality of power distribution in Okinawa is made clear in Section 11 of
the Order: “The High Commissioner may assume...the exercise of full authority in the
Islands, if such assumption of authority appears mandatory for security reasons.” The
legal dualism posited administrative, legislative, and juridical authority of GRI
subordinate to that of the USCAR. USCAR through the issuance of ordinances,
proclamations and directives, gave itself the absolute structural power over the people of
Okinawa. Power created power, and the subjects of colonial control were devoid of “legitimate” means to intervene in such an ascending spiral of dominance.

As seen above, structure of colonial control established over the people of Okinawa in general can be characterized as that of indirect rule. Active military personnel of the U.S. Forces Ryukyu Islands governed the people, as the Imperial Japanese military personnel governed its colonies in Taiwan and Korea. The legal dualism of US CAR ordinances and GRI legislature, the appointment system of the Chief Executive of GRI, the limitation of rights to jurisdiction: all of these were the specific nature of indirect rule imposed upon the people of Okinawa.

The Status of Forces Agreement (SoFA) between the United States and the hosting nations of U.S. military bases around the globe has similar legal restrictions to the hosting nations in dealing with the U.S. military personnel and their dependents residing, establishing the right of an area and group of people that guarantees the inapplicability of hosting nation’s legal conditions, i.e., the establishment of extraterritoriality. In the case of SoFA, the existence of the established legal structure of the hosting nation precedes that of applying the specifically outlined laws that regulate the U.S. military personnel and their dependents. The rights of the U.S. military personnel and their dependents are circumscribed within the larger set of legal conditions of the hosting nations, therefore
the United States negotiates with the hosting nation on what is acceptable. In the case of Okinawa, such relationship of legal restriction was inverted. The laws stipulated by the U.S. Armed Forces preceded laws established by the GR!. The rights of the people of Okinawa were circumscribed by the larger set of legal conditions established by the US CAR. The people of Okinawa had to negotiate with the U.S. military on what was acceptable, confining their rights within the dominant power of the U.S. forces.

Colonial Rule over the Base Workers: Direct Rule

The structure of control imposed on the base workers had the characteristics of direct colonial rule. Whereas the people of Okinawa in general were under legal dualism noted above, the legal structure that ruled the base workers specifically was a separate legal structure from the rest of the workers in both the private and public sector. The private and public sector enjoyed the “customary” labor laws practiced in prewar Okinawa, but base workers were under the newly imported American labor law that was revised to restrict the labor rights of the base workers. One of the characteristics of direct colonial rule is the condemnation and dismissal of traditional law and application of a culturally foreign law. While the population of Okinawa as a whole was under two separate legal
structures, the base workers experienced one single foreign law that was imposed by USCAR’s capacity to practice ultimate power freely against its colonial subjects.

The main ordinance that determined the base workers’ rights was Ordinance 116, titled “Labor Relations and Labor Standards concerning Ryukyuan Employees,” issued in August 1953. This Ordinance was a mixture of U.S. Code Title 29 Chapter 7, the Labor Management Relations Act, known as the Taft-Hartley Act enacted in 1947, and Title 5, the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Act, revised to suppress the base workers’ rights.

Ordinance 116 was issued to legally separate base workers from public and private sector workers when labor disputes began to arise in Okinawa. Construction of military bases grew rapidly from 1949 when the U.S. government came to a domestic agreement to sustain quasi-permanently its control over Okinawa. Construction companies from both mainland Japan and the United States came to Okinawa as contractors and employed local people. Workers under employment by contractors, especially Shimizu and its subcontractor Nihon Dōro Gaisha, worked under conditions that included systematic kickbacks, several months of unpaid wages, sudden layoffs, wage cuts, and “pigpen quarters,” described as the cramming of more than over 40 people in a dorm of 40 square feet, or 6.4 meters by 6.4 meters of space. The housing was
without mosquito nets and without tatamis to rest on, with rain leaking from the ceiling and a pool of mud after every rainfall. The toilets were foul and unsanitary. Contractors physically beat workers who were absent from work because of sickness. Moreover, the wage system was implicitly racial. Considering what Americans received as 100%, Filipinos received 60%, mainland Japanese 30%, and Okinawans 10% for equal work (Zenchrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a, 18; Arasaki & Nakano, 1989: 66; Arasaki, 1976: 116).

Many construction contractors took advantage of the lack of workers’ rights protections and exploited the local workers. Labor disputes began to occur in 1952 between the workers and several of the contractors. Labor disputes raised by workers against mainland U.S. contractors in reaction to sudden layoffs were suppressed by the Military Police who, with guns in their hands, took protesters away to the local Koza Police Station (Zenchrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu, 1999a: 18). Local workers waged strikes against mainland Japan contractors to demand better working conditions (Arasaki & Nakano, 1989: 65). In 1952, GRI was established, and one of the first laws that GRI considered was protection of workers facing such exploitation. The GRI Legislature, after struggling for over a year to pass labor laws that followed mainland Japan’s labor laws, succeeded in establishing the Trade Union Act (Rōdō Kumiai Hō), Labor Relations
Adjustment Act (Rōdō Kankei Chōsei Hō), and Labor Standards Act (Rōdō Kijun Hō) in September, in effect October 1953.

USCAR countered the labor laws, using its power to control the legislature, by issuing Ordinance 116 in August 1953 just before the new labor laws went into effect. The Ordinance outlined the rights of workers employed by the U.S. Forces and its contractors separately from the non-military workers, making the labor laws established by the GRI Legislature that outlined workers’ rights inapplicable to the base workers.

USCAR allowed the passage of the GRI labor law bills to ease discontent among the people against military control over Okinawa on one condition, which was to restrict the rights of the base workers. Base workers structurally had the capacity to disturb military operations because they were effectively part of the military as laborers. Smooth military operations were largely dependent on local workers’ labor. That meant through such means as strike and picketing, the base workers by their very position within the bases had the capacity to interfere with the execution of military activities. Since the GRI labor law bills endowed all workers the right to organize, collective bargaining, and strike, USCAR needed to establish its own legal standard that outlined rights of the base workers and procedures to be taken when labor disputes arose. This accomplished, USCAR finally allowed the bill to be passed (Miyazato, ed.: 367-68).
Ordinance 116 ran 32 pages long in the English version. Article 2 established four categories of workers and delineated workers' rights according to these categories:


Category II: Direct-hire employees paid by U.S. Government non-appropriated funds.

Category III: Direct-hire employees of USFR [United States Forces, Ryukyu Islands] personnel.

Category IV: Employees of contractors of the U.S. Government while employed in the performance of their contracts.

(Gekkan Okinawa Sha, ed. Vol. 2: 91)

Category I workers were those employees paid from the annually appropriated defense budget of the U.S. Federal Government. That means Category I workers were federal government employees. Category II workers were called "Ekusuchenji" by the base workers, meaning "Exchange." These workers worked at restaurants, clubs, and exchange (REX for Ryukyu Exchange) where their payment came from the independent income of each workplace. Category III workers were mostly housemaids and drivers individually employed by military personnel stationed in Okinawa. Category IV workers were people employed by local contractors in business with the U.S. Forces such as cleaning companies.
Regarding the base workers’ rights to organize and collective bargaining, Article 5 of the Ordinance stated as follows:

Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities, for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection, and shall also have the right to refrain from any or all of such activities: Provided, that no Category I employee..., labor organization of such employees, or representative of such labor organization shall propose or enter into collective bargaining or any labor or trade agreement with an employer (Gekkan Okinawa Sha, ed. Vol. 2: 92).

All category employees have the right to unionize, and all category employees except Category I can engage in collective bargaining. Regarding the restriction against Category I employees’ right to collective bargaining, Article 7 (a) further stated that regardless of the prohibition of Article 5 against collective bargaining by or on behalf of Category I employees...the right of such employees to organize into groups is recognized and prompt consideration shall be given to petitions or presentations of such groups; however, it shall be expressly understood that no one group may be considered as solely representing the interests of all Category I employees of an installation (ibid: 95).

Before analyzing the nature of these articles, it is pertinent to take a look at the law that outlined federal government employees’ rights in the United States. Consider Section
7102 of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Act regarding the federal government employees' right to organize and collective bargaining:

Each employee shall have the right to form, join, or assist any labor organization, or to refrain from any such activity...and each employee shall be protected in the exercise of such right... Such right includes the right-

(1) to act for a labor organization in the capacity of a representative and the right, in that capacity, to present the views of the labor organization to heads of agencies and other officials of the executive branch of the Government, the Congress, or other appropriate authorities, and

(2) to engage in collective bargaining with respect to conditions of employment through representatives chosen by employees under this chapter (Cornell University, Legal Information Institute website).

By comparing the two legal counterparts that governed two employees under similar conditions, that is, base workers in Okinawa paid from federal appropriated funds and federal government employees in the U.S. paid from the same source, it can be seen that Category I employees were restricted in their right to engage in collective bargaining.

Although Article 7 of Ordinance 116 did outline that “petitions” or requests will be taken into consideration, Ordinance 116 deviated from the general principle of equality in bargaining power.
Regarding the base workers’ right to strike, a similar act of direct importation and application of foreign law to colonial subjects which is a characteristic of direct colonial rule can be observed. Legal conditions regarding the right to strike that governed the base workers was a mixture of the provisions outlined in the Federal Service Labor Management Relations Act and the Taft Hartley Act. To the Category I workers, the FSLMRA was applied, and to all category employees, the Taft Hartley Act was imposed.

Article 12 of Ordinance 116 clearly stated that it is unlawful for any Category I employee to participate in any strike.

It shall be unlawful for any Category I employee...to participate in any strike. No person shall accept, or continue in, employment as a Category I employee who engages in a strike against the U.S. Government or who is a member of an organization of Government employees that asserts the right to strike against U.S. Government, or who advocates, or is a member of an organization that advocates, the overthrow of the U.S. Government by force or violence (Gekkan Okinawa Sha, ed. Vol. 2: 100-01).

The Article next gave the criminal punishments for engaging in a strike, which were of both a fine and imprisonment.

Section 7116 of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Act stated that:

(b) it shall be an unfair labor practice for a labor organization-

(7)(A) to call, or participate in, a strike, work stoppage, or slowdown, or
picketing of an agency in a labor-management dispute if such picketing interferes with an agency’s operations…

Nothing in paragraph (7)...shall result in any informational picketing which does not interfere with an agency’s operations being considered as an unfair labor practice (Cornell University, Legal Information Institute website).

Section 7118 noted that the Federal Labor Relations Authority is in charge of investigating the charge of engaging in unfair labor practice. Section 7119 states the procedures to be taken at an occasion of negotiation impasse, such as seeking assistance from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Article 6 titled “Unfair Labor Practices” of Ordinance 116 was very similar to Section 158 of the Taft-Hartley Act. To see the similarity clearly between the two, text of the Taft-Hartley Act is shown below. The bolded text shows that the bolded sentences are literally the same in Article 6 of Ordinance 116.

It shall be an unfair labor practice for a labor organization or its agents-

(4)(i) to engage in, or to induce or encourage any individual employed by any person engaged in commerce or in an industry affecting commerce to engage in, a strike or a refusal in the course of his employment to use, manufacture, process, transport, or otherwise handle or work on any goods, articles, materials, or commodities or to perform any services; or

(ii) to threaten, coerce, or restrain any person engaged in commerce or in an industry affecting commerce or in an industry affecting commerce,
where in either case an object thereof is—

(A) forcing or requiring any employer or self employed person to join any labor or employer organization or to enter into any agreement which is prohibited by subsection (e) of this section;

(B) forcing or requiring any person to cease using, selling, handling, transporting, or otherwise dealing in the products of any other producer, processor, or manufacturer, or to cease doing business with any other person, or forcing or requiring any other employer to recognize or bargain with a labor organization as the representative of his employees unless such labor organization has been certified as the representative of such employees under the provisions of section 159 of this title: Provided, that nothing contained in this clause (B) shall be construed to make unlawful, where not otherwise unlawful, any primary strike or primary picketing;

(C) forcing or requiring any employer to recognize or bargain with a particular labor organization as the representative of his employees if another labor organization has been certified as the representative of such employees under the provisions of section 159 of this title;

(D) forcing or requiring any employer to assign particular work to employees in a particular labor organization or in a particular trade, craft, or class rather than to employees in another labor organization or in another trade, craft, or class, unless such employer is failing to conform to an order or certification of the Board determining the bargaining representative for employees performing such work:

Provided, that nothing contained in this subsection shall be construed to make unlawful a refusal by any person to enter upon the premises of any employer (other than his own employer), if the employees of such employer are engaged in a strike ratified or approved by a representative of such employees whom such
employer is required to recognize under this subchapter: ...
(Cornell University, Legal Information Institute website; Gekkan Okinawa Sha, ed. Vol. 2: 93).

The above conditions under which U.S. workers were restricted in their right to strike were similarly applied to the base workers. The bolded text is exactly the wording seen in Ordinance 116. For American workers, the National Labor Relations Board was endowed with the power to prevent any unfair labor practices, while for the base workers the Labor Relations Board was empowered, a body made up of six appointed members by the Deputy Governor (High Commissioner of USCAR); three recommended by the GRI Chief Executive, three from the Army, Air Force, and District Engineer respectively.

Article 13 titled "Essential Industries, Strikes" of Ordinance 116 denied the employees' right to strike in "essential industries or activities," which were water, electricity and gas supply, transportation, postal, telephone and other communication services, operation of port facilities, and all other industries that may be declared as such by the Deputy Governor, or later the High Commissioner of USCAR (Gekkan Okinawa Sha, ed. Vol. 1: 101).

The findings from the comparison between laws applied to the base workers in Okinawa and laws applied to workers in the United States are clear. Labor laws practiced in the United States were imposed on the base workers. Base workers received the same
legal restriction as did U.S. workers, or were even further restricted if we consider the
Category I workers’ right to collective bargaining. Category I workers were treated as
federal government employees, and the base workers as a whole were treated as were
those employed in the industries affecting commerce: the Taft-Hartley Act was to create
a formal procedure for mediating labor-management conflict so that such conflict would
not harm the rest of the population. Base workers were considered workers employed in
an industry where labor-management disputes and free labor practices would directly
affect the U.S. interest, which was the smooth operation of military affairs in Okinawa;
there is a parallel conception between employees in industry affecting commerce and
employees in industry affecting military operations.

It is the characteristic of direct colonial rule to impose upon the colonial subjects
the legal structure imported from the colonizing country and to condemn local custom.
The population of Okinawa as a whole was subject to indirect rule with a legal dualism,
but for the base workers under the above legal provisions, the structure they were placed
under was that of direct colonial rule. Base workers were separated from the three labor
laws established by the GRI and put under a single legal structure that was cut-and-pasted
from U.S. labor laws. Discontent arose within the base workers from the very fact of
being placed under such structure of direct rule.
It might have been different if the base workers were endowed with American nationality, citizenship and the right to vote that came along with all the legal provisions of labor rights for federal government employees in the United States, but of course that was not the case. The U.S. policy of control over Okinawa was not one of assimilation, but rather indirect colonial control that ensured free use of the bases with the least possible economic costs. The base workers were under foreign labor laws without any protections or means of political access that balanced out the restrictions.

Discontent was both structurally and culturally caused. Structurally, the Category I workers, who were the majority of all base workers, were denied of the means to make a claim collectively, and management was not obliged to listen. It was rather a favor for the management to listen and improve the base workers’ working conditions. Culturally, the mode of management practiced in the United States was different from that of Japan. Management, in this sense the U.S. military, did not have the idea of “management responsibility or ‘koyōsha sekinin’,” implying that management holds responsibility in keeping its employees to be financially afloat and not laying them off even at financially difficult moments, whereas it is a common practice to layoff workers in the United States. And the everyday ill-treatment of base workers by their immediate
superintendents caused anger among the base workers. The specific nature of that
discontent will be discussed in the following section.
CHAPTER 2
EMERGENCE OF THE BASE WORKERS’ UNION

It is one thing to analyze the structural condition the base workers were placed in and another to understand how the base workers interpreted their situation. The contents of laws that governed the base workers were analyzed in the previous section. This chapter will take a look at what the base workers’ life experiences were under such a legal structure, and how they interpreted their situation, covering the timeframe from 1945 to 1963. The mechanism of the emergence of a movement usually involves preexisting discontent or an aggrieved situation. Alleviating the discontent is the motive of social movement activities, although the existence of grievance does not automatically cause social movements to arise. This chapter will show that the grievance did exist among base workers and will describe its specific content. What was the specific nature of discontents among the base workers? How did the base workers unionize, and why did they when they did? What were the hindering factors against unionization, and what were the enabling factors that allowed the base workers to unionize, resulting in the formation of a labor union at that very specific point of time in history?

For the base workers, and the people of Okinawa in general, the specific content of ordinances and proclamations that set the power relations between the U.S. military
and the people was not where the discontent arose. The legal structure was a mere
capacity established by the U.S. government and USCAR to enable the use of power
against the colonized. When the capacity to use power was put into practice, and directly
experienced in everyday life, that was the moment where discontent arose among the
people. It was what they saw and experienced. The majority of the people were not
aware of the specific content of the laws. What the base workers and the people of
Okinawa encountered was the actions taken by the U.S. military in their everyday lives.

The power relations and the structure of control were established by the early
1950s with the issuance of Ordinance 116 and was clarified in 1957 with the issuance of
Executive Order 10713. The United States established its power affecting all
administrative, judicial, and legislative functions in Okinawa after Japan's jurisdiction
over Okinawa was abandoned upon the signing of the Treaty of Peace with Japan. The
proclamations and ordinances issued were all about the capacity to control. How
USCAR actually practiced its capacity and how the people experienced and interpreted
their lives under the military rule are separate questions. USCAR endowed itself with the
full power in Okinawa, but how did they use the power, and how did the people,
especially the base workers, interpret their experience?
Life Experience of Base Workers: Nature of Discontent

Labor gathered by the U.S. Forces and used for military related work was initially called “gunsagyō,” literally meaning military work. When the U.S. Forces landed on Okinawa in April 1945, civilians were gathered into camps. As noted earlier, the Battle of Okinawa resulted in total geographic, political, economic, and social devastation.

Civilian survivors of the Battle, those found hiding or those who surrendered, were gathered and sent to camps established by the U.S. Forces. The people of Okinawa’s postwar life started in the camps. Within the camps, those physically able to work were mobilized by the U.S. Forces into military work such as construction of camps, miscellaneous duties at military facilities, and general clean-up of destruction created from the Battle (Kōchi, 1975: 360). Compensation in return for forced labor was material goods such as food, clothes, and packs of cigarettes (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a, p. 8).

In October civilians began to be released and returned to their homes, with resettlement mostly finished by mid 1946 (Arasaki & Nakano, 1976: 19). Some were fortunate enough to find their original land. Others, by the order of the U.S. Armed Forces, were not allowed to settle in their old towns because the lands were already in use by the Armed Forces. In March 1946 with the restoration of the monetary economy

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ordered by the U.S. military government, compensation for military work in the form of
rations changed to paying wage to the workers. Employment of the people of Okinawa
became an official procedure requiring all workers to fill out a labor card (Kōchi, 1975:
303). Labor offices were established within the military government by the issuance of
Military Government Special Proclamation 24 titled “Employment and Labor” on
October 21st, 1947. Where military work used to be all manual labor, it now became
more varied, and there were shopkeepers at exchange services, cooks, truck drivers and
typists.

The majority of those people who were physically able to withstand manual
labor engaged in military work. Still under the economic devastation created by the war,
the dominant labor-purchasing institution people could find was the military. Farmland
was destroyed from the Battle and greatly reduced from expropriation of land by the U.S.
Forces. With the initiation of the monetary economy, need for money to exchange for
food was imminent for those freed from military camps, people who had to establish their
lives from scratch. But reestablishing the mode of life of fishery, farming, manufacture,
or service required human and material resources, and moreover time. The Battle left the
people with barely any resources to reestablish their prewar mode of life. Natural
resources, family members, their monetary assets were destroyed. During the days when
materials and money were non-existent for the majority of those who survived the Battle, the only thing people had was their body and labor, and they sought a place where they could sell it in exchange for materials, and now for money. Any manufacturing industry run by the people that might have been able to employ the local population was almost non-existent. Since the U.S. military was the dominant employer that purchased labor in exchange for the money people needed to subsist, people sought employment in the bases.

Arasaki (1989) notes that in 1948 average monthly living expenses for a five member family were from 2,500 to 3,000 B-yen, whereas an average worker at a military port was paid from 300 to 350 B-yen a month (21). Although the only jobs people could find were critically underpaid, they took them. It is said that the majority of those who have lived through the years of postwar chaos have some kind of military work experience. Especially those wives who lost their husbands as mobilized soldiers during the war found work at military bases. As such, military work was not a choice among other existing options. The need for money was so pressing that it left no room for whining about likes and dislikes. It is another characteristic of colonialism that establishes a structure of domestic economic dependency that drives people into alienating modes of subsistence of capitalism.
Uehara Kōsuke, founder of the base workers' union Zengunrō and president of the union until his victory in the first election for the Diet in November 1970, describes the base workers during the 1950s as “the mute Gunsagyō-Acchā (Uehara, 1982: 15).” 

“Acchā” literally means “to walk” in the Okinawan language, which in turn points to work or do that which in the sentence structure comes before “acchā.” “Gunsagyō” means “military work.” So the word “Gunsagyō-Acchā” literally means to do military work, or those engaging in military work. Uehara states that the term, more than literally pointing to base workers itself, held a negative connotation. Base workers in the 1950s called themselves “sagyō-acchā” in a cynical way to describe their low quality jobs (ibid: 12 3). Okinawa society itself also used such term to describe the base workers’ low status within the working population in Okinawa (ibid). “Sagyō-acchā” pointed to the structurally inferior position the workers held in the workplace, and the cultural sense of indignation and helplessness arising from being in such a position.

The base workers’ experiences of the 1950s can be categorized as economic (structural) and cultural. Economic discontent arose from low wages, lack of allowances, and job instability. Uehara states that the phrase “Mōningu sheiku hando, ไทยbunungu nekku katto,” translatable as “Morning shake hand, evening neck cut (ibid: 14)” was used to describe the job instability at that time. One worker who worked as a driver among 80
other workers, one day asked his boss to even out the job assignment among all the 80 workers. His boss replied, “If you are complaining that your job is too hard for you, then don’t come from tomorrow (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a, p. 35).” Another worker had a small “Why are you here” “I am here because I was told to come here” line of quarrel at a construction site. After the quarrel, the military personnel boss showed him a boxing move, then the worker showed him a straight karate kick. Then the boss turned around and left. Immediately, the worker was called in by the labor office and was told he was dismissed on the spot, although this worker managed to stay on the job with favorable help by another officer in the military (ibid, p. 36). Arasaki states that such trivial clashes of emotions led to dismissals without any clear reason (Arasaki & Nakano, 1970: 93). Base workers who have experience working in the bases during the 1950s seem to hold a similar experience of unreasonably being fired or at least being so threatened by their American bosses at the workplace. Uehara (1982) recollects,

Maintenance of human resources was practiced with free discretion of the American superintendent. Misunderstanding of English, small mistakes on the job, holding suspicion of absence from sickness as absence from negligence. All led to disciplinary measure or dismissal, depending on the mood of the superintendent. Base workers’ lives swayed depending on the will of the superintendent (14).
Base workers' wages were low with racial wage differentiation practiced. As we have seen, although they were working on the same job, people of Okinawa were paid only one-tenth the wage rate of Americans, one-sixth of Filipinos, and one-third to a quarter of mainland Japanese (ibid). There was no system established on retirement/severance allowance, or the seasonal bonus payments usually practiced at Japanese companies. Requests to their superintendents to raise wages or allowances led to the intimidation of "if you don't like it here, then go find work somewhere else." Base workers, who entered base labor because there could not practically be found any other place to work, submissively stayed on the job or found another job within the same military workplace, structurally staying subordinated and ill-treated.

The cultural sense of indignation and anger arose from the way the base workers were treated at workplaces. Uehara (1982) states that the U.S. military called the people of Okinawa "Ryukyuans" or "local natives" to separate them from the mainland Japanese and practiced a racial segregation policy, such as the racial wage differentiation previously noted. This racial segregation policy that posited the people of Okinawa at the bottom of the strata was observed in other aspects of everyday life. For example, toilets were separated between the "Ryukyuans" and "Americans," while mainland Japanese were allowed to use the latter. The people of Okinawa were kicked out even in the
middle of the act. The people were not allowed to use the coffee shops and cafeterias, nor many of them could afford to use them because of the underpaid wages. American superintendents asked women workers out to the coffee shop, leaving the men behind. Some military personnel lifted women workers' skirts or lifted them up (13-14), supposedly as a funny joke. Regarding the psychological instruments the minority rule bring into the colony, Magdoff (1978) notes, “racism and arrogance on the part of the colonizers and a resulting spirit of inferiority among the colonized (20).” I do not have sufficient information to assert that the base workers experienced a sense of inferiority, but from the above statements it can be surmised that the base workers felt anger and frustration at the very micro level.

U.S. forces, or the larger USCAR, structurally subordinated the base workers, guaranteeing them not enough wages, nor allowances, and firing them freely at their discretion. At the very micro level, the military personnel treated the base workers as lower beings than themselves, denying them the respect with which military personnel treated their own people. This aroused strong discontent among the workers, which in turn was suppressed by the high hand endowed to the members of the Armed Forces. The large structure of the oppressed and the oppressor was laid out in the proclamations and ordinances, and such a structure was implemented at the individual level, with
superintendents firing workers freely. Some military personnel wore the mask of the colonizer and took advantage of the workers, local men were generally perceived as lower in status, and women were taken advantage of.

Such working conditions aroused strong anger among the workers, but they were "mute" as described by Uehara. Although individual resistance can be observed here and there, concerted action cannot be seen until the unionization movement began in the late 1950s to early 60s. Indignation was suppressed by the threat of dismissals sporadically and freely carried out. Base workers, the majority of whom could not afford to lose their job and had nowhere else to work, fell silent and continued to work. Suddenly laid off, dumbfounded workers were left on the streets (Zenchūro Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 18).

I have noted that there was enough grievance among the base workers to move them to action. Then the next pertinent questions would be about the emergence of movement, the how and why of the formation of the base workers’ union.

**Emergence of the Base Workers’ Union**

In 1960 independent labor unions began to be formed at several of the workplaces within the military. Within several years after the formation of unions, the union members made
a swift move in uniting the independent unions, becoming the largest of all labor unions in Okinawa. In December 1966 the base workers' union announced success in obtaining a majority within the Category I and II workplaces, unionizing 54.7% of workers (Zenchûrô Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a, 125). In 1969, the union reached 75.7% in unionizing the Category 1 and 2 workplaces (Zengunrô Newsletter, No. 55).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Union Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1960</td>
<td>2110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1961</td>
<td>2638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1962</td>
<td>4964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1963</td>
<td>5874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1964</td>
<td>7058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1965</td>
<td>8681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1966</td>
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<td>1970*</td>
<td>18729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971*</td>
<td>17315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1972</td>
<td>12650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Zenchûrô Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a; Zengunrô Newsletter, No. 15, 45, 55) *Month of count not available.

By 1970 the union became a symbol of the struggle against the condition of reversion of Okinawa to Japan as determined by the U.S. and Japanese governments, and it further waged intense struggles that led the big wave of the base withdrawal movement. In analyzing the path the base workers' union took, it is crucial to take a look at how the base workers' union was formed. What is it that enabled the transition from "mute
sagyō-accha” to unionization? What were the processes the base workers took from “the life in humiliation of having to smile helplessly to the American superintendent at personal possession checkpoints, cutting open his/her wrapping bag using a scissor, avoiding the trouble of untying the knot (Nakano & Arasaki, 1970: 93)” to a body of conscious base workers voicing and acting to withdraw the bases?

Social movements theories offer useful analytical tools in analyzing the emergence of the base workers’ union, and we have noted the three major analytical perspectives: resource mobilization, political opportunities, and framing, also that treating these perspectives as mutually exclusive tools for explanation does not serve the goal of explaining the complexity of the process of union formation. The recent trend in the study of social movements and contentious politics in general is to transcend each perspective’s analytical boundaries and treat the theories as complementary perspectives that offer mechanisms that can be used to analyze different parts of the larger phenomena (McAdam, 1999; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 2001). The mechanisms provided by the three perspectives will be embedded in the case of base workers’ process towards unionization in order to see how individual motivation, culture, resources, and political threat and opportunities interplayed.
I have argued that base workers felt a strong sense of indignation arising from the structural conditions of low wages, job insecurity, and the way they were treated everyday at their workplaces. Discontent and grievance existed but such anger did not lead to unionization until 1960. Although there can be seen sporadic acts of rebellion here and there to improve working conditions, these actions were not sustained nor did they move towards formation of a formal organization until the late 1950s, when a handful of base workers formed an informal study group that lead to the formation of the first base workers’ union in 1960.

Ordinance 116 was issued in August 1953. Although the Ordinance restricted certain union activities such as the right to collective bargaining and strike for Category I workers, it did not restrict the workers’ right to unionize. In fact Ordinance 116 guaranteed all workers’ rights to unionize. Thus in August 1953 there was a political opportunity, which the base workers could have utilized to take collective actions towards unionization. But in hindsight they did not and took until 1960 to form a union. The question is why? What were the hindrances the base workers faced in taking actions towards unionization? What motivated the base workers to unionize? What were the enabling factors that removed the hindrances? What were the specific processes the base workers took in order to unionize?
A lively environment of social movements characterized the year 1960, when unionization began at military workplaces. There were at least three preceding historical events that created this context in which the base workers began to unionize. One was the first-ever island-wide struggle that challenged the U.S. military occupation policy, called the Shimagurumi Tōsō. The USCAR began to make lease contracts in November 1952 to the landowners who owned the lands currently used by the U.S. military. The condition of contract set by the USCAR was a 20-year lease for about 9 yen per 16.5 square-meter, the price of a bottle of Coca Cola at that time. When further expropriation of land was needed, the USCAR issued Ordinance 109, basically a declaration of land expropriation (Arasaki & Nakano, [1965] 1971: 73). The U.S. military confiscated the farmers’ land at gun point, set fire on homes, and crashed down homes using bulldozers. In 1954 USCAR announced a policy of virtual purchase of land, paying a lump sum of 16.6 years’ worth of annual lease fee, which annual lease fee was now set at 6% of the land price. In reaction to such land expropriation and against the announcement made by the team sent from the United States to investigate the land issues that was far from meeting the demands of landowners, the landowners rose in anger. In summer 1956, rallies were held which mobilized over 160,000 people on June 20th, and 100,000 and 50,000 people on June 25th at two respective sites of rallies (ibid, 82).
The Shimagurumi Tōsō waned in 1958 when the United States made some concession to landowner demands by setting the lease fee six times higher than it was in 1956 and by making annual payments instead of a one-time lump sum payment. But the Shimagurumi Tōsō, although it withered away, had a significant impact on the rise of labor movement. In 1955, there were 5 labor unions whereas in 1958 increased to 47 unions (Okinawa Rōdō Undōshi–25 nen no Ayumi Henshū Iinkai, ed., 1995: 38, 48).

Arasaki (1971) argues that the people’s involvement in the island-wide struggle against the U.S. military occupation policy caused them to engage in labor movements at their own workplaces, giving rise to a wave of unionization and labor disputes (83 4).

Another significant factor in creating a favorable atmosphere for labor movement was the arrival of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to Okinawa in May 1956. The ICFTU team investigated labor conditions in Okinawa at various industries including the military workplaces and published the result of the investigation in a report, including a list of recommendations to improve the conditions of workers. The ICFTU investigation team’s arrival to Okinawa not only had an impact on the USCAR’s prior perception of labor movement as being “red,” it also had an impact on the initiation of unionization in Okinawa (Okinawa Rōdō Undōshi – 25 nen no Ayumi Henshū Iinkai, ed., 1995: 38). On May 1st, 1957, the first May Day was held in Okinawa.
that did not involve the initiative of political parties, making the May Day an annually held routinized practice.

The last factor that characterized the lively year of 1960 was the formation of the Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Kyōgikai (Okinawa Prefectural Reversion Council) on April 28th 1960, or Fukkikyō. Fukkikyō was an umbrella organization formed on April 28th, 1960, that took reversion to Japan to be its utmost priority as stated in the Organization Platform (Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan linkai ed., 1982: 53). Fukkikyō initially included 17 organizations, among them the Okinawa Teachers Association, Okiseikyō (coalition of community-based young men’s association), the three progressive parties of the Okinawa People’s Party, the Okinawa Socialist Party, and the Okinawa Socialist Masses Party, labor unions such as Kankōrō and Shishokurō (municipal office workers’ union), and the student organization of the University of the Ryukyus. Fukkikyō was formed in reaction to the Mutual Security Treaty signed in January 1960 and about to be ratified at the Diet, which Treaty was perceived to prolong the occupation of Okinawa by the United States with the support of the Government of Japan within the context of strengthened military alliance between the two countries. Fukkikyō waged ad hoc rallies to demand reversion, including its annual rally held on April 28th, which was now held in collective memory as the “Day of Shame,” when the Treaty of Peace with
Japan went into effect in 1952. From here began the process of struggles to bring about reversion led by this umbrella organization. Within this sociopolitical context of a rising labor movement and the reversion movement, the base workers took their own unique path towards unionization beginning in 1960.

Along with the strong sense of indignation over the working conditions was fear of the consequences of taking any collective action. The base workers wanted to do something about their situation but at the same time they feared that such action might result in dismissal. The base workers' real life experiences did not point to the possibility of positive change through taking collective action. The act of claim-making was rather perceived as causing further job insecurity. The prevalent perception shared by the base workers was that there was more to lose than to gain by taking collective action to improve their working conditions. Workplace superintendents did not follow the management's obligation outlined in the Ordinance, to listen to workers' claims regarding working conditions. The attitude taken by military personnel was not that of accommodation but of condemnation. The majority of the base workers, facing the immediate need of money to subsist, could not afford to be unemployed, and as a result remained submissive.
One base worker did take a stand in the face of such fear and so initiated the process of unionization. Uehara Kōsuke, an employee at the Army District Engineer, was laid off in 1959. Base construction in Okinawa that began in 1949 to 1950 with the U.S. decision to maintain Okinawa in reaction to the Korean War came to temporary completion in the late 1950s. Workers employed for the base construction were laid off en masse in 1959, and Uehara was among them. Uehara had only two weeks to find another job, since 14 days was the prior notification period before layoff. In his autobiography (2001), he states,

At a military workplace, no matter how many years you diligently work...you are sentenced to leave mercilessly according to the military’s convenience. Many laborers were helpless in the face of such treatment. Moreover, they left without receiving a penny of severance allowance. I couldn’t but feel indignant (63).

He further states that he was not the only one who felt anger at such treatment. Not only it was shared widely among the employees, anger towards the military’s mode of employee management went back to the late 1940s among the base workers, represented by the common phrase, “Morning hand shake, evening neck cut.” His reaction to the layoff was to take action towards forming a labor union, the first step of which was to set up an informal study group called Gun Rōdō Mondai Kenkyūkai (Study Group on Base...
Workers' Issues) in late April 1960. The 1959 layoff was in effect a *political threat* that motivated Uehara to form a study group that led to unionization. Political opportunity theory considers the following dimensions of political vulnerability or receptiveness towards movements that allows a movement to rise:

- Relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system
- Stability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird, sustain a polity
- Presence of elite allies
- State's capacity and propensity for repression

(McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 10)

But the recent critique of McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) is on the heavy focus of "opportunity" compared to threat, which also holds explanatory power in movement emergence. In case of the base workers' union, the threat that was imposed upon the base workers was layoff, the most serious threat an employee can face, and it had a heavy impact on the initiation of the move towards unionization.

Cultural factors also played a role in determining Uehara's action. McAdam (1999; McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001) argues that structural conditions, whether they constitute an opportunity or a threat, must be perceived as such for a movement to rise. In the case of Uehara's perception, the U.S. military's mode of laying off workers according to its convenience was culturally not acceptable in terms of Japanese labor
management relationships. In Japan, labor’s diligence and loyalty is balanced by management’s responsibility in protecting workers at economic hardships, whereas in the United States, there is no such familial relationship between the two, and moreover, laying off workers is the first thing management engages in upon the firm’s economic difficulty. Such cultural difference is also important in understanding Uehara and others’ anger towards the management. I am not trying to explain the anger by “culture” only, that it was the result of “misunderstanding” on both parts. I have noted the structural causes of indignation among the base workers, the underpaid wages, racism, complete lack of allowances, and the colonial arrogance among the military personnel in their treatment of individuals. These were the conditions that the base workers lived in. My point is to show how the threat was conceptualized, giving rise to action, based on such perception.

As a result of such a structural threat and the conceptualization of such a threat as unjust, Uehara, who was lucky enough to avoid being left on the street and found another job at the Army Post Engineering, began to contact his coworkers who were interested in labor issues. Together they formed the Gun Rōdō Mondai Kenkyūkai. He found 7 to 8 interested individuals who began by holding informal gatherings among themselves in their houses, drinking cheap sake (Uehara, 2000: 66-67). Uehara writes,
"What we all agreed on was the need to form an organization where our voices can be heard. We decided to create such atmosphere first beginning with our workplace" (ibid: 67). Then the group began to study the content of Ordinance 116 to determine whether it was legitimate to unionize under the Ordinance.

This shows that the specific content of the Ordinance was unknown to the base workers. Tamaki Kiyoshi states,

Majority of the base workers were not aware of the provisions outlined in Ordinance 116. It was the era of chaos, the 1950s. Those workers who worked at the bases, when their immediate superintendents did not like their employees, they just took away their gate passes, the gate passes you need to enter the military bases and show up to work...the passes were just taken away. From the next day, you could not enter the gate. That meant you're fired. When the base workers were living under such condition, the base workers generally held a view that the U.S. military personnel held ultimate power. That was the reality, and discussions such as whether if Ordinance 116 allowed the base workers to unionize or not did not take place. It was quite a courageous act to take actions towards unionization those days (Interview Notes).

In fact, unawareness of the rights guaranteed on paper was one of the causes no union was formed when Ordinance 116 was issued in 1953. The political opportunity was not perceived as an opportunity. Partially because of this unawareness, nobody took action towards unionization. In 1959 Uehara was aware of the fact that he might be "fired for cause" for engaging in unionization activities. That is why he formed a study group
underground. Such fear was not unfounded, since the Counter-Intelligence Corps was investigating the activities of Uehara and Tomoyori Shinsuke[^4], another member of the study group (Interview Notes, Tomoyori). But what made Uehara and the study group members persist in their unionizing activities was the union consciousness that sensed the need for an organization that would give them power, whereas individuals were susceptible to personal harassment. Uehara was the motivated individual who broke the ice. The growing labor movements outside of the bases in Okinawa aroused his motivation.

As we have seen, the base workers’ move towards unionization occurred in the context of growing union activism as a whole in Okinawa. The Shimagurumi Tōsō was the first island-wide movement, reaching its peak in the mid 1950s in reaction to the U.S. military’s brutal land expropriation through the use of “bayonets and bulldozers” and the policy of one-time lump sum payment of land use fees. Resistance to U.S. military policy began with the Shimagurumi Tōsō as did the increase of labor unions towards the end of 1950s, this also partially due to the visit of the ICFTU investigation team to Okinawa. The Shimagurumi Tōsō, the ICFTU, and the rise of labor unions that resulted from them impacted Uehara’s union consciousness. The employees at the District Engineer, where Uehara worked until layoff, were generally more politically aware since

[^4]: Name shortened for privacy.
the DE was the administrative center of land expropriation, taking care of the land issues
upon base construction including the paper work for the expropriation process. The
employees, from their structural position within the workplace, knew the naked power the
military used in expropriating the lands and at the same time were sensitive to the
people’s resistance (Uehara, 1982: 42). Also, Uehara was conscious of the labor issues
enough that he visited and observed the labor strike in 1958 that involved women textile
workers (ibid, 46-7). The political opportunity that is conducive to unionization was
beginning to grow in Okinawa, and Uehara’s motivation was strengthened as conditions
changed.

The nature of the organizing effort the study group engaged in can be explained
by resource mobilization. Uehara and his coworkers went Zukeran Motor Pool, Quarter
Master, and Makiminato Motor Pool and held meetings with those interested (ibid). This
is how they formed the Gun Rōdō Mondai Kenkyūkai. Each member then began to
organize his workplace, forming study groups at home. The effort spread through
personal connections. Tsuha Yukinao, who was a member of the Gun Rōdō Mondai
Kenkyūkai and also a member of Bei Rikugun Yusōbutai Tōitsu Yūai Kai at Zukeran
Motor Pool, states in retrospect that the process of the formation of Yūai Kai started in
reaction to the layoff announcement at the Motor Pool in late May 1960. Yuai Kai was formed on June 12th, and Tsuha tells us that

At that time in the Post Engineering Section, Mr. Uehara and Mr. Tomoyose were forming ‘Gun Rodo Mondai Kenkyukai’ and our ‘Yuai Kai’ decided to join them on June 20th and actually joined on June 22nd (Zenchurou Okinawa Chiku Honbu, 1999a: 58).

Tsuha was already a member of the Gun Rodo Mondai Kenkyukai at its formation in late April so, chronologically speaking, Uehara’s effort to include people from other workplaces seems to precede the formation of Yuai Kai, in which the member of Gun Rodo Mondai Kenkyukai participated. It isn’t clear among the members of the Yuai Kai that Uehara’s group had a significant effect on the formation of Yuai Kai, but it can be argued that Uehara’s group was the centrifugal force spreading the effort to organize, and also the centripetal force of bringing separate efforts together. This was done through connecting human resources, one of the major processes that conscious agents take in initiating a movement.

Uehara and the study group grasped the growing political opportunity for unionization by making an appearance at the Fourth May Day on May 1st, 1960. This was a break from the past routines of underground activities and a shift towards public
action. Uehara used the already ongoing May Day opportunity by making a speech on stage. He recollects that this was a dangerous move put his job in jeopardy. But he felt the need to go public.

Uehara’s appearance in public at the May Day in 1960 had a profound effect on the formation of the union. Use of the media in order to gain public support is an effective means of mobilizing those who are “outside” the movement, effectively everyone at the time who was not a member of the study group. Mobilizing outside support is a key element of resource mobilization. Outsiders can be conceptualized at three different levels: belief in social movement organization’s goals, amount of resources held, and benefits they may receive as the result of movement success.

Regarding the outsiders’ relation to movement goals, adherents are those who believe in the goals of the movement, and within the non-adherents, there are bystanders who are neither opposed to nor agree with the movement goals and opponents who oppose movement goals (Hunt et al., 1994: 23). Those who own larger resource pools are called elites, and those who only control very limited resource are termed mass. Those outsiders who would directly benefit from goal accomplishment are potential beneficiaries, and those who do not directly benefit but adhere to movement goals are termed conscience adherents (ibid). Uehara, by taking up the stage, reached out to a
huge pool of potential beneficiaries of base workers who could benefit from unionization, and to possible adherents who might sympathize with their intent. His intention was met by media coverage, and most significant, he succeeded in establishing a supportive connection with an elite ally and adherent, the ICFTU.

Uehara’s public appearance, in theoretical terms an innovative action that brings about change in otherwise stagnant movement progress, was the beginning of encounter with Howard Robinson, President of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) Okinawa Branch. Robinson approached Uehara after listening to his speech at the Fourth May Day, creating a pipeline between Gun Rōdō Mondai Kenkyūkai and ICFTU. Uehara personally met with Robinson, and he recollects Robinson informing him that he “had already sent a letter to the High Commissioner (Donald P. Booth) asking not to interfere with the unionization movement within the military workforce, it is indeed possible to unionize under Ordinance 116, and that although union activities will have restrictions, forming a union will help the base workers in improving various working conditions” (Uehara, 2000: 70, my translation). This letter is presumed to have had a significant effect in suppressing the U.S. military’s intent to repress, and moreover, in legitimizing the activities of unionization within the military workplaces. In terms of political opportunity theory, the presence of elite allies is one the factors that cause
change in the political structure or alignment of control (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 10). Robinson’s support for unionization was just that.

Uehara took Robinson’s attitude as being supportive, and he brought back the news to the Gun Rōdō Mondai Kenkyūkai and decided to hold a colloquium having Robinson as a speaker to give the rest of the base workers the chance to hear what Robinson had just told Uehara. On July 3rd, 1960, Robinson spoke on the nature of Ordinance 116. About 150 base workers showed up at the colloquium, and there was media coverage. Uehara’s recollection of the content of the speech was as follows:

Mr. Robinson encouraged everybody to unionize as follows: “Even under the Ordinance [116], it is possible to unionize. Regarding the contradictions seen in the Ordinance, both parties ought to discuss and find a solution. There is no need for everybody to be fearful of unionizing. It is important to discard all fears and anxieties and engage in unionization with courage and enthusiasm. It is the workers’ right to unionize. The ICFTU will continue its support, and whenever there is repression, we will fight along.”

Those workers who listened to the speech raised questions of anxiety, for example fearing the Military would fire workers for unionizing....

To such questions, Mr. Robinson spoke, “All employees can unionize under the Ordinance. Although there are restrictions on union activities, it is possible to engage in union activities. It is highly unimaginable that one will be fired for unionizing. If there is such a case, ICFTU will cooperate to our full capacity. The foremost agenda is to unionize, and everything begins with unionization.”

(Uehara, 1982: 53)
McAdam (1999) uses the term *cognitive liberation* to point to the meanings and definitions that members of a movement attach to a structural change in political opportunity. For the base workers fearful of unionization and feeling generally helplessness, Robinson's speech worked as a cognitive liberation: unionization was possible under the Ordinance; unionization was important in voicing the workers' grievances; workers had the support of an international organization based in the United States. The fact that ICFTU was seen to be an American organization gave credibility to it since that made ICFTU stand in parallel with the U.S. military authority. From here, the race towards unionization at various workplaces began.

From July to September 1960, four independent labor union chapters were formed within the military workplaces, Zukeran Motor Pool (July 9th), USCAR Union (August 18th), QM (Quartermaster) Union (September 16th), Post Engineer (September 25th). Two more followed in 1961, Makiminato Motor Pool (June 2nd) and Gilbert (June 4th).

On June 18th, 1961, a coalition of military base workers' unions was formed Zen Okinawa Gun Rōdō Kumiai Rengōkai, or Zengunrōren for short, with Uehara as president (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu, 1999a: 52-54). Coalition members
numbered close to 2,500, the Post Engineering Section being the largest with its constituency of 1,500.

After the formation of Zengunrōren, labour unions within military work places grew rapidly. In 1962 eight new unions were organized, including the Air Force union with 934 members. On July 8th, 1962, the first annual meeting of Zengunrōren was held. At this moment, the number of unions amounted to 12, members totaling up to over 4,900.

On July 14th, 1963, the second annual meeting was held, and at this meeting, a coalition of chapter unions was united into a single labor union called Zen Okinawa Gun Rōdō Kumiai, or All Okinawa Military Employees Trade Union, in short, Zengunrō.
CHAPTER 3
EMPOWERMENT OF THE UNION

It was not until 1970 that Zengunrō waged a series of strikes demanding withdrawal of the bases, thus rejecting the content of reversion as determined by the governments of Japan and United States, i.e., reversion without major base reduction. What enabled Zengunrō to act was the strength it had developed in its 10-year history of struggles against the USCAR. The power of the union included the following:

1. Physical size of the union, resulting from the growing unionization rate within all military workplaces.
2. Professionalization of the union establishing a routinized mode of running the union with full-time officials, annual regular meetings and extraordinary meetings at different levels from executive meetings to general meetings.
3. Maturation of consciousness among base workers that penetrated the intent of both governments behind the negotiations on the condition of reversion, and the new willingness to act rather than to fall silent.
4. Formation of solidarity among base workers as a unique socio-political group that shared the same structural and cultural grievance, emerging from direct confrontations at picket lines with the U.S. military.
5. Invention and employment of various tactics of struggle base workers learned on the spot as firsthand experience.
6. Economic achievements of the union obtained through struggles, as a result enhancing the union members’ faith in the union.

Empowerment is here meant to point to the ability of the union to wage struggles. When the time came for Zengunrō to fully engage in the reversion struggle demanding withdrawal of the bases from Okinawa, it would be ready. Above factors of
empowerment of the union, or the structural and cultural capacity of Zengunrō to engage in the reversion movement, was obtained through its ten years of struggles building up towards the year 1970.

On the formation of the first base workers’ labor union chapter in 1960, Zengunrō concentrated on making economic requests to improve the base workers’ working conditions and avoided engaging in ad hoc reversion struggles, any physical form of action demanding reversion of administrative rights over Okinawa to Japan. As an organization, it voiced its pro-reversion stance as early as 1962, but as a wish rather than a subject of struggle. Zengunrō’s first focus was not on effecting reversion but on obtaining a livable wage, various social benefits, and the basic workers’ rights that allow workers to obtain such wages and benefits. Their decade-long economic struggles led to the expansion and fortification of the union, so that when deciding to engage in the opposition movement against Japan-U.S. government-led conditions of reversion, Zengunrō had a firm foundation to stand on. The union was there ready to grasp the timing of reversion struggle and put themselves into practice.
Expansion of the Union towards the Reversion Movement

In offering analytical tools to explain the development of movements, proponents of resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald, [1987] 1994; Jenkins and Perrow, 1997) are concerned with the organizational structure of the movement. The focus is on the social and political resources, from monetary resources to elite allies within the polity, and the continuous flow of these resources into the mobilizing structure to assist the movement to develop and survive over time. One such resource includes the creation of a more enduring organizational structure that can sustain movement (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996; McAdam, [1982] 1999). In Zengunrō’s case, there was the increase in union membership and the creation of a formal organization with professional members that consequently led to the capacity to wage a power struggle over reversion in later years.

The number of union members showed continuous increase until 1970 when the base workers began the series of strikes in reaction to the mass layoff. 1960 was the year when independent unions began to form at various workplaces after Robinson’s speech that liberated the base workers’ fear of unionizing. Zukeran Motor Pool Union, the first union to be formed, was not approved by the USCAR as required under Ordinance 145.
Zukeran Motor Pool Union was denied approval because USCAR suspected its chairperson of being under communist influence. From August to October, four independent unions were approved and formed in the order of USCAR union, Quarter Masters, Post Engineer, Zukeran Motor Pool Drivers’ Union, with a total of 2,110 members. In 1961 the Gilbert Union and Makiminato Motor Pool, and Zukeran Motor Pool union were formed. On June 18th, 1961, a coalition of independent unions called Zen Okinawa Gun Rōdō Kumiai Rengōkai or Zengunrören was formed, counting 2,638 union members.

Unionization continued at various workplaces within the U.S. military, and on July 14th, 1963, the united and centralized union Zengunrō emerged with 5874 union members. At this time, most of the unions formed were within the Army of the U.S. Armed Forces in Okinawa, but with the formation of the Air Force Chapter in June 1964, unionization spread to workplaces outside of the Army. On October 8th, 1965, the Marine Chapter was formed. On April 23rd, 1965, Zengunrō Women’s Division was formed. In March 1967, Zengunrō succeeded in unionizing all four military bodies of Army, Air Force, Marine, and Navy.

The number of union member continued to increase until 1970; then the size of the union began to decrease as a result of mass layoffs. The increase in the mass
participation base can be seen across all sectors of workplace, categories and gender. In December 1966 Zengunrō has obtained a majority within the Category I and II workplaces, unionizing 54.7% of its workers (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a, 125). In 1969 Zengunro reached 75.7% in unionizing the Category 1 and 2 workplaces (Zengunrō Newsletter, No. 55).

The mobilizing structure changed from informal study groups to formal independent unions first at the separate workplaces, then to a coalition of those independent unions, Zengunrōren, then to a united body of unionized base workers, Zengunrō, with elected union executives, full-time union officers, formal meetings at various levels from general meeting to executive meetings, union platforms and policies, a regularized mode of decision-making and transmittance of decided policies, and, with union fees established. Finally Zengunrō gained legitimacy as the representative of the base workers as a whole.

The process of how insurgents devise and employ movement tactics and how these affect the movement's momentum has been outlined in social movements theories (Tilly, 1995; Tarrow, [1993] 1997, McAdam, [1983] 1997) with theorists employing several concepts to analyze the relationship between movement tactics and movement development. Charles Tilly (1995) introduced the word *repertoire* as
a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle. People learn.... At any particular point in history, however, they learn only a rather small number of alternative ways to act collectively (26).

Tilly, by examining the shift in repertoires over time and space in the history of Great Britain from the 18th century to 19th century, argued that repertoires maintained by a group of people are constrained by the limitation of knowledge available to that group on the possible means of claim-making (ibid).

McAdam (1997) introduced the concept of tactical interaction to explain how insurgents innovate new tactics to realize their movement goals while opponents devising means to counter such innovation (340). Analysis of this dialectic interaction of tactic innovation and tactic adaptation is used to explain the dynamics of movement development. McAdam described how the Civil Rights Movement activists invented new disruptive tactics that temporarily leveraged their power to attain movement goals until opponents countered such tactics with their own means to suppress the movement. Political process theory argues that such tactical innovation on the part of the insurgents is put into action when there is an organizational readiness from which insurgents spring their movement, when there is structural room in the political system that is vulnerable to
such movement, and finally when the insurgents perceive of such systematic vulnerability as vulnerable (341-2).

McAdam's theory of political process and tactical interaction is useful to explain Zengunrō's history of struggle from its formation until its involvement in the reversion movement in 1970. Zengunrō learned to wage various tactics during these years that leveraged their bargaining power, resulting in strengthening the organization itself. The power with which Zengunrō endowed itself through these years of struggles resulted in organizational readiness for the reversion struggle.

The base workers' motive of forming a labor union was, simply put, to secure the life of the base workers. This motive, conceptualized frequently in the union's newsletters in the latter years as "the struggle for a human life," was the union's central theme upon which the union based its activities from the birth of the union to reversion in 1972. But what changed over time is what constituted the concept "human life." To be precise, various aspects were added, building on the aspects of a "human life" that the union already had conceived at its formation. What constituted Zengunrōren's, and later Zengunrō's, specific topics of struggle regarding the establishment of a human life were "livable" wages, i.e. wage hikes, social security systems, various allowances from retirement allowances to the "bonus payment," the seasonal lump sum payment given in
Japan but not in the United States. To these economic demands, other demands were added in reaction to particular crisis, for example, as the call to withdraw layoff announcements, and finally the call to withdraw the military bases from Okinawa and to realize reversion without the military bases.

The following is a bullet point list of struggles, tactics employed, and the content of goals attained by the union.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject of Struggle</th>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Content of Acquisition</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 6/18/1961 | • Retirement allowance  
| | • Wage hike  
| | • Long-term sick leave | • Forming a coalition of independent base workers’ union  
| |  
| | • Rally  
| | • Handing a written statement | | | |
| 1962 | • Bonus payment  
| | • Demotion  
| | • Commodity price  
| | • Wage hike  
| | • Retirement allowance  
| | • Racially equal payment for holiday shifts  
| | • Long-term sick leave  
| | • Paid maternity leave | • Regular meetings  
| |  
| | • Sending a letter to the U.S. President  
| | • Meeting with the High Commissioner | • Wage hike  
| |  
| | • Year-end bonus payment | | |
| 1963 | • Employment Application Form  
| | • Wage hike  
| | • Bonus payment hike  
| | • Payment increase for holiday shifts  
| | • Ordinance 116 | • Regular meetings  
| |  
| | • Formation of a special committee on Ordinance 116  
| | • Formation of a united body of base workers’ union (Zengunro)  
| | • Participation in ICFTU  
| | • Sending letters | • Retirement allowance | | |
| 1964 | • Wage hike  
| | • Retirement allowance | • Letters  
<p>| |
| |<br />
| | • Signature collecting | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1965 | Anti-embarkation of tugboat bound to Vietnam  
|      | Prime Minister Sato's visit to Okinawa  
|      | Wage hike  
|      | Retirement allowance  
|      | Year-end bonus payment  
|      | Social security system  
|      | Tax reduction  
|      | Labor intensification  
|      | Dismissal  
|      | Workers' basic rights  
|      | Sit-in  
|      | Rally  
|      | Demonstration  
|      | Meeting  
|      | Threat to refuse holiday shifts and overtime work  
|      | Inclusion of “strike” clause in the Union's Rule  
|      | Signature collection  
|      | Submission of wage plan  
|      | Establishment of the Joint Labor Commission  
|      | Wage hike  
|      | Repeal of demotion  
|      | Paid maternity leave  
|      | Improved retirement allowance |
| 1966 | Ordinance 116  
|      | Wage hike  
|      | Family allowance  
|      | Tax reduction  
|      | Workers' basic rights  
|      | Reversion  
|      | Study group sessions on Ordinance 116  
|      | Participation in Fukkikyo  
|      | Paid physiological leave  
|      | Medical insurance  
|      | Wage hike  
|      | Increase in holiday and midnight shift pay |
| 1967 | Wage hike  
|      | Retirement allowance  
|      | Tax reduction  
|      | Workers' basic rights  
|      | Dismissal (Category 4)  
|      | Reversion  
|      | Year-end allowance  
|      | Wage cut through reduction of work hours  
|      | Establishment of a collective bargaining table  
|      | Meeting  
|      | Handing leaflets  
|      | Demonstration  
|      | Sit-in  
|      | Hunger strike  
|      | Chapter strike  
|      | White “hachimaki toso”  
|      | Plan to wage 100% paid leave struggle  
|      | Red “hachimaki toso” (Category 4 milk plant)  
|      | Overtime work refusal (Category 4)  
|      | Overtime work and holiday shift refusal (Zengunro)  
|      | Signature collection  
|      | Wage hike  
|      | Summer and year-end bonus payment increase  
|      | Long term sick leave for tuberculosis patients  
|      | Retirement allowance (Category 4 Milk Plant)  
<p>|      | Year-end allowance (Category 4) |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1969</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to collective bargaining</td>
<td>Removal of B52s, nuclear weapons, and nuclear subs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishment of collective bargaining table</td>
<td>Wage hike</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Right to strike</td>
<td>Family allowance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Retirement allowance</td>
<td>Year-end allowance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wage cut through reduction of work hours</td>
<td>Retirement allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Establishment of unemployment measures (GRI Legislature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of B52s, nuclear weapons, and nuclear subs</td>
<td>Dismissal (150 workers)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reversion</td>
<td>Repeal of disciplinary measure against a strike</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meetings in Honolulu and Washington (Department of Defense Pentagon, Department of Labor)</td>
<td>Plan to participate in general strike</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collective bargaining</td>
<td>Collective bargaining</td>
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<td></td>
<td>100% paid leave practice</td>
<td>Red &quot;hachimaki toso&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Refusal to work (REX)</td>
<td>Strike</td>
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<td></td>
<td>48 hours of 100% paid leave</td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sit-in</td>
<td>Threat to wage a strike</td>
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<td>72 hour union chapter strike (category 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Formation of a united body of base workers in Okinawa and on the mainland Japan (Churo Kyoto)</td>
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<td>Participation in the formation of a coalition for the public election of GRI Chief Executive (Kakushin Kyoto Kaigi)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participation in the formation of a coalition of organizations against B52s and nuclear submarines (Inochi o Mamoru Kenmin Kyoto Kaigi)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Right to collective bargaining</td>
<td>Improved retirement allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishment of JSLC</td>
<td>Reduced disciplinary measure of dismissal to 10 days suspension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wage hike</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in summer and year-end bonus payment</td>
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<td>Increase of paid holidays</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase in maternity leave</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement in retirement allowance</td>
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Reversion Struggle as a Tactical Escalation

The base workers built their capacity to engage in the reversion struggle of 1970 through the economic struggles beginning from the formation of Zengunrōren in June 1961. The base workers devised various tactics and learned how to struggle by actually practicing them, then the union raised the level of tactics when the workers saw that their economic claims were not being realized. The further escalation of tactics was rewarded with economic gains, and such gains aroused confidence in the union members that worker struggle leads to a better life. When escalation did not meet with any gains, the union escalated their tactics again.

Nearing the 1970s the base workers began to face mass dismissal as a result of the U.S. government’s tightened defense budget and Zengunrō waged a series of strikes to demand repeal of the dismissals. The strikes were not successful and as a result, Zengunrō began to demand withdrawal of the military bases as a tactical defense of the
base workers' livelihoods. The reversion effort from the late 1960s led by the progressive organization Fukkikyō was already beyond the point of struggling to obtain reversion itself and had moved on to criticize the content of reversion. Fukkikyō called for base withdrawal in 1969.

Zengunrō's base removal movement thus connected with an already active reversion movement that entailed shutting down the bases at reversion. Fukkikyō had began to perceive the bases as the cause of all evil and initiated its struggle for base withdrawal upon reversion. But now, with over 20,000 members on site and so structurally in a position to shake the bases from within, Zengunrō began to be taken as the symbol of the reversion movement, or the anti-U.S.-Japan-promoted condition of reversion movement. Zengunrō’s objective was the protection and improvement of the workers’ lives, “to live a human life,” which called for the development of alternative industry to provide jobs after the bases were withdrawn.

The economic struggles Zengunrōren and Zengunrō fought from 1961 to 1970 were various, and a closer look will enable us to see the escalation of tactics employed, with clarity, how the base workers’ union devised new tactics and learned through practice how to fight. In order to see variable of tactical escalation clear, I have focused
on economic struggles consistently raised throughout the years, which were wage hike, retirement allowance, and seasonal lump sum payment called "bonus payment."

Until 1964, the union heavily concentrated on holding regular meetings and rallies and sending petition letters to the personnel offices of the military bodies in Okinawa, the High Commissioner of USCAR, the President of the United States, and the Federal Government. Under the restriction of Ordinance 116, the base workers' union did not have the right to collective bargaining, so their claim-making depended on adopting economic resolutions and either sending them or directly handing them on to the authorities in the form of petitions. The union activity of Zengunrōren, beyond the action of forming a union which is a tactic itself, began with holding a rally on October 17th, 1961, to demand the establishment of wage hikes, retirement allowances, and various other allowances.

A team of investigators of socioeconomic issues in Okinawa led by Carl Kaysen, Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, arrived in October. Zengunrōren, perceived the arrival of such a team from the Kennedy Administration as an opportunity to lay out its grievances. A first-time rally was held, gathering 1,500 base workers (Uehara, 1982: 79). Items of petition to the Kaysen investigation team were adopted at the rally, put into a form of a petition letter, and
directly handed to a member of the investigation team. This was one of the first tactics employed to obtain the union’s economic aims. It is safe to assume that Zengunrōren had been holding informal meetings with the Army Personnel Management Office, since Zengunrōren was concerned to avoid unnecessarily irritating the U.S. military body. They invited the personnel officer to their Inauguration Rally and showed the petition letter to the officer prior to handing it to the investigation team. Zengunrōren’s tactics included holding informal meetings with the Army’s personnel office since that was one of the very few local windows where Zengunrōren could present their claims. They held regular meetings, adopted resolutions, brought the claims and petitioned.

During these years until 1964 the union did make economic gains. In 1962 Zengunrōren was met with wage hike and year-end bonus payment. In 1963 a retirement allowance system was established. To assert a causal relationship between Zengunrōren’s union activities and these economic improvements requires making some assumptions. The initiation of the Kennedy Administration’s policy of stabilizing Okinawa by bringing the socioeconomic level to that of mainland Japan was certainly critical to the economic improvement the base workers met with, but it can be also said that without base workers unionizing and raising their voices, the Kaysen investigation team would have not been aware their grievances. Regardless of such cause and effect
relationship, the fact that Zengunrōren and the base workers perceived such economic improvement to be the result of their union activities is of pertinence here. The gains the base workers met with were far from meeting all the demands the base workers made, but such relative improvements were received as fruit born from union activities (Uehara, 1982: 98; Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu, 1999a: 85).

Such a chronological connection between preceding union activity and subsequent economic improvement had two effects on the union. One was enhanced confidence in the union activists. The perception that their activities were not in vain, that their actions would with a certain probability lead to concrete gains resulted in motivating the activists to continue their struggles. Second, faith in the union was strengthened in the minds of potential beneficiaries, the non-unionized base workers, and this faith motivated non-union members to join the union. Uehara states that one of the difficulties he had in organizing and expanding the union was the widely held distrust in its effectiveness of the union. Often he heard voices of non-union members saying "There is no way that the military is going to listen to Zengunrōren’s demands. Retirement allowance, bonus payments...all are but dreams (Uehara, 1982: 78)," “Even if Zengunrōren is formed, the military will ignore union demands when making decisions of significance, so why should I join? I am only going to end up wasting my union fees
Uehara, who believed that unionization was the only means to fight against the instability and undemocratic working condition of the base workers, had been feeling the need to prove to non-union workers what unionization could do to improve every base workers' life. The concrete merits of a wage hike and allowances resulted in bringing in new workers to join (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 85).

In early 1965, frustrated with the lagging wage hike that had not been realized since 1962 in spite of yearly demands, Zengunrō devised a new tactic of overtime work and holiday shift refusal and inclusion of a “Right to Strike” clause in Zengunrō’s Union Charter. The Spring Labor Offensive began in February this year, and Zengunrō continued to negotiate with the military but received no reply.

In March Zengunrō announced to the military that it would enter in a one-day holiday shift refusal on March 21st, which was a Sunday, and an overtime work refusal from March 29th. While continuing to petition by meeting with both the military and the High Commissioner, Zengunrō decided to hold off the one-day holiday shift refusal. The majority of the union’s executive members were of the opinion that the effort within the union to wage a tactic of concerted work refusal was insufficient. At this point in the union’s history, Zengunrō was not yet ready to wage a strike. Zengunrō further waited to
see what kind of answers the military had on union demands before deciding on whether to accept overtime work as of March 29th.

On March 23rd, the military announced a set of revisions to the wage rate and various allowances. Zengunrō was disappointed with the wage revision plan: the amount of wage hike was trivial, and the majority of base workers did not qualify. Moreover, the period of regular wage increases was prolonged. Zengunrō interpreted the wage revision as a change for worse and submitted its own wage plan. The local military authority responded with a negative answer to Zengunrō’s demands, answering that wages of the base workers were decided in Washington and beyond the local authority’s power.

Empowered by having established a decision-making process for going on a strike and including such rule in the Union Charter, Zengunrō demanded reconsideration of the wage plan and improvement in the retirement allowance. To this tactic the military responded by establishing a labor committee to listen to Zengunrō’s demands, whereas in the previous years the Army’s personnel office was the only approach available. The new strike clause in the Union Charter became one of the main agendas at labor committee meetings, thus a bargaining tool to realize Zengunrō’s demands. Zengunrō demanded re-revision of the new wage plan, and the military demanded to delete the
unlawful Strike clause from the Charter for undisrupted negotiation. After observing that
the negotiation was moving forward, Zengunrō decided to delete the clause and
succeeded in making the military send its Army personnel officer to Hawaii and
Washington.

The result was re-revision of wage plan covering various aspects of wages, a
shortened term for regular wage increases, and paid maternity leave. In this year,
Zengunrō’s first gradual steps towards crossing the established legal line on striking can
be observed. About to cross the line and go on strike, Zengunrō decided not to.
Zengunrō was also able to win improvement in the retirement allowance system later that
year. These economic gains were obtained through the employment of new tactics,
threatening the management with a holiday work, overtime work refusal and strike. The
military responded by establishing a committee to deal with the increasing power of the
union. The union members interpreted the economic gains as results of union activities
(Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a, 110; Uehara, 1982: 143). Building up to a
strike was a valuable experience.

Zengunrō’s economic struggle to obtain a higher wage and improvement in
various allowances went rather smooth by 1966. By employing the now usual tactic of
holding Spring Labor Offensive rallies and negotiating with the labor committee
established the previous year, Zengunrō was met with a wage hike, an increase in holiday
and midnight shifts, and paid medical leave for women, announced in August (Uehara,
1982: 151; Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 124). Nevertheless, the union
members were frustrated by not being directly involved in the decision-making process of
their working conditions. In contrast, private sector workers had a legally guaranteed
right to collectively bargain around a negotiation table where management and labor
decided on the spot facing each other. If labor was dissatisfied, workers had the means to
leverage their bargaining power, which was the right to strike. But for the base workers
wages were decided by Washington, taking in consideration of reports either sent from
Okinawa or written by the investigation team sent to Okinawa. Local input was taken as
a request or a petition, with no obligation to respond. The union was not officially
included in the decision-making process, and the base workers were also constrained not
having the right to strike.

Now Ordinance 116 had become a subject of struggle. Zengunrō’s ultimate
anxiety was the lack of means to resist dismissal. The base workers sensed that they
needed to win over the right to strike. In the effort to leverage their bargaining power
within the given situation in a round-about way, Zengunrō devised tactics such as the
refusal of overtime work and holiday shifts. In 1967 the new tactic of “100% Paid Leave
Practice” made Zengunrō and the base workers again stand on the fringe of “illega”
activity and oppression resulting from it.

Zengunrō learned to wage the new tactics of “Hachimaki Tōsō,” sit-in, and the
hunger strike to attain economic demands in 1967. It also developed a plan to order all
union members to take a paid leave concertedly on a specified date, in effect a form of a
strike called “100% Paid Leave Practice”. Zengunrō’s demands at this year’s Spring
Labor Offensive were largely about wages and the improvement of inferior allowances
compared to mainland U.S. military base workers, in addition to the establishment of a
system of deciding wages through collective bargaining. Zengunrō held rallies and met
with personnel officers from the Pentagon, Army and CINCPAC in March.

Frustrated by slow answers, Zengunrō waged a new tactic of wearing a white
headband on the job that said “WAGE HIKE” on their foreheads. There was also a plan
to practice paid leave in concert, the 100% paid leave practice struggle, but it was not
implemented. I assume that Zengunrō executives decided to defer the paid leave practice
because they realized that local military authorities do not have the authority to make
decisions on the base workers’ economic demands. When all was decided in Washington,
such an action would only cause disruption in goal attainment. The wage investigation
team was to arrive in Okinawa in May, thus it was more practical to negotiate with them rather than to employ a disruptive tactic.

In May and June, Zengunrō executives held meetings with the Washington team. The investigation team left Okinawa without making concrete statements but taking with them the opinions collected in Okinawa through meetings with Zengunrō. In July wage revision was announced that included a wage hike and an increase in year-end allowance. Zengunrō took the wage revision as a disappointment that ignored the demands they had made to the investigation team (Uehara, 1982: 183). Although Zengunrō continued to demand re-revision of the new wage plan by holding meetings with the local authority, their effort did not bear any fruit and the revision plan remained.

The union ended this year’s Spring Labor Offensive in frustration over the absence of direct involvement and inclusion of the union in the decision-making routine on the economic issues. No matter how often they met with local military authorities or any investigation team dispatched from Washington, wages were decided in Washington. The union was restricted with regard to expressing their frustration and leveraging their negotiation power by Ordinance 116. But the year did not end with total failure. Zengunrō did make economic gains from waging the new tactics of sit-ins, hunger strikes, and finally a strike to demand a year-end allowance at Category IV workplaces. The
strike was undertaken by Category IV workers who were employed by contractors holding the right to strike. The above tactics had the effect, earning 50 to 60% of the demands the union made against the employers. Union members learned to wage new tactics and gained further confidence that struggle leads to concrete results. At the same time, major frustrations persisted.

Zengunrō’s endeavor in devising new tactics to change the unbalanced power relations between the management and labor included visiting Honolulu and Washington to directly petition the authorities in charge. Zengunrō sought to share the table where decisions are made. At the Tenth Extraordinary Meeting held on February 4th, 1968, the union came to an agreement to send executives to Honolulu and Washington and make a direct approach to the military officials. At the same time the union included the 100% paid leave struggle as a tactic depending on the results of the trip to Washington.

The subjects for negotiation covered various issues from wage hikes and allowances to the right to collective bargaining and strike. Union executives met with the Army, Air Force, Marine, and Exchange personnel of CINCPAC in Honolulu, and Pentagon, Army, Department of State, Labor Department officials, and people from AFL-CIO and UAW in Washington. At the meetings Zengunrō spoke of their discontents and, hearing Washington’s replies, Zengunrō executive members concluded
that their aims of gaining the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike would be difficult to obtain given the current union power.

Coming back to Okinawa, Zengunrō held meetings with local military authorities, and the replies were consistent on waiting for Washington’s answers. At the Eleventh Extraordinary Meeting held on April 7th, representatives voted on whether to wage the 100% paid leave struggle; the result was 185 votes affirmative out of 209 (Uehara, 1982: 233). On the 17th, the central committee decided on strike date of April 24th. Just a couple of days before, the High Commissioner announced a statement sent from Washington the establishment of an official bargaining table of JSLC in Okinawa where wages and other working conditions would be decided (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 148).

The statement basically allowed Zengunrō the right to collective bargaining. Zengunrō immediately began to collectively bargain on April 23rd, with the day to wage a de facto strike just around the clock. Within a few hours a rally for the next day’s paid leave struggle was to begin and union members were already gathering at the rally location while negotiations were being held. Zengunrō executive members at the bargaining table were faced with the decision of where to draw the line.
Uehara understood that it was impossible in just one day to reach an agreement on all of the union’s demands, but his worst worry was that the military might make concessions that would satisfy only some union members, prolong the bargaining and diffuse the paid leave struggle. The discontent among base workers was too strong, and an ambivalent attitude among the executives could have resulted in internal conflict and dissolution of the solidarity of the union (Interview Notes, Arasaki). The bargaining began with negotiations on the amount of a wage hike, and when the military side offered a certain amount, Uehara decided to end the bargaining. The first collective bargaining ended with a handshake on both sides. Then Uehara and the rest of the executive members arrived at a rally location already filled with over ten thousand highly motivated base workers. Upon arrival, Uehara heard voices calling “Hey President, we are going to do it, right!? (Uehara, 1982: 236).” Uehara announced the entrance into the 100% paid leave struggle on stage.

So the union members undertook and learned to wage another struggle tactic. They stood on a picket line for the first time. The military did not engage in any sort of counter tactics of oppression or disciplinary measures. The struggle was interpreted as a success. The collective bargaining continued and reached an agreement was reached in May. Zengunrō ended the struggle without much trouble. The result of the collective
bargaining showed union members that this year was a year of success. The new tactics of sending union executives to Washington, the threat to wage a strike behind the name of paid leave practice, and the actual paid leave struggle bore fruit, the establishment of an official bargaining table that won the most economic gains ever since the establishment of the union.

In 1969 Zengunrō continued to gain further experiences of struggle by the implementation of new tactics. For the first time the union attempted to wage a strike on a clearly political issue, the withdrawal of the B52 strategic bombers stationed in Okinawa. In November the previous year, a B52 bound for Vietnam loaded with bombs for air raids crashed in Kadena Air Base with a huge explosion that deeply frightened the local residents. Within a month of the accident, various organizations from the teachers’ union and political parties to labor unions formed an umbrella organization called “Inochi o Mamoru Kenmin Kyōtō Kaigi” with close to 140 organizations. The tactic to be employed in the struggle for withdrawal of B52s from Okinawa was a general strike. In January, Zengunrō held an extraordinary meeting to decide on participation in the general strike, and voted yes with 222 out of 236 (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 168). The momentum Zengunrō accumulated from their years of struggle experiences,
especially from last year’s success in waging a strike, affected the union’s decision to participate.

Now union activism ran head to head with the military’s strategic policy of war making. The military had already announced that participants in a general strike would be subject to disciplinary measures. The grassroots organizing effort for strike participation at military workplaces did not proceed smoothly as it did in the paid leave struggle of the year before. The issue had nothing to do with wages, and there were workers who feared reprisal. Zengunrō, perceived as the core determinant of the outcome of a general strike given its size and structural position on the bases, decided not to participate in the strike. Zengunrō’s decision received harsh criticism both from the outside and from within, especially from young workers eager to wage an intense means of struggle. There was fury among the membership that someone was disrupting the prefecture-wide momentum towards the first-ever general strike, especially because such persons were their own union executives making decisions without holding open meetings. From this time, Zengunrō began to show internal diversification between those who searched for escalation of tactics and those who placed the utmost priority in maintaining the union and chose to escalate the tactics only when there was unanimous agreement within the union. Lowering the level of tactic and choosing a common
denominator that everybody could accept was the executive members' rule in deciding on a tactic.

The general strike ended in a united rally on February 4th. Zengunrō's experience in the 2.4 struggle was a bitter one. But such bitter experience lead to an explosion in June that same year in the form of a strike. On April 4th, JSCLC announced that by June 2nd, 150 workers would be dismissed from the Air Force as a part of reduction measures of the Air Force foreign work force. After holding negotiations at the JSCLC bargaining table and continuously receiving negative answers to repeal the dismissal, Zengunro reached an agreement at the extraordinary meeting held on May 25th to wage a strike. It was a strike, no longer a concerted paid leave practice. Collective bargaining continued, and the military showed some openness to claims on the amount of retirement allowance to be offered to the dismissed but not on revocation of the layoff. Union executives were not eager to repeat the experience of 2.4 united struggle and turned off the bargaining. The military for the first time took the tactic of oppression, deploying the military police with bayonets. The military police used physical force to remove the picket lines and many were wounded. For many of the union members this was a first experience of such oppressive activity, and the oppression led to higher solidarity among the base workers.
Zengunrō continued its Spring Labor Offensive bargaining with JSCLC. The economic results were satisfactory, but when it came to the disciplining of union members including dismissal and suspension, Zengunrō demanded repeal. The union again held meetings at various levels and decided to wage another strike depending on the JSLC answer. JSLC showed willingness to compromise by reducing the disciplinary measure from dismissal to suspension and was able to win an agreement that Zengunrō would not engage in strikes before May 15th, 1970.

But now Zengunrō had not only won economic gains of wage hike and various allowances but also experienced standing on picket lines face to face with armed military personnel. The plan and failure of participation in the general strike fed frustration within the union and this led to an escalation of tactics, an escalation to the point where the union clearly transgressed the given legal restrictions against strikes. Zengunrō proved able to organize and withstand the fear of violence. The union’s bargaining power did protect the workers subject to disciplinary measures. However, the union was unable to undo the dismissal of 150 workers in the Air Force workplaces. The dismissal aroused strong anxiety among all workers.

The base workers perceived that restructuring of the U.S. bases would be made depending on the progress of the Vietnam War and the coming reversion, and the Air
Force dismissals were the sign of the beginning of restructuring. The dismissal was not a one-time problem restricted to a small part of the workforce; it was an issue shared by all workers, a situation they could easily find themselves in tomorrow. There is a connection between Zengunrō’s strike and the immediate threat to the base workers’ life. The presence or withdrawal of the B52s did pose danger to the base workers’ lives, but the presence/withdrawal did not affect base workers’ job stability. It was the dismissal as a result of tightened military budget that pushed the base workers to engage in a strike.

Zengunrō’s posture was highly influenced by the management labor relationship. Ordinance 116 and the military’s capacity to oppress was still in effect, although Zengunrō was able to overthrow the ordinance de facto by physically doing the undoable and decreasing the sanctions arising from such transgression at the collective bargaining table. Especially when the subject of struggle was beyond the arena of economic demands, the military deemed such action as running against the legitimate role of a labor union. Zengunrō’s executive members, who stood in a position of protecting the union from oppression and lowering tactics when necessary, were reluctant to furiously wage strikes on political subjects when the union could not guarantee unemployment measures for those dismissed by the very reason of engaging in a political strike. Although union members were close to being dismissed for waging an economic strike, union executives
were able to justify the union's reasons and protect them. When engaging in a political strike, there were no points of compromise for either side. It was no longer a necessary topic to negotiate.

In November 1969 Fukkikyō organized a strike and rally to show opposition against Prime Minister Sato's visit to the United States. From available resources, there cannot be seen any signs of Zengunrō as a union organizing its union members to participate in the strike. The only reference available regarding Zengunrō's participation is "Zengunrō took actions of paid leave practice and participated in the strike (Uehara, 1982: 352)." From this sentence, I argue that Zengunrō as a union did not mobilize its members but individual union members participated on their own terms by submitting a paid leave notice to their superintendents.

From November to December 1969 two significant changes fell heavy on the base workers' shoulders. One was the announcement of the Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué that stressed that both countries' shared common interest in the U.S. military facilities in Okinawa, and that the bases would be maintained for security purposes, while not making any reference to the base reduction nor withdrawal of nuclear weapons. Within two weeks of the Joint Communiqué, JSLC announced the dismissal of 2,400 workers beginning January 1970 until May. The mass layoff was perceived by the base workers
as the other side of the reversion coin. In other words, for the base workers, reversion meant that the bases were going to be maintained while the base workers were going to lose their jobs.

The first list of dismissal was to be announced December 5th and implemented by January 20th. The Communique and the dismissals connected and showed the base workers what reversion meant for them. The connection made, the base workers rose in anger. Zengunrō’s anticipation of job insecurity that would accompany reversion was layoffs occurring upon base reduction. Zengunrō as a union conceptualized such layoffs caused by base reduction as a necessary evil required to create an Okinawa that was base-free. But the picture presented to them now was fundamentally different from their anticipation. The bases were going to stay, and their jobs taken away. On December 21st, Zengunrō held an extraordinary meeting that agreed on setting three series of strikes, one before January 5th, the second in late January, the third depending on the progress of collective bargaining.

On January 5th, Zengunrō bargained with JSLC and demanded repeal of dismissal, a six-month prior notification and adjustment period, and an increase in retirement allowance. JSLC responded with a negative answer. The Strike Declaration announced on January 7th interpreted the dismissal as not entailing the return or diminishing of the
bases but a fortification and maintenance of the military bases premised on the sacrifice of base workers (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 191). On January 8th, Zengunrō entered a 48-hour strike, the longest strike it had ever waged, another escalation in tactics. This time the military avoided physical action. Zengunrō continued to bargain with the JSLC but did not receive any positive answers. On January 19th the union began a 5-day 120-hour strike. Now, the military mobilized military personnel with bayonets to remove the picketers. At these sites of conflicts, slogans of “If you are going to lay us off, then return the bases!” was beginning to be voiced by the picketers, a significant sign of connection made between the economic struggle of revocation of layoffs and the political struggle of base withdrawal.

On December 21st, 1970, another mass layoff of 3,000 workers was announced by the U.S. military (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu. 1999a: 209). Zengunrō’s reaction was another series of strikes in 1971: 48 hours from February 10th, 48 hours from March 2nd, 48 hours from April 14th. In 1971 Zengunrō continued to wage a series of strikes that held the characteristic of the base withdrawal movement. By this time it was apparent that the strikes were not solely aimed at revoking the dismissal. The slogan of “Withdraw the bases if you are going to lay us off!” was now a symbol of the struggle. This base withdrawal movement as a consequence of economic struggles was the
reversion movement for the base workers. And these intense struggles in opposition to mass layoffs, with their demand of base withdrawal, were preliminary to the union’s participation in the 5.19 General Strike of May 19th, 1971.

This was a purely political strike that voiced opposition to the conditions for reversion promoted by the governments of Japan and the United States. The General Strike was organized by Fukkikyō, who were already demanding base withdrawal as a condition of reversion as noted above, but Zengunrō was the dominant figure in the strike since it was the largest union among the participants, with more than 20,000 members while the second largest union was Kankōrō with only 8,000.

On June 17th, 1971, the reversion agreement was signed by the governments of Japan and the United States. Both governments agreed on the maintenance of the U.S. military bases in Okinawa upon reversion. On October 24th, Zengunrō adopted the slogan of anti-war, peace, and finally, base withdrawal. Based on the union’s established position of base withdrawal, anti-war and peace, Zengunrō for a second time participated in a strictly political strike, the 11.10 General Strike on November 11th that was aimed against the Diet session, often called “The Okinawa Diet,” that was about to ratify the June 17th agreement on reversion. Over 70 unions with more than 56,000 workers participated in the strike. This was an intense day of physical clash between the
participants and the riot police that resulted in a death of a police officer by a Motolov cocktail thrown by a student activist.

The New Year did not bring a stop to the series of mass layoffs, with the announcement of layoff of 1,629 workers in February 1971. Zengunrō reacted again by striking, this time for 240 hours from March 7th, and then continuing for a week from the 17th, and again on the 24th, extending the strike without limit. After 35 days, the longest ever strike was called off by the executive members on April 10th, again causing strong discontent among the members, especially within the Youth Divisions.

Development of Consciousness and the Reversion Movement

Klandermans (1992) has summarized and categorized literatures on the cultural aspect of collective action. The majority of the literatures written on the social construction of meaning have treated consciousness as the independent variable that affects the participation level, but Klandermans is more interested in the social construction of meaning in action situations, or the processes of interpreting, defining, and consciousness raising that occur among participants who interact during episodes of collective action (81), treating the relationship between action and consciousness as independent and dependent variable respectively. A focus on how action affected actor consciousness,
which in turn motivated the participants to engage still further, is pertinent to understanding how Zengunrō enabled itself, through action, to construct mental readiness for the struggle over reversion.

Heightened “success expectation” as a result of movement success is one of the key elements that resulted in the increased motivation to act among the base workers. As seen above, Zengunrō engaged in various tactics when making economic demands, and through its history of struggles, the union succeeded partially in obtaining its demands. Wages of base workers had been among the lowest within all industries in Okinawa, and as a result of movement activities, by the late 1960s the base workers had an above average wage. The base workers started with no allowances, but the movement was able to gain various benefits: retirement and medical benefits, seasonal lump sum payments, women’s medical leave, maternity leave, and long-term sick leave. The union began with those members who believed in taking action to improve their working conditions, but at this point they felt no assurance that their action would actually bring about an improvement of circumstances. The cause was rather ideological, a strong imperative to redress the injustices. The potential beneficiaries, those who would possibly gain from union activities but not part of the union, initially were in doubt about the union’s
effectiveness. But the union continued to make economic gains and so demonstrated to
the unionized workers that union activities will lead to a better life.

Concrete economic gains heightened success expectations, leading to the
expansion of the union, but in fact the consequences of both success and failure in
waging escalated tactics itself raised the consciousness of the base workers, motivating
them to further escalate tactics. Three struggles, the 100% Paid Leave Practice in 1968,
the February 4th United Action in 1969, and the June 5th “Bayonet” Strike also in 1969,
all had a profound effect in raising the base workers’ consciousness.

The Paid Leave Practice was the first ever tactic practiced by the union that ran
against the established ordinance. Before beginning the Practice, the union waged a
“Hachimaki Struggle,” making members wear headbands at their workplaces during
work hours. Whereas rallies and demonstrations were held outside of the workplaces and
by groups, the Hachimaki Struggle forced each union member to stand as an individual in
the workplaces and carry the symbol of the union on his/her physical person. This had an
effect of making each of the union members conscious of the union’s activities.

The Paid Leave Practice was a success in that the union made economic gains
without receiving disciplinary dismissals, but disregarding the economic gains, the fact
that the union was able to conduct an “illegal” activity heightened confidence and
courage on an individual level, and deepened faith in the union resulting in strengthened
solidarity within the union (Uehara, 1982: 248).

The February 4th United Action left discontent among Zengunrō members. It
would have been the first prefecture-wide strike, but Zengunrō faded away during the
planning process, lowering the intensity of the struggle. Base workers who were for the
general strike felt strong distrust and anger towards their own union executives for having
weakened the outcome (Interview Notes, Interviewee 1; Agena). This failure only
worked to compress the internal dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction that exploded in the form
of heightened tactics in the next struggle. A section of younger members was formed
within Zengunrō, the majority of whom would have been college students if they have
continued their education. Youth Division called “Seinenbu” began to be formed within
each workplace and sought to organize those younger union members who were
generally more radical and energetic in waging militant tactics. Such energy, organized
from below, pressured the executive members to escalate the union’s tactics. There had
been pressure from the inside before the February 4th United Action, but after it became
an organized effort and increasingly effective.

The June 5th Bayonet Strike in 1969 was the first incident in which the union
members experienced physical oppression from the military. The military deployed
military police to remove the picketers using bayonets, and as we have seen earlier, many were injured. Such confrontation with authority resulted in heightening the solidarity among the union members. The sense of injustice was not only shared among the union members but more generally among the people of Okinawa and it spread to the mainland Japan through media coverage. Because the picket groups were organized by workplaces, seeing familiar faces standing in front of armed military personnel and being injured aroused both anger at the enemy and faith in one’s comrades, as a result motivating the union members to struggle for more (Interview Notes, Interviewee 1).

There can be a circular relationship between action and the development of consciousness. Some of the literatures treat the development of consciousness as the pre-requisite to action (McAdam, [1982] 1999), or some treats the consciousness itself as the collective action (Mellucci, 1995), and some looks at the consciousness as the consequence of action (Fanstasia, 1989). In Zengunrō’s case, it was both that one affected other, and the other in turn affected the one. Zengunrō’s actions led to the critical development of consciousness that motivated the workers to struggle further.
Establishment of Collaborative Connections with Outside Organizations

Another important aspect of the previous struggles that enabled Zengunrō to later wage the reversion struggles was the development of a collaborative relationship between outside organizations, or to be more precise, fortification of the union through participation in other pre-existing organizations and the creation of a new organization. The key connections were made with Kenrōkyō and Fukkikyō.

Zengunrō played a major role in the creation of Kenrōkyō in 1964, a coalition of labor unions from all sectors in Okinawa, private, public, and military. The specific purpose in creating such a united body of labor union was to bring in the largest possible strength of the unionized workers to collaborate on the shared economic issues of tax reduction and lower commodity prices (Okinawa Rōdō Undōshi-25 nen no Ayumi Henshū Iinkai, ed. 1995).

But there was also a latent motive behind Zengunrō’s participation in Kenrōkyō. Zengunrō, not yet willing to openly wage reversion struggles independently, sought to join other organizations to second-handedly participate in reversion struggles without being so identified. Kenrōkyō from its inception was outright pro-reversion as seen in the Declaration of Formation (Okinawa Rōdō Undōshi-25 nen no Ayumi Henshū Iinkai ed., 1995: 104-05) and the Union Platform (ibid, 102-04). Participation in a larger entity
that was structurally more able to take physical action as one stage in Zengunrō’s gradual
process towards participating in the reversion struggle. Such establishment of
collaborative relationships between organizations meant that Zengunrō gained support for
its pre-1970 economic struggles especially the Paid Leave Strike and the June 5th Strike.
Union members and individual supporters recollect that without this support, Zengunrō
could not have waged the strikes that ran against the military’ interest (Interview Notes,
Uehara; Tamaki; Maeshiro).

Participation in Fukkikyō in 1966 had a similar effect, only that it was more direct
in that Fukkikyō was the leading umbrella organization with an ad hoc motive of
realizing reversion to Japan. Most, if not all, the member unions of Kenrōkyō were
already a part of Fukkikyō on an individual union basis. Such multi-membership of
organizations in Okinawa had an effect in spreading reversion movement activities, and
Zengunrō strategically became part of the established connection. The support and,
moreover, the language of “base withdrawal” was already there for Zengunrō to connect
with, so as to immerse the union in the swirl of the reversion movement already
happening, only it took a while for Zengunrō to participate because of its immediate
dependency on the bases.
CHAPTER 4
FROM REVERSION AS SENTIMENT TO SUBJECT OF STRUGGLE

In this chapter, I attempt to explain the process of Zengūrō’s involvement in the reversion movement by analyzing the change in Zengūrō’s discourse regarding reversion from June 1961, the year of the formation of Zengūrōren, to reversion in May 1972.

Regarding union-based activities that sought winning over reversion as a movement goal, within these 11 years the base workers’ union showed a drastic shift from inaction to a representative figure of the insurgency on Okinawa. Through most of the 1960s, the union concentrated on making economic demands and negotiating with the U.S. military regarding employees’ working conditions. It was only in 1970 that Zengūrō revealed a taste for “struggle against the bases,” the dominant component of the reversion struggle. In 1970 Zengūrō began its series of strikes that entailed the demand for base withdrawal. Finally in 1971 Zengūrō made “base withdrawal” a union slogan and waged another series of strikes, including a general strike along with other unions and political parties.

Everything has its own reason, and so it is with Zengunro’s process from inaction to action. There are time-and-place specific reasons why Zengunro did not take ad hoc physical collective actions to realize reversion, and there are again reasons why Zengunro did take actions regarding reversion at a very specific moment in time and not otherwise.
Both structural and cultural factors interplayed in this shift. The dynamic transactions between perception or interpretation and the structural conditions that surrounded the base workers are the focus in this chapter.

Framing process theory along with the political opportunity theory, or political threat theory, are used here to explain the shift from inaction to action. In analyzing the change in action, one must take into account the dynamic transaction between perception, structural condition, and the resultant physical form of action. The question of how reversion was perceived among the base workers at the point of union formation and the process of transformation of this perception as the sociopolitical structure that surrounded the base workers changed over time is also the question of how framing processes and political opportunity/threat affect each other, resulting in change in action. Benford and Snow (2000) writes

[C]ollective action frames are not static, reified entities but are continuously being constituted, contested, reproduced, transformed, and/or replaced during the course of social movement activity. Hence, framing is a dynamic, ongoing process. But this process does not occur in a structural or cultural vacuum. Rather, framing processes are affected by a number of elements of the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded (628).
I intend to figure out just that, i.e., how changes in framing accord with the changes in the context the base workers found themselves in, which ultimately led the base workers to take actions according to the frames established. This attempt falls parallels the endeavor to transcend analytical divides between the theoretical triads of resource mobilization, political opportunities, and framing processes and perceive the three as interlinked tools to be used for comprehensive movement analysis.

The specific theory I use here is what is called framing processes. It is the approach that introduced tools for analyzing meaning construction and the sense-making of the situation that actors engage in during their struggles. As other social movement approaches do, framing theory also makes a causal argument that pertinent framing works as a driving force for movement development and continuation (Snow & Benford 1992: 143–150; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996: 7). Pertinent framing processes work to mobilize the population against certain subjects and to take certain directions delineated in the frames established.

Snow and Benford (ibid) refer to frame as “an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment,” and the verb form framing is referred to as an “active, process-derived
phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction (137).” Frame functions as punctuation of “reality,” as modes of attribution and articulation; “frames focus attention on a particular situation considered problematic, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, and articulate an alternative set of arrangements including what the movement actors need to do in order to affect desired change (Hunt, Benford and Snow, 1994: 190).” The three concepts introduced are diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing “identifies some event or condition as problematic and in need of amelioration, and thereby designates culpable agents (ibid, p.191),” in other words it defines what exactly the problem is. Diagnostic framing points to the articulation and identification of the cause or subjects to be blamed. Prognostic framing “outlines a plan for redress, specifying what should be done by whom, including an elaboration of specific targets, strategies, and tactics (ibid).” This framing clarifies the means or kinds of action to take in order to solve the issue raised in the diagnostic frame. Motivational framing “address[es] this need (of people to act) by keynoting appropriate vocabularies of motive or rationales for doing something for the cause (ibid),” i.e., stating the “why,” giving reasons to act. This framing involves justifying reasons of one’s own participation in the movement and offers the audiences their reasons to participate. Using these three
concepts, I intend to demonstrate how the sentiment for reversion shifted to an agenda of active engagement.

To state the conclusion first, a strong majority of the base workers were for reversion on an individual basis, and thus there was a consensus regarding the yes/no question on reversion. But when it came to mobilizing the base workers as a union, the persons who held responsibility in movement outcomes, the executive members of Zengunrō, in the earlier years abstained from taking action since engagement in the reversion movement was a subject of repression by the U.S. military. The reversion movement was a clear denial of U.S. military control and the U.S. military became hostile when Zengunrō showed its pro-reversion stance. Given its weak bargaining position set forth in Ordinance 116, so that listening to the claims made by Zengunrō was not a military obligation but a favor to be dispensed, Zengunrō had to keep from taking actions that might end cost it all access to claim realization, resulting in the deterioration of the newly born union. The union was thus its early in years anxious to maintain a posture that was acceptable and selectively did not take actions that might illegitimatize the union. But since individual base workers were for reversion, at certain opportunities where voicing reversion was possible, such as at rallies organized by Fukkikyō, participation took place and action can be observed. Zengunrō through its "legitimate"
economic struggles begin to gain confidence and power as an organization and, as we have already seen, began to shift from inaction to action in the reversion struggle. But it was only when reversion was posed as a threat to economic life of the workers did they act as a union to demand reversion, or at this historical moment, to demand repeal of the conditions of reversion as demanded by the governments of the United States and Japan.

Two documents in particular enable us to see Zengunro’s perception of the issues faced by the base workers, what should be done in order to deal with the issues, and the reasons why the union should act, or the diagnosis, prognosis, and motivational frames respectively. These are the Declaration of Formation of Zengunroren and the Movement Policies, both announced at the inauguration rally of Zengunroren on June 18th, 1961. First, let’s take a look at the Declaration.

It has been more than 15 years since Okinawa was separated from our motherland Japan upon the end of the war, in which Okinawa suffered the largest sacrifice. Ever since until today, we are made to lead an unnatural path politically, economically, and socio-culturally under U.S. control. We the habitants of Okinawa have continuously fought and endeavored to relieve ourselves from this irregular social condition, but our cherished hope (higan) have yet not been considered.

Arising from such irregular societal form were issues of basic human rights and other issues that covered various social aspects. For the diligent working class, adding to the underpaid wages, they are facing the harsh realities of life that are doubled and tripled with sufferings from heavy taxation, high commodity prices, and lack of social security system.

Especially the base-related workers are not guaranteed of the
workers’ three basic rights, which is the standard in democratic societies. The ordinance labor laws are imposing strict restrictions to workers’ activities.

...[W]hy is it that workers living in a democratic society are not enabled to freely unionize? Why are retirement allowance nor bonus payments made? We the military workers have held such doubts and discontents... We have confirmed that there is no way but to autonomously form a union and free ourselves from the unilateral control by the management.

...We came to an agreement that in order to solve the various issues within the military workplaces and to ensure the fifty thousand base workers’ standard of living and rights at the level of Japanese citizens, we need bring together the pre-established unions and establish a powerful union, thus we here establish Zengunrōren.

We here announce that we will expand and fortify this unified organization, and at the same time engage in legitimate union activities while executing the Movement Policies of Zengunrōren...

(Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu, 1999b: 296).

Before looking into the text, let’s take a look at the content of the Movement Policies since the above Declaration touches on the Policies.

...In order to win over the issues commonly shared by the base workers, the unionization of un-unionized workplaces must be promoted with the highest priority of all union activities, basing the activities for unionized on Zengunrōren.

Zengunrōren’s development will be highly dependent on whether if we could heighten the workers’ consciousness among some of our colleagues who are looking upon unionization as a bystander with an attitude of resignation. Based on this understanding, unionization of un-unionized workplaces must be sought as the agenda of utmost importance.

...Each individual worker protects their own standard of living and rights together their powers and strive, we will have victory and
hope. With such consciousness, let's face forward and deal with the issues [of resignation and indifference].

Specific Movement Goals
1. Opposition against Layoffs and Establishment of Retirement Allowance System
2. At military workplaces, dogmatic layoffs have been made as an everyday practice based on the reasons of tightened budget and reduction of the bases. Also, depending on the sways in the international situations, we are always facing the uncertainty of becoming unemployed en mass. Moreover, our wages are not enough even to sustain our everyday expenses, and no matter how long we work, we are not given any retirement allowance. As such, we are engaging in labor without job security and underpaid wages...
3. Establishment of Long-term Sick Leave
4. Improvement of the Wage System
5. Improvement of Various Allowance Systems
(Uehara, 1982: 69-76)

With these statements before us we can clarify how the issue of reversion was conceptualized by the base workers. The opening paragraph of the Declaration contains the only reference made on reversion. It asserts that various grievances or discontents specific to the base workers of “not [being] guaranteed of the workers’ three basic rights,” not being able to “freely unionize,” and not receiving any “retirement allowance nor bonus payments” arises from the fact that “we are made to lead an unnatural path politically, economically, and socio-culturally under U.S. control.” Thus, the diagnostic framing is that “various issues” specifically noted are caused by being under U.S. rule. It
is important here to note that, at the point of union formation the base workers’ union is already focusing on mainland workers’ rights, working conditions and standards of living, and comparing them with their own, aiming to reach the mainland Japanese citizens’ level.

The prognostic framing, or the means of ameliorating the content of discontents raised, was the fortification and expansion of the union. The Declaration stated that unionization was the first means sought as the way to go about gaining the specific movement goals of wage increase, bonus payments and retirement allowances, among other economic goals listed in the Specific Movement Goals, and this resulted in the formation of a coalition union to bring in all the preexisting independent unions. The Declaration continued that expansion and fortification of the union was a tactic to be taken to win established goals. The Movement Policies clarified what was meant by expansion and fortification of the union, i.e., “the unionization of un-unionized workplaces” that must be “promoted with the highest priority of all union activities.”

The motivational framing, the reasons why the base workers should engage in movement activities, is stated in the third paragraph of the Policies, that each workers’ power may be weak but bringing all together will deliver victory into their hands.
It is clear that the base workers perceived the very cause of their discontent as U.S. control; the fact that Okinawa is being separated from the mainland and placed under U.S. colonial rule has brought about the lack of human rights and the base worker-specific grievances. This was the diagnosis. But the prognosis that we saw above was not to engage in the reversion movement already developed in Okinawa but to engage in the fortification and expansion of the union through unionizing the un-unionized in order to attain economic goals. Even among the statement of movement goals there is no reference to the issue of reversion. This, the base workers’ engagement, or non-engagement though being pro-reversion, can be observed in the years ahead also. Uehara (1982), the president of Zengunrōren, states that fortification of the union and unionizing the un-unionized remained the main agenda for Zengunrōren (91). Though the Movement Policies for 1962 noted the issue of reversion, for example in the critique against the Kennedy administration’s new policy on Okinawa, the issue of reversion remained as a diagnostic framing and did not connect with taking specific action in order to achieve reversion. The prognostic framing was to demand specific economic goals as seen in the 1961 Policies, such as the wage hike and retirement allowance (ibid, 92).

One incident noteworthy here concerns a banner raised at Zengunrōren’s First Regular Meeting, July 1962, its message “Promote reversion to Motherland.” Uehara
states that from the perspective of “regaining humanity,” the base workers were eager to bring about reversion as soon as possible (ibid, 95). At the meeting the invited guest from the Army’s Personnel Management Office demanded in anger that the offending banner be taken down, and when the executive members refused, he left the meeting stating that he could not make a speech at a meeting where “a politically-colored slogan that runs against the U.S. military policy is raised (ibid).” A couple of days later Uehara was called into the Personnel Management office, questioned and criticized for displaying a political slogan counter to U.S. policy. The executive members again met with the Personnel Management officer on July 13th to explain the union’s intent in raising such a slogan. The official letter Zengunrōren wrote to explain its position to the U.S. military body is worth taking a look at since it gives a good idea how reversion was perceived by the base workers. The letter is titled “Our view on the slogan ‘Let’s promote Reversion to our Motherland’” and reads as follows:

...We deeply regret that the Personnel Office misunderstood our true intent of raising the reversion slogan at the regular meeting on July 8th...
1. Okinawa’s reversion issue is nothing new, and all strata of the people of Okinawa have been willing to revert to Japan’s administration for more than a decade, raising their voices on various occasions to both governments of Japan and U.S....

Though there are minor differences in positions against the reversion issue and the way to pursue the movement, the majority of the people of Okinawa long to secure their basic human rights under the
Japanese Constitution as Japanese citizens and to take part in national politics.

2. Under such a social state of people from all strata longing to revert, we military base workers needed to show our stance regarding the reversion issue.

    Especially when considering the fact that private sector labor unions have been voicing support for reversion with the slogan ‘Let’s win over Reversion’, we thought unless we also show our stance clearly regarding reversion we might be subject to their criticism. Based on this objective stance, we inserted the slogan ‘Let’s promote Reversion’.

    The wording ‘Let’s promote Reversion’ is a very moderate expression in Japanese. The slogan was to show it is not that base workers are indifferent but that we also wish for reversion...

5. Although you are claiming that voicing opinions on the reversion issue is a political activity, whereas a labor union should be centering its action on economic issues, the reversion issue is indeed strongly related to economic issues. To give a few examples, compared to mainland Japan, the social security system is very much behind, commodity prices are high, and wages are low...especially regarding us military employees, there is no system established here on various allowances that are systematically paid to base workers on the mainland. We believe that if Okinawa falls under Japan’s jurisdiction, we will be able to enjoy various allowances and benefits equally with mainland base workers. Acknowledging this stance of ours, it should not be so difficult to understand our emotions in requesting reversion (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu 1999b, 278).

Section 2 is a defensive position the union purposely took in order to avoid repression.

Section 5 is interesting here because it shows that perception-wise, struggling for reversion could have been a prognosis for ameliorating the economic grievances listed as a diagnostic frame. Zengunrōren already has the clear idea that the issue of reversion can be perceived as an economic issue. But as for physical action, the base workers do not
engage in union-based physical activities in order to demand reversion. The issue of reversion still remained as a will and sentiment in 1962, and the union continued to make economic demands, and sought to expand and fortify the union by engaging in leafletting activity.

In July 1963, the second Regular Meeting was held, and within the Movement Policies, a section was devoted to the issue of reversion, titled “Struggle to Promote Reversion.” The content of the text ran similar to that of previous years, stating that reversion is a “netsugan” of all people of Okinawa for the purpose of freeing themselves from the “irregular social situation,” to “regain sovereignty as a Japanese national,” and to demand protection under the Constitution of Japan (Uehara, 1982: 113).” The text continued as follows:

Conflict may arise vis-à-vis the military agency by taking up the issue of reversion, but we must hold courage and strongly voice our true intent. We must sustain our organizational autonomy, and seek our way towards reversion. (ibid)

The text shows that the issue of reversion is now on the union’s agenda although it is understood that the voicing of such a “political” stance may arouse anger in the U.S. military and negatively affect the union’s economic aims. But still at this moment, one can see that the union has just started to plow its way through in searching for base
worker-specific means of taking action. Reversion has been raised as a “issue” among other economic demands within the diagnosis framing, but the prognostic framing is yet unclear; the question of how to engage, or specifically what kind of actions to take has not yet arisen. For this reason, the issue of reversion still remained in this year as a wish, or as a slogan.

At the Fifth Regular Meeting held on August 1st, 1965, issue of reversion has similarly appeared on Zengunro’s agenda for struggle. In the Movement Policies, the seventh section, titled “Struggle to Win Over Reversion” states as follows:

...We the people of Okinawa Prefecture’s demand for reversion to the motherland, for the return of the administrative rights is not merely a demand for bread nor a sentiment.

Where can one find in this twentieth century people who belong to a nation without the protection from their state and constitution, being infringed upon their human rights, lacking numerous freedoms, and receiving humiliation?

Okinawa prefecture’s people’s struggle to win over reversion is thus a cry for ethnic self-determination (minzoku jiketsu) that free ourselves from colonial rule under foreign race (iminzoku). Our cry is the demand for justice and peace.

Our attainment of rights to regain our true humanity and to lead a happy life is not possible without the protection of the Japan’s democratic and peaceful constitution.

Standing on this basic position, we must reflect on and therefore must reconsider our past attitude towards participation in the reversion movement. We must unify the union members’ opinions, promote the participation in Fukkikyō. While reflecting the base workers’ opinion in the reversion movement, we must fortify the movement to win over
reversion by keeping in steps with the rest of the diligent public (Zengunrō Newsletter, No. 21).

For the base workers the reversion struggle was framed by the idea of “regaining a human life.” Within this framework, the most fundamental causal factor of the base workers not being able to lead a “human life” was being under U.S. rule. Thus, the diagnosis is the “lack of human rights,” the “humiliation” the people receive under U.S. rule, the lack of protection by their own state and constitution. Prognostic framing was to win over reversion. Zengunrō decided to “reconsider its past attitude” the union has been taking in participating in the reversion movement and to fortify the movement. The motivational framing is that “without protection of the constitution,” a truly human life is impossible. That is why the reversion movement must be sought as the remedy.

The new willingness to “reconsider the union’s past attitude” points to the union’s failure to mobilize its members in the pre-existing reversion movement lead by Fukkikyō. At the Q&A session on Movement Policies at the Regular Meeting, a question was raised from the floor about the union executive members’ opinion on engagement in the reversion movement, saying the executive members should reach out to each chapter in engaging in the reversion movement. The executive members’ reply reads as follows:

Reversion movement has been engaged gradually and modestly. It is true that the movement is only engaged by the executive members and
by partial union members. We intend to make it a union-based engagement (ibid).

So we see that Zengunrō as a union had yet to mobilize for the struggle to win reversion.

Only those who were conscious enough to show up to the rallies held by Fukkikyō participated on an individual basis, not in reaction to the movement policy of Zengunrō.

For example, Sato’s visit to Okinawa from August 19th to 21st, 1965, was a big issue for pro-reversion activists in Okinawa. The Fifth Regular Meeting was held several weeks before Sato’s visit to Okinawa, and there cannot be seen any sign of union-based mobilization of the base workers for participation in the rally. Moreover, whether to welcome Sato or to protest his visit was not on Zengunrō’s agenda, the issue that split the Fukkikyō member organizations over whether to wave the hinomaru or rally against his visit, a symbolic sign of Fukkikyō’s shift towards a more critical stance. In the documentary footage that covered Sato’s visit to Okinawa, Zengunrō flags can be seen being waved at the rallying point. When I consider the fact that there were union members at the rally and no written statements on the union’s decision to mobilize its membership, I come to the conclusion that again, participation was made only by individuals making a private decision to participate.
In an important shift Zengunro showed signs of officially becoming a member organization of Fukkikyo. This I argue was a result of grasping the political opportunity opened by Sato's visit to Okinawa. The visit appeared to the local activists as a sure sign that the "Okinawa problem" was going to be seriously considered under the Sato Administration. Up to this point, for the base workers' union, reversion to Japan was never considered negatively. It was surely a positive thing that must be realized in order to "regain humanity." But what made the union executive members abstain from taking overt physical actions towards winning over reversion was the repressive attitude of the U.S. military and the clear imbalance of bargaining power between the union and management under Ordinance 116. Category I workers were denied of the right to engage in collective bargaining, thus the union was dependent on the U.S. military making favorable considerations in listening to the informal claims made by the union. Because sitting on the bargaining table was not an obligation of the management, or refusing to bargain was not considered as an unfair labor practice by the management, the union felt the need to maintain a friendly relationship with the management, and taking actions that ran against the U.S. policy surely entailed a risk. Uehara states:

At the early stage of the union, immediately diving into the struggles of winning over rights [meaning repeal of Ordinance 116], right to strike, or anti-base...those were taboos. We were for those activities, and we
understood their importance. But before taking those actions, our focus was on the democratization of the workplace, and to raise the wage at a level that would allow us to subsist. And the summer and winter seasonal bonus payments and retirement allowance (Interview Notes).

Uehara and the rest of the executive members formed a union based on their union consciousness that an individual worker’s power may be weak but bringing the workers together will bring them victory. The union having been formed, the union executives did not choose to immediately put it at risk. Thus, the diagnosis covered all aspects of the fundamental question of reversion, and the selective prognosis was to put aside the issue of reversion and to first of all fortify and expand the union. Realizing reversion was a distant goal that they found other immediate concerns that affected the workers’ life of today, which was the improvement of the everyday working conditions. One can see this in the Declaration of the Formation of Zengunrōren stressing that the union will engage in “legitimate” activities.

Zengunrō considering joining Fukkikyō in 1965 and did so in 1966. Discontent for not having engaged strongly enough in the past was expressed at the Q&A session of the 1965 Regular Meeting. Sato’s visit to Okinawa symbolized a shift in the political arena. Reversion was no longer the object of longing but something that could be realized in the near future. These impacted the union to reconsider its previous attitude
regarding engagement in the reversion movement. The answer Zengunrō reached was to join Fukkikyō and reflect the base workers' opinion in the movement.

On August 21st, Zengunrō held its Sixth Regular Meeting. Participation in Fukkikyō was supported with a strong majority of vote. The proposition to join Fukkikyō raised by the Executive Board read as follows:

Okinawa Prefecture citizens' will and struggle for reversion to the motherland is not merely a matter of bread or sentiment. It has been over twenty years since the end of World War II until today, and there is no sensible reason for us to live without the protection of State and the Constitution, to have our basic human rights violated, to face numerous disabilities and humiliation. Prefecture citizens' struggle for reversion is the movement for ethnic self-determination, seeking social justice and peace, so as to free ourselves from the colonial rule under an alien race. It is not possible to revive our true humanity and secure various rights, so as to be blessed with a happy life without protection under Japan's democratic and peaceful Constitution.

Based on this understanding, we reflected on our weak engagement in the reversion movement. We raised in last year's movement policy to promote the participation in Fukkikyō and have been struggling more actively since then in the reversion movement.

This year...for the purpose of expanding the base of the reversion movement, to reflect the base workers' opinions in the movement, to develop and strengthen the movement into a strong ethnic movement, we would like to propose official participation in Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Kyōgikai.

(Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu, 1999a: 120-21)

A couple of union chapter representatives opposed the proposal, arguing that the decision
to participate in Fukkikyō was too hasty and Zengunrō members should know more about
the nature of Fukkikyō. Another point of opposition was that Zengunrō should focus on
economic struggles because it was not a political organization (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku
Honbu Undōshi Henshū Iinkai, ed., 1996a: 56). The majority of the union members
voted for the participation:

Far from being hasty, participation in Fukkikyō should have been
materialized earlier. We indeed stand in a unique position for being base
workers, but for this very reason, by becoming an active participant we
should reflect the base workers’ opinion and engage [in the reversion
movement] as a prefecture wide movement (ibid).

Zengunrō’s highest organizational goal was to enable the base workers to “lead a
human life.” Zengunrō sensed the issue of reversion was rising, especially because of the
political shifts in Japan-U.S. relations with the initiation of Sato Administration. Now
reversion was not a far-fetched issue for the base workers. For Zengunrō reversion was
the prognostic framing that would enable the workers to live a human life. It was time to
join Fukkikyō even at the price of antagonizing the U.S. military. Realization of
reversion to Japan now lined up in a parallel position with making economic negotiations
with the U.S. military to realize their demand. Moreover, through past struggles,
Zengunrō saw that small economic gains through negotiations are not enough to alleviate
their grievance. Deep grievance lied in the very fact that Okinawa is being separated from Japan, resulting in the lack of Constitutional protections. This was the root of their grievance. Now that Zengunrō have fought and gained certain economic improvements, they realized that economic gains does not solve the root issue. Now that reversion was not a distant issue, Zengunrō decided to formally engage in the reversion movement as a prognosis to their grievance.

Though Zengunrō decided to join Fukkikyō in 1966, it had not yet as an organization conceptualized the position of its members, who were confronting their employers while depending on them. They did not yet have a clear policy taking in consideration the consequences of reversion. Clear guidelines for engaging in the reversion movement were established for the first time in 1967.

At the Eighth Regular Meeting, held on September 30th and October 1st, Zengunrō established its organizational policy for engagement in the reversion movement. Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, but Zengunrō at this moment perceived 1970 as the year of significant change coupled with the expiration date of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Focusing on 1970 Zengunrō developed a three-year struggle plan for reversion. At the meeting the union’s analysis considered on the following three points: The current situation of bases; the year 1970 and base labor; fundamental movement policy; and
long-term movement goals.

The current working situation was characterized as being unstable. With the intensification of the Vietnam War, bases in Okinawa were being “strengthened;” this meant forcible change in work shifts, overwork, midnight shifts and holiday shifts. While some base workers suffered from the new heavy demands, others faced wage cuts, transfers and layoffs according to the changes in the progress of the war. While the U.S. Congress increased the war budget for the FY 1968, economic rationalization was practiced at bases abroad, and the base workers’ lives consequently became more unstable (Zenchūrō Okinawa Chiku Honbu Undōshi Henshū Iinkai, ed., 1996a: 83-4).

Zenchūrō conceived 1970 as the historical turning-point for both Japan and the base workers in Okinawa. The expiration the Mutual Security Treaty was to come in 1970, and in this context the reversion of Okinawa would be an issue among the mainland politicians. 1970 was anticipated to be a historical moment of nationwide struggle, as in the 1960 Ampo Struggle. For progressives in Okinawa, 1970 was perceived as the historical point to win over reversion. The Newsletter writes, “Therefore, the base workers are faced with the period to strongly wage struggles to win over reversion, at the in preparation for the reversion, wage serious struggles to prevent unemployment and secure our lives” (ibid: 84). In mainland Japan, U.S. bases were
facing withdrawal and reduction as the time progressed. Members of Zenchūrō were fighting the struggle for unemployment measures and stability of life on the assumption that bases would be gone in the future and that they ought to be gone. Zengunrō perceived 1970 as the starting year for such “instability.” The union states:

We need to pertinently acknowledge the necessary evil of the bases and overcome our own difficulties while establishing collaboration with Zenchuro (ibid).

Zengunrō perceived the bases as “evil,” an existence that ought to be withdrawn from Okinawa emotionally, but the existence of the bases was necessary in the sense that bases were the foundation of the workers’ livelihood. The bases had been the largest employer in the postwar period and at the same time had been the most powerful source of evil. But depending on this evil was the mode of life for the largest portion of workers in Okinawa, approximately 50,000 in 1967. Without the bases, base workers were to be left without jobs, no matter that they were unsatisfactory for the majority of workers. Zengunrō perceived 1970 as a time of further instability and decided to “employ sound struggles with a long term prospect in order to prevent unemployment and achieve a stable life” (ibid).

The union’s fundamental movement policy and long-term movement goal is
stated as follows:

2. Despite the fact that we are laborers working in the bases, we oppose control of Okinawa by the United States. We demand the application of the Japan Constitution and struggle to demand all democratic rights which mainland citizens are endowed with.

   We will understand the anti-war, peace movement and the anti-base struggles that are developing as a prefecture wide public opinion and movement. We intend to win reversion, gradually reduce the bases, then finally bring about total withdrawal of the bases, seek employment in the peace industry and to live our lives in peace.

3. We have been forcibly put under a situation to engage in base labor immediately from the beginning of the occupation. The workplace we thought was temporary has grown to dominate the labor market for the past 22 years.

   But different from public and private employees, bases are merely an occupation that we cannot depend on for our future life. Moreover, our occupation is not the job we want to pass down to our offspring. We know from looking at the military’s way of treatment that workers have been forcibly laid off, thrown away like worn-out rags, no matter how hard they worked.

   We need to correctly see from this very moment that some day all base workers will be put under the same situation. In order to put into action unemployment measures and to secure the life of our families, we here establish the following as Zengunrō’s fundamental movement policy: “Free the base workers from the unstable base labor, cultivate workplaces that allows us to live without depending on the bases, seek employment and stability of life”.

4. The issue of base labor is difficult for Zengunrō to solve on its own. Zengunrō will continue to strengthen the organization of Kenrōkyō and posit the issue of base labor of Okinawa as a significant issue to be solved and advance the domestic labor movement. We will connect this with the reversion movement and seek assistance from mainland organizations such as Sōhyō and Dōmei...especially Zenchuro, struggling to conquer the difficult situations engaging in base labor...
5. Labor issues include problems that cannot be solved by being confined to economic struggles. Especially base labor issues need to be considered also from a political perspective.

Therefore, we will actively engage in all political movements related to the enhancement of everyday lives and various rights...

6. Following this fundamental movement policy, we will establish an organizational structure that responds to the reversion movement and other situations, connect all central agendas with the struggle to win over various rights, and establish the three-year strategic goals towards the year 1970 as follows:

**First Year:** From the end of the year to next year's Spring Labor Offensive
1. Revision of wage policy, correction of wage disparity, win over the right to strike
2. In preparing for reversion, establish plans for base labor measures.

**Second Year**
Struggle for significant increase of retirement allowance with use of force [implying the readiness to strike]
Demand protection measures of base workers to GRI and the Japan Government

**Third Year**
By 1970, shift the base workers' employment to indirect employment and stabilize life and employment stability under the responsibility of the Japan Government.

Winning the above within the coming three years will not be easy. All this might end in a mere plan. But towards this goal, we will prepare the funds for struggles, organize the union into struggles, and will need to wage repeated struggles that open the future of base workers (ibid).

Zengunrō participated in this year reversion rallies organized by Fukkikyō on October 21st and November 2nd (ibid: 85-87).

The base workers' inferences about the consequences of reversion are clear
enough. They anticipated that as reversion approached, they would face layoffs because of rearrangements by the U.S. military. Base workers anticipated layoffs coming from the consolidation and restructuring of the bases upon reversion to Japan.

Interviewee 1 states,

As an image, reversion was held to entail gradual decrease of the military bases. If Okinawa is to revert within the next 5 years, some bases will decrease every year...in a popular term, the rearrangement and reduction of the bases (Interview Notes).

Kiyoshi Tamaki makes a similar point about base workers’ inferences in 1967 regarding the conditions and consequence of reversion.

It was not that reversion will result in total removal of the bases, but rather we thought that certain amount of bases will be reduced. Moreover, in order to establish an Okinawa that we can pass down to our offspring, bases must be reduced. Therefore, one issue that will arise upon reversion, the layoff of base workers coming from such reduction, must be accepted with determination. We held such discussions... We neither thought the bases are going to be maintained as they are nor be completely withdrawn (Interview Notes).

Zengunrō established their movement policy and goals based on this anticipation that bases will be reduced but will not be completely withdrawn. To deal with the base reduction and layoffs arising from it, Zengunrō decided to first “free the base workers from the unstable base labor” through reversion to Japan, that is, they would receive
protection under the Constitution of Japan, Japan’s labor laws and unemployment measures, and the indirect employment system outlined in the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. Second, the union felt the need to “cultivate workplaces that allows us to live without depending on the bases,” that is, the gradual reduction and finally complete withdrawal of the U.S. bases and the establishment of alternative industries on the returned lands that were currently occupied by the U.S. military. Finally, to seek employment in the alternative industry and live a stable life.

In other words, Zengunrō was in support of reversion even if reversion entailed restructuring of the bases and layoffs arising from it. Such determination to face a situation of unemployment to a certain extent rested on the base workers’ hope that reversion liberate Okinawa from U.S. military occupation. As the movement policy stated, bases were merely a place of occupation that the workers found undependable for future life and that such occupation was not the ideal job they wanted to pass down to their offspring. The bases were the cause of their grievance. If that cause was going to be reduced, then the base workers were willing to accept the difficulties that would arise temporarily.

The flip side of the coin was Zengunrō’s use of the term necessary evil. Voices demanding complete withdrawal of the bases were growing among progressives in
Okinawa and, emotionally speaking, the base workers were with the progressives. Base workers conceived of the bases as “evil” in the sense that, again, they were the cause of all evils represented by the U.S. colonial rule, but “necessary” since they provided jobs. Base workers had to cling to their jobs in order to live. That was their reality, to have to depend on what they despised.

Zengunrō was for reversion because reversion was the means to self-liberation from military rule. Even though reversion would entail reduction of the bases and cause unemployment, reduction of the bases itself was in line with self-liberation and an ideal view of future Okinawa, therefore the reversion was a “go.” But as workers living off the bases, Zengunrō, although emotionally wanting the bases to be out of Okinawa, accepted the necessary evil of the bases at that point in history and did not raise the “withdraw the bases” slogan along with the rest of the progressives. As a labor union, Zengunrō sought a remedy from the future layoffs they saw inevitable. Though it seems contradictory to seek resolution through a phenomenon from which the cause arises, Zengunrō sought unemployment measures under the legal protection of the Japanese Government upon reversion. As a result, Zengunrō’s plan was 1) to seek reversion first along with the bases, 2) then seek legal protection of the unemployed, 3) demand removal of the U.S. bases, 4) then move away from base labor and seek a new mode of employment that would
Thus, the issue of reversion had begun to be perceived as a "threat." Whereas in the past the issue of reversion was perceived wholly positive, now reversion was perceived as bringing about unemployment as a result of base reduction upon reversion. Whereas reversion was conceptualized as a fundamental diagnosis to relieve the pains arising from U.S. military colonial rule, now the reversion has become a part of the diagnosis, an issue that will cause economic difficulty. Thus the phrase "necessary evil." The union was pro-reversion from the very formation of the union, so the union still is. That is why the layoffs that may occur upon reversion with the reduction of the bases were perceived to be a "necessary evil." If the bases are withdrawn, layoffs that will accompany the withdrawal are perceived as acceptable. Fukkikyō has already established the slogan of being "anti-base" within their movement activities in 1967. For the base workers, it was difficult to accept the anti-base slogan since they were making their living on the bases. But again, the base workers were for reversion, and this is the reason why the union perceived the bases’ existence itself and the certain amount of layoffs arising from base reduction as "necessary evil" and decided to participate in the reversion movement. As such, there can be observed two sets of framing at this moment in history. One is the perception of reversion as an opportunity, and the other as a threat to be dealt
Reversion as Opportunity:
Diagnostic Framing: Working conditions that did not provide job security
Prognostic Framing: To demand Reversion

Reversion as Threat:
Diagnostic Framing: Unemployment arising from reversion
Prognostic Framing: To demand reversion and at the same time wage economic struggles for wage hike and retirement allowance, seek job protection by the Japanese Government, and then demand withdrawal of bases from Okinawa and make transition to alternative industries.

What changed Zengunro’s position on reversion that sought reversion first then demanding removal of the bases with unemployment measures secured by the Japanese Government, were the announcement of the Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué on November 21st, 1969 and the announcements of the layoff of 2,400 workers on December 4th. While the Communiqué set the reversion for the year 1972, it confirmed that the U.S. military bases in Okinawa were playing a significant role in the security of both Japan and the United States, and that the bases would be maintained in Okinawa. In other words, there was no reference to the restructuring or reduction of the bases but rather an emphasis on the significance of the bases and fortification of the Japan-U.S. relations.
Within a couple of weeks of the announcement of the Communique, the layoff of 2,400 base workers was announced, to be completed by the spring of 1970. Zengunrō countered this layoff by waging waves of labor strikes, first a 48-hour strike on January 8th to 9th, second a 120-hour strike from January 19th to 23rd. Zengunrō interpreted the layoffs as “destruction of base workers’ lives that does not entail the reduction of the bases...it is a rationalization upon the base workers’ sacrifice.” This interpretation is continuous with the workers’ fundamental struggles to “regain a human life.” Now workers were going to lose their jobs while the bases were going to be maintained. Zengunrō waged strikes to demand the revocation of layoffs, but the layoffs were implemented, and the base workers saw their coworkers forced out of their workplaces and jobless. From here arose the famous slogan of “If you are going to lay us off, then remove the bases!” Whereas the base workers anticipated reversion with base reduction and layoffs arising from it, the reality was a fortification of Japan-U.S. relations resting on the sacrifice of the base workers. This was far from what base workers had perceived as the conditions of reversion. Whereas the existence of the bases were perceived as a “necessary evil” prior to the Joint Communiqué and the mass layoff, the bases became no longer necessary but only evil.

The base workers rose in anger and stood on the picket line. The Government of
Japan intervened as the negotiator by making a decision to provide a special payment for
the unemployed on March 28th, but the fundamental facts did not change. A single
monetary payment did not satisfy the base workers, whose vision of the future allowed
the workers to “lead a human life” employed in industries developed on the open sites of
bases after complete withdrawal. Whereas reversion was perceived as a diagnosis before
the Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué and the subsequent mass layoff, the conditions of
reversion promoted by the two governments was no longer perceived as a remedy but as
a threat:

Post-Joint Communiqué & Mass Layoff:
Diagnosis: Reversion led by both governments of Japan and the U.S. as causing job
insecurity without the reduction of the bases.
Prognosis: To demand revocation of layoffs, removal of the bases, and to demand
revocation of the reversion agreement

Mass layoffs continued to be announced, 516 workers on July 31st, and 3,000
workers on December 21st in 1970. This time the Government of Japan moved quickly
to try to suppress the commotion by announcing a special payment to the 3,000 workers,
but this failed to keep the base workers from rising in anger. In reaction to the
announcement of the mass layoff, Zengunrō now officially adopted the slogan
“Withdrawal of the bases” in its Movement Policies (Zenchūrō Okinawachiku Honbu,
In this year, Zengunrō waged waves of strikes, including participation in prefecture-wide general strikes on May 19th and November 10th, voicing opposition against the conditions of reversion that had been outlined and were being promoted with sheer political power ignoring both local and mainland opposition voices. Maintenance of the bases and unemployment were now the facts of the conditions of reversion for the base workers, and facing these conditions, they along with other progressive organizations shifted to pressing for withdrawal of the bases. Kiyoshi Tamaki states,

"America's economy faced hardship from the Vietnam War, and from the motive of rationalizing the maintenance of the bases, base workers began to be laid off. Because of budgetary reasons. Now whereas we anticipated the bases to be reduced, the bases were not going to be returned. But from economic standpoint we were going to be laid off. From there, through fighting an intense layoff revocation struggle, the policy shifted to base removal (Interview Notes)."

Noboru Agena states,

"If reversion was to make the workers' lives better, then reversion was to be promoted without question. But seeking reversion without considering its conditions was to be doubted. Ultimately, it was a question of whether the workers' lives become better or worse. If the bases in Okinawa is going to be removed by reverting, then reversion is good, but if the bases are going to be fortified by reverting, then we oppose it (Interview Notes)."

Moriteru Arasaki states,

"Mainland Japan too faced mass layoffs in the late 1950s, but it was a layoff that entailed the return of the bases. But in case of Okinawa, it was
a mass layoff without the return of the bases. So it was not a matter of a
yes or no question to the reversion itself. The reversion was already set
with the Communique. It was a struggle against the condition of reversion,
the reversion policy outlined by the Japanese and U.S. Government.
Zengunrō’s answer was ‘No’ to the Communique-line of the content of
reversion...Zengunrō had the expectation that reversion would lead to the
improvement of the conditions of the base workers. But the reality they
faced was a policy deployment different from their expectation, that is
layoff without return of bases. As a struggle against such reality, they took
the step of rejecting such reversion policy...they were not against the
reversion itself, but the content of it (Interview Notes).

Base workers sought reversion because they thought reversion would lead to a more
human life for the base workers. But the reality the base workers faced was the
Communique-line of reversion, content of which was mass layoff of base workers and
maintenance of the bases. Base workers had sought remedy in the state of Japan, but on
the contrary, they saw the Japanese government extend its hand to the enemy and
patronize the bases. Interviewee 2⁹ states,

Reverting to Japan did not automatically result in joy. We rejected that.
Rather, we perceived it as a mere shift of the dominator from the U.S.
military government to the government of Japan.... We felt betrayed
(Interview Notes).

In reaction to this reality, Zengunrō adopted a “base removal” position while
fighting to revoke the layoffs. On the surface fighting both struggles of base removal and
revocation of layoffs seems incompatible. In reality base removal pointed to the workers’
intention to live a life without depending on the bases. They rejected the U.S. military bases as their future employment and sought to work in an alternative industry constructed at the base sites after removal. Struggle against the revocation of layoffs was a reaction to the fact that layoffs were being carried out at this moment when unemployment measures were insufficient and when there were no alternative industries where they could find work.

As we have seen, before the announcement of the Communiqué, Zengunrō held a pro-reversion stance with the anticipation that the bases would not be completely removed but only reduced, causing a certain number of layoffs. In 1967 Zengunrō established a new policy having inferred the ramifications of reversion for the base workers: base reduction and layoffs arising from it. Rather than being against the reversion because of such layoffs, Zengunrō still held its position of pro-reversion and decided to wage struggles to demand indirect employment under the responsibility of the Government of Japan and the establishment of unemployment measures.

Then why was it that the union was for reversion when it anticipated the job insecurity reversion would bring? Given this dilemma, union could have remained silent on the issue of reversion. Or the union could have voiced opposition to any reversion that was accompanied by base reduction. Why instead did Zengunrō perceive the
anticipated base reduction upon reversion as a necessary evil?

Part of the answer was that Zengunrō, and moreover the people of Okinawa in general, felt that they were missing out on the economic prosperity in mainland Japan. Smith (2001) states that Okinawa was excluded from the “income-doubling” decade of the 1960s.

The people were unreasonably and discriminatively being deprived of the opportunity to enjoy the economic prosperity enjoyed by mainland Japanese because of the occupation of Okinawa by the U.S. military. Even though the reversion would entail temporary job insecurity, the union expected that the base workers as a whole would be able to receive the protective measures under the Government of Japan. As I have already noted, Japan’s labor policy takes a familial stance towards regular employees, protecting them against layoffs, while the U.S. labor standards are layoff-driven. Zengunrō planned to demand base withdrawal after reversion when again it would cause job insecurity for partially economic, and partially ideological reasons, which latter reason will be discussed in the next chapter. Regarding the economic reason, the union perceived that with the bases gone it would be possible to build an alternative industry. I argue that such perception arose because the mainland Japanese economy was booming, and when Okinawa became administratively included in such prosperity after reversion, it
would also be possible to create that lucrative alternative industry with its new job opportunity. Base labor was perceived to be the most unstable job one could find in Okinawa, and union members sought to free themselves from the instability and move into the ought-to-be prosperous alternative industry constructed at sites where military bases used to stand.

In November December 1969 the reality the base workers faced was the maintenance of the bases and mass layoff. This then was the reality of reversion for the base workers. In reaction to this reality, Zengunrō waged a strong base removal movement, against the condition of reversion that was set by both governments of Japan and the United States but not anti-reversion. Pertinent questions to ask here are, why were revocation of layoffs and base withdrawal sought at the same time? Why did not the union only demand revocation and stay away from the base withdrawal movement? Why did not the union oppose reversion itself when it was already clear to them that layoffs were part of the reversion?

Again there can be made two explanations: ideological and economic. The ideological reason was the rising anti-war consciousness being developed within the progressives represented by Fukkikyō within the context of the intensification of the Vietnam War, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. The economic reason was that
when base labor was perceived to be an insecure job to have and when the union sought
to establish an alternative industry after the bases are removed, the maintenance of the
bases for the base workers the denial of their right to enjoy the economic prosperity by
the governments of Japan and the Untied States. Their future prosperous locale of work
was denied.

But the reversion itself was not opposed, in part because, considering themselves
as also being “Japanese,” the base workers considered it only natural to be part of the
State of Japan. Moreover, they claimed the right to have its share in the mainland
economic prosperity and to enjoy legal protection as “Japanese.”
My mother lost my father in the Battle of Okinawa. Women had to protect the home now. So you know what she did? She sought work at the bases. And what she did for work was to scrub rust off the stocked shells using a sand paper. In a sense, these shells were what killed her husband. Though she knew, she still had to sand the shells for a living. (Interview Notes, Maeshiro)

To answer the questions of how and why the base workers moved transcended the boundaries of economic struggle and engaged in the political struggles of base withdrawal as a condition of reversion, the process of change in the base workers’ anti-war consciousness needs to be explained. The base workers’ anti-war consciousness and how it changed according to the changing political situations, i.e., the negotiation between the governments of Japan and the United States on the conditions of reversion and the intensification of the Vietnam War, is crucial in understanding why the base workers demanded base withdrawal as a condition of reversion.

Had anti-war consciousness been the only reason for the initiation of the base withdrawal movement, the base workers would have waged a struggle for base withdrawal at least from 1967, when the union had already taken a position of anti-war and pro-peace. But in reality, the union did not; it took the union until 1970 to tie in the base withdrawal movement. This lag must be explained in terms of the base workers-
specific dilemma of economic dependency on the existence of the bases and rejection of base labor as the least ideal of jobs.

Although the base workers were emotionally against the bases, taking actions based on such emotion would point the arrow at themselves who were making a living off the bases. Some union members, especially those in the Youth Division, have transcended the dilemma simply by denying their mode of subsistence, an attitude fueled by anti-war consciousness in the context of the Vietnam War, while as we know the union as a whole took longer than those individual members to demand base withdrawal. In other words the base workers, though there were differences among them, analyzed their jobs' relationship to the Vietnam War and the changing political and economic situations, came to a conclusive conceptualization of that relationship and those situations, and acted according to their conceptualization.

In explaining such process, I use framing theory. As in Chapter 4, in this concluding chapter I have used the theoretical concepts of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing to break down the perceptions the base workers held and in order to see how they changed vis-à-vis the changing economic and political conditions that surrounded them.
The intensification of the Vietnam War beginning with the bombing of North Vietnam in February 1965 was plainly visible to the people of Okinawa. The appearance of B52s in July 1965 and the subsequent stationing of B52s at Kadena Air Base was the symbol of United States' war against Vietnam. The B52s, notorious for their capacity to kill en mass indiscriminately and their ability to carry nuclear weapons flew to Vietnam from morning to night. On the two-hour flight out to Vietnam, the B52s were fully loaded with bombs and they came back home empty stomached. This huge mass of metal with its disproportionately large black tail and its noise caught the eyes and ears of the people in Okinawa. Fatigued military personnel with weakened morale from the war filled the town of Koza for “rest and recreation.” Crimes committed by such military personnel skyrocketed. Within such a context arose the agency-strong frame of Okinawa as the victimizer to the people of Vietnam, or as accomplices to U.S. aggression.

The people of Okinawa had experienced two wars in the recent past: the Battle of Okinawa and the Korean War. Until the Vietnam War, they had not constructed any frame regarding their role or possible responsibility but predominantly held a frame of being the victim of these wars. Kishimoto (1969) argues as follows:

The ideology of pacifism that constituted the reversion movement
ideology...lacked the perspective of investigating the issue of war in relation to the question of agency. The essences of the meaning of war experience and the issue of responsibility was stripped away by the ethical and emotional mind frame. The continuity from defeat in war to direct rule under the U.S. military power took away the time and room in the people's heart to reflect. Moreover, the act of making the already miserable people even more miserable by pressing the question of responsibility was to be avoided.

The issues of war and responsibility were metamorphosed by the separation [of Okinawa] from the mainland [Japan]. The tragedy of the Battle of Okinawa gave birth to the consciousness of the “victimized” by the segregation from mainland Japan, and the connection of such tragedy with the historical facts of discrimination gave birth to the development of the “logic of discrimination,” as a result engrossing the question of war experience within the logic of discrimination.... It ostracized the ideological ground that would have allowed reflection on one's responsibility of having played a part from the inside in the 15 Year War [World War II] and anti-war ideology arising from such reflection....

Such ideological soil lacked the condition that would question the existence of the bases itself, but at the same time, the U.S. military power was too strong and the bases too immense for such question to arise. For that reason, although the bases were pertinently conceived by the people as the keystone to U.S. military strategy, the people were not able to hold the bases as the target to demand base withdrawal....(203-04)

And he continues to argue that the intensification of the Vietnam War caused those carriers of the reversion movement, who ought to connect initiation based to their own war experience, to reflect on one’s responsibility of not being able again to avoid their relationship to war. This reflection led to conceiving the responsibility for war based on
the question of agency and the new conceptualization of themselves as the "victimizer" linked to the existence of military bases in Okinawa (ibid, 205).

Such formation of connection through progress of time between anti-war consciousness and anti-base consciousness, leading to the demand for base removal, based on such an agency-strong frame of conceiving oneself as the "victimizer" of the people of Vietnam. This view was not held unanimously among all segments of pro-reversion activists. Each segment of movement bearers differed in the way such anti-war consciousness was incorporated in its movement activities (ibid, 206 07). Analyzing the case of Fukkikyō is useful in highlighting the specificity of the base workers' dilemma.

Fukkikyō, the umbrella organization that sought reversion to Japan as its highest goal in which Zengunrō was a member since 1966, took its anti-war, pro-peace, anti-base, no nuclear weapons position in 1967. Prior to 1967 Fukkikyō conceptualized the intensification of the Vietnam War as a threat to the people of Okinawa. The fact that the U.S. military was using Okinawa as its major ground for waging the war might result in retaliatory attacks on Okinawa, so dragging the people of Okinawa into "their" war (Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan linkai, ed. 208).

Fukkikyō's Movement Policies for 1965 diagnosed the escalation of the Vietnam War as a threat to the people's everyday lives but was unclear as to the prognosis of such
diagnostic frame of threat of being included into other’s war. In the Movement Policies for 1966, Fukkikyō raised the same diagnostic frame of threat to the people’s lives. The prognostic framing was to “Oppose the Vietnam War and Stop waging war from Okinawa (ibid, 281).” In both years, there are statements regarding removal of the nuclear bases in Okinawa, and the specific content of these statements remained on opposition to operation drills of using missiles capable of carrying strategic nuclear warheads and the stationing of nuclear submarines (ibid, 212, 277).

But in 1967 the frames regarding the Vietnam War-military bases-reversion relationship showed significant change, from that of the “victim” of U.S. aggression and a mere opposition to the demand for base withdrawal founded on the conceptualization of themselves as the “victimizer.” Primer Minister Sato’s visit to Washington in November 1967 and the Sato-Johnson Joint Communiqué had a profound impact to the organization’s stance against the Vietnam War.

Sato’s visit to the United States in November 1967 was also perceived to touch on the issue of Okinawa’s reversion. The motive of his visit was pertinently understood by the people of Okinawa as promoting the stationing of the U.S. military in Okinawa and stressing their importance in maintaining the alliance (ibid, 367). Based on this perception, the Outline of Action to Demand Immediate, Unconditional, Total Reversion,
after stating that the use of bases in Okinawa for the Vietnam War were posing a threat to people’s lives, for the first time in the organization’s history established the agency-

strong frame of the victimizer.

Okinawa that has by experience lived the tragedy of war as the last battle ground in the last war pledged to not repeat the misery. The same Okinawa is now made to lend our hands to the massacre of the people of Asia against our will. We cannot tolerate (ibid, 366-367).

The Outline moved on to state the fundamental policy of the reversion movement as follows:

The underlying theme of our fundamental logic of reversion movement is the principle of anti-war and peace that arise from our direct experience of the misery of war and to not repeat it again. To win over the democratic and peaceful Constitution, and to defend the Constitution must be the reversion movement’s backbone (ibid, 368).

Arising from such conceptualization was the new slogan of “Remove the nuclear bases, oppose the military bases, and win over the application of the Peace Constitution (ibid).”

The Resolution adopted at the November 2nd rally, held to demand immediate, unconditional, and total reversion, asserted Fukkikyō’s unwillingness to play a part in the Vietnam War as follows:

The rumor goes that the Prime Minister’s motive of visit to the United States is the fortification of the security alliance in the Asia Pacific… That will lead to the participation in the Vietnam War and further destabilize the Far East. That is not what we hope…. (ibid, 373)
On November 21st, 1967, after the summit meeting and the subsequent announcement of
the Joint Communiqué, Fukkikyō adopted a Resolution of Objection against the
governments of Japan and the United States.

The Sato-Johnson Joint Communiqué not only ignored the prefectural
citizen’s demands…but promised long-term fixation of the Mutual
Security Treaty and reconfirmed the significance of the military bases in
Okinawa....

As we have pointed prior to the Prime Minister’s visit to the
United States, [the Communiqué] have affirmed the military bases in
Okinawa and confirmed a more active participation in the Vietnam War.

This shows that the maintenance of the U.S. military bases in
Okinawa is in the interest of both governments of Japan and the United
States. This teaches us a lesson: Reversion of Okinawa to our
motherland will not be realized unless the bases are removed.

We must…cultivate a qualitatively new path to the past 22 years
of reversion movement.... (ibid, 377)

The 1967 Joint Communiqué showed to Fukkikyō that reversion was being sought by
both governments as a means of strengthening the military alliance between them, which
meant that the bases were going to be maintained in Okinawa even after reversion. On
these terms reversion posed a threat to the members of Fukkikyō. As one looks into the
history of Fukkikyō’s struggles and claims on reversion, one can see that the question of
existence of the bases was long left untouched. But as the negotiations on the conditions
of reversion progressed between the two governments, it gradually became clear that the bases were going to be maintained while the administrative rights were to be returned.

Reversion proponents, realizing that the ultimately determining factor of Okinawa's pain was the existence of the bases, felt anxiety as reversion neared and therefore the need to make a major shift regarding the reversion movement, which in effect meant the transition from "voicing opposition" to "taking action," from being "anti-base" to acting for "base removal" (Arasaki & Nakano, 1970: 87-88). When the people grasped the real possibility of base maintenance even after reversion, they sensed that for them nothing was going to change. From there, the existence of the bases became the subject of the reversion struggle. Theoretically speaking, diagnostic framing was the governments' confirmation of the "significance of the bases in Okinawa," the recognition that they were about to use Okinawa to fulfill their mutual interest in holding the bases, and that the alliance between the two countries was to be fortified through the promotion of the Vietnam War. Prognostic framing called for removal of the bases and the demand for reversion without bases. The motivational framing was the anti-war and pro-peace position, that Okinawa cannot let the misery of war to happen again, certainly not at hands of the Japanese government. As such, the reversion movement began to take the existence of the bases themselves as an issue of the reversion movement, the result of
an interpretive process of the underlying intent of both governments in materializing reversion and the escalation of the Vietnam War. Such interpretive process was a result of the activists catching it as a political threat, rather than as an opportunity. Rather than perceiving such surrounding political situations as an opportunity to be grasped and used to voice one's concerns, it was rather a threat that must be acted upon.

In considering the actions to take, Fukkikyō reinterpreted their Battle of Okinawa experience and motivated themselves to "not let the misery happen again." The demand for base withdrawal as a condition of reversion now stood on the ideology of anti-war and peace. In 1968 Fukkikyō’s Movement Policies stated that Fukkikyō denies Okinawa as the station ground for massacring the people of Vietnam, and finally in 1969 Fukkikyō outwardly raised base removal as the organization’s movement policy (Okinawaken Sokoku Fukki Tōsōshi Hensan Iinkai, ed. 477, 480).

Arasaki (1970) states that in 1967 there was a disagreement within Fukkikyō regarding the issue of the bases. On the one hand, there was the belief that true reversion will not be fully attained unless the bases are withdrawn; on the other were those who held that bases exist also on the mainland Japan and that base removal should be a national issue after reversion is realized rather than the movement goal of Fukkikyō. From such disagreement arose the compromised slogan of "anti-base" and "withdrawal
of nuclear military bases” (86 7). But in 1969 Fukkikyō raised the slogan of “withdraw military bases” within their movement policies. This was in reaction to the approach of reversion that stressed the maintenance of the bases in Okinawa upon reversion, shown in the 1969 Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué, this time a sure sign that reversion is going to happen and bases are going to be maintained.

The Case of Zengunrō

In analyzing the dilemma Zengunrō held and how they overcame such dilemma of being emotionally anti-base but having difficulty in demanding withdrawal of the bases because of their economic dependency on the bases, it will be useful here to consider the base workers involvement in the reversion movement from two perspectives: that of the union, and that of the individual workers.

As noted in earlier chapters, at the union level, it was not until October 1971 and the Twenty-fourth Regular Meeting, after the reversion agreement was signed between the two governments, that Zengunrō as a union included “base withdrawal from the stance of anti-war and peace” in its Movement Policies (Zenchūro Okinawachiku Honbu ed. 229). But again as we have seen, the union had already gone out on strikes and the slogan “withdraw the bases if you are going to lay us off!” shouted. Such preceding
struggles readied the union for its first political strike of the May 19th and the November
10th General Strikes in 1971 that demanded revocation of the reversion agreement and
withdrawal of the bases. Such characteristic of precedence of base withdrawal movement
before the union's decision to raise the base withdrawal slogan is important when
considering the base workers' individual anti-war consciousness.

From 1967 until the Twenty-first Regular Meeting in January 1971, the union
took the position that "we understand and support the anti-war, peace, and anti-base
struggles (Zengunrō Newsletter, No. 45; 55; Zenchūro Okinawachiku Honbu ed.,
212 13)." This notion of "understanding" needs explanation since it touches upon the
base workers' dilemma. The impact of the intensification of the Vietnam War on the
base workers was framed by the union as causing further job instability. Base workers
faced sudden changes in their working conditions: overtime work, holiday shifts,
employment of part time workers and subcontracting workers, wage cut, and transfer
(Zengunrō Newsletter, No. 38; 45). The union perceived such instability and the
worsening working condition as a threat. The economic hardship faced by the U.S.
government resulting from the Vietnam War was beginning to make its appearance in
Okinawa in the form of reduced work shifts and wage cuts. Such job instability was
perceived by the union as another proof of the fundamental characteristic of labor at the bases, i.e. that

Whether we like it or not, withdrawal, transfer, reduction, and consolidation of military units have been practiced upon change in the U.S. military policy, and such change resulted in the reduction and release of employees (ibid, No. 55).

Work at the bases is unstable by nature. This was the diagnostic framing the union reached in response to the intensification of the Vietnam War. And the answer to the question of what to do about such job instability was to “organize struggles to demand diversion of the military bases to the use by peace industry (ibid).” The union’s Movement Policy for 1970 stated as follows:

Regarding the anti-base movement, we need to acknowledge the righteousness in the anti-war struggle for peace while taking in consideration the fact that we are living by working in the bases....

The longing for peace leads to opposition of war, which leads to the elimination of the military bases, the dangerous element of waging war. We cannot ignore such nation-wide demand.

Even the base workers cannot evade such current of the society, and this is a fatalistic agenda the base workers need to overcome and break through (ibid, No. 55).

The union position was now unequivocal with the anti-war and peace movement engaged in by Fukkikyō: the military bases should not stay in Okinawa. The union’s reasons
were the fundamentally unstable nature of base labor and the pro-peace position. But what was different was the fact that the base workers depended for their living on the bases. Because of this fact, it was difficult for the union to engage in the anti-war movement linked with the movement for base removal. As a way to deal with this situation, the union established a policy of first of all realizing reversion so as to be employed by the Government of Japan, then to demand base withdrawal and the creation of an alternative, peaceful industries. Such demand to diverge the bases into peaceful industry was the anti-war and peace movement sought by the union until 1971. In theoretical terms, the diagnostic framing was the job insecurity and the lack of employment alternatives. Prognostic framing called for struggles to seek unemployment measures by the Japanese government and to demand base withdrawal upon the establishment of the alternative peaceful industry. Motivational framing was the anti-war and pro-peace consciousness widely shared by the base workers.

Within this set of framing, the agency-strong framing of the "victimizer" is not evident. But it was different when it came to the individual base workers. The base workers' experience of the Vietnam War was unique because of their structural position at the bases. They saw massive loads of bombs being carried; they washed and fixed jeeps greased with flesh and blood sent back from Vietnam for repair; they packed ice
around the dead bodies of U.S. soldiers to be sent to the U.S. mainland (Interview Notes,
Interviewee 2; Interviewee 1; Tamaki; Agena). Such experiences had an impact on the
construction of the “victimizer” frame, which led each individual base worker to shift
toward rejection of this mode of subsistence, hence rejection of the base presence.

Interviewee 2 states:

Fixing the military vehicles, or sending back over there (Vietnam) the
tanks that we fixed...we directly felt that the vehicles that we fixed
were going to kill the people of Vietnam. Being in this huge
mechanism of the U.S. military bases, even though we are not directly
putting our hands on the people of Vietnam, we felt that realistically we
were playing a part in this (war).

Interviewee 1 states:

It was in the midst of the Vietnam War. I worked at Makiminato, where
it was a supply depot for logistics, and there, we directly saw
ammunitions and weapons being carried, trucks going back and forth.
We see it right in front of our eyes. We saw B52s fly every day, every
night. We discussed with each other, and I thought to myself. In order
to have the B52s be out of Okinawa, we need to overtly act. We
discussed it within the Youth Division. We felt strongly, how can we
stop this, how can we remove the B52s.

Kiyoshi Tamaki states,

The feeling of contradiction towards the bases were strong those days
among the people who had the tragic experience of the war and among
the people who lived the confusion of the postwar era...It was the
Vietnam War that with a certain sense of reality connected the bases in
Okinawa and war. It was in the late 1960s. B52 strategic bombers flew
from Kadena. Dead and wounded soldiers carried in from Vietnam were sent back to the mainland U.S. via Okinawa. People of Okinawa saw what role the bases in Okinawa were playing...first of all, there were the people who have experienced the Battle of Okinawa. By seeing B52 bombers fly from Okinawa, it was easily perceivable that there was a war going on in Vietnam. Bombs were being dropped, and we can imagine the occurring situation. From our very plight, we could imagine their plight. As such, we opposed those that connect to war (Interview Notes).

The above show the emergence of the diagnostic framing of base labor as accomplice to U.S. aggression. The act of driving a screwing into a broken tank was perceived as participating in the massacre of the people of Vietnam, the same situation the people of Okinawa were on the receiving end of 25 years ago. The existence of the bases itself began to be perceived as an “issue.” Maintenance of the bases upon reversion began to be perceived as not an ideal situation based on this anti-war consciousness. Kiyoshi Tamaki states,

What lay as a common base of opposition struggle against the Vietnam War and the reversion struggle is the idea of the condition of human beings ought to be in. Reversion struggle is after all about regaining humanity.... opposition against the Vietnam War and reversion struggle has its origin in the same root (Interview Notes).

In other words, the existence of the bases was no longer a permissible condition that would enable the people of Okinawa to “regain a human life,” the master frame that
supported all of the struggles engaged by the base workers, from the economic to the political.

This diagnostic framing prepared the base workers to take their stand against the bases when it became clear to them that the bases were going to be maintained for the purpose of the fortification of U.S.-Japan military alliance upon reversion, which was made clear by the Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué in 1969 and the subsequent series of mass layoff. The last wall that hindered the base workers from demanding base withdrawal their economic dependency. This wall was breached by the series of mass layoffs that began in 1970 after the Joint Communiqué. This structurally enabled the base workers in diving into the struggles to demand base withdrawal as a condition of reversion. In a sense, the base workers no longer had anything to lose. They were by force put in a deadlock. The future vision established by the union of seeking employment in the peaceful industry after the bases are withdrawn was denied by the conditions of reversion. Adding to this economic factor, their present involvement in the Vietnam War was unacceptable. From here sprung the base workers’ struggles to demand base withdrawal.
CONCLUSION

In this paper I have made an attempt to explain the dynamic processes the base workers took from silence and submission to militant activism and ultimately to the denial of their workplaces, i.e., the movement to withdraw the U.S. military bases from Okinawa.

Whereas the general underlying motive of base workers' struggles was to "regain human life," what constituted the content of a "human life" changed significantly in reaction to the changing political situation the base workers found themselves in. For the base workers the issue of reversion shifted from being perceived as a remedy that would bring about a better life to being perceived as a threat.

I have argued that the Sato-Nixon Joint Communiqué and mass layoff that immediately followed it in late 1969 was the turning point, pushing the base workers to militant physical action to demand withdrawal of the bases. But such reaction was not an automatic knee-jerk type of reflex. There were historical specific reasons the base workers demanded base withdrawal instead of choosing to concentrate on their previous struggles of revocation of layoffs, staying mute, or acting against reversion itself.

The base workers' fundamental anguish was job insecurity. Base work provided no job security in the pre-reversion days. The bases were never perceived as ideal employers. That is why the base workers developed a long-term vision that would enable
them to move away from base labor and find jobs in the private or public sector and so be free to demand withdrawal of the bases. But the reality they faced was the opposite of their vision; layoffs were practiced before the peace industries were established. If the bases were going to stay, their alternative vision of work was denied. At this impasse, the workers came to demand base withdrawal.

Over time the base workers’ anti-war consciousness became another important explanatory factor. The intensification of the Vietnam War raised the question of agency, that the base workers were accomplices of U.S. aggression against the people of Vietnam, the same aggression their own people suffered in the Battle of Okinawa. Thus the base workers came to reject their mode of subsistence. Merely making a demand to revoke the layoffs did not accommodate anti-base and anti-war consciousness. The Sato-Nixon Joint Communique and the mass layoffs not only were political threats in theoretical terms but were the antithesis of the workers’ closely held wishes.

These two causal factors interplayed, generating the historical outcome of the base workers’ involvement in the base withdrawal movement in opposition to the Japan-U.S. conditions of reversion. The intense struggles to demand withdrawal of the bases as a condition of reversion were fought by the base workers, especially by the Youth Division workers who tended to perceive their struggle itself as their raison d’être,
representative of the New Left student movement culture that pervaded among college
students in the late 1960s. For them it was no longer the question of whether they could
win job security; it was a fight against the existence of the U.S. military bases in Okinawa
and, moreover, against their own government’s capitalistic and imperial willingness to
sacrifice the people of Okinawa while becoming a dominating power in Asia hand in
hand with the United States. This was the anger the people felt at being betrayed by their
own government, and the consciousness that would not allow such impermissible intent
to be fulfilled.

But before Zengunrō could wage its struggle for base withdrawal as a condition of
reversion, there were the antecedent processes that enabled the union to take a strong
position. These were the union’s expansion and fortification through the economic
struggles they engaged in, the establishment of cooperative relations with other
organizations of Kenrōkyō and Fukkikyō, the rising confidence among base workers that
struggle leads to goal attainment, and the experience of failure over the 2.4 “General
Strike” on February 4th, 1969, that resulted in escalation of tactics in later struggles
especially marked by the formation of the Youth Division. All these elements together
enabled Zengunrō’s struggles for base withdrawal, represented by their series of strikes
demanding base withdrawal and finally their participation in the island-wide general strikes in 1971.

The processes that led to base worker participation in the reversion movement appear to fit the political processes model invoked by McAdam ([1982] 1999; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). There existed a mobilizing structure the movement based itself on, and that when the opportunity was perceived as such, the movement arose. But the real historical case of Zengunrō’s processes were rather more complex requiring additional analytical tools. I have stressed the importance of a culture-specific interpretation of grievance that resulted from the difference in labor-management responsibilities as understood in Japan and the United States, the individual motivation of Uehara Kōsuke who broke the ice in initiating the rush towards unionization, how engagement in the movement itself vis-à-vis repression resulted in higher solidarity among the insurgents especially at the June 5th Bayonet Strike in 1969, and how it was that threat rather than opportunity determined the base workers’ decision to undertake the struggle for the base withdrawal.

What determined the specific direction of struggle was a pre-existing anti-war and anti-base consciousness, along with the economic discontent at being left out of the economic prosperity enjoyed by the mainland Japanese. The New Left student
movement culture also had a strong impact on the militant activism that we have seen among the Youth Division workers wearing helmets. But what was most powerfully symbolic of the base workers’ struggles were those middle-aged workers, who had nothing to do with the ideologies of the New Left wearing the helmets distributed by the Youth Divisions and demonstrating along with them. It was the symbol of an anger and anguish shared widely among the workers against their own government which had taken their longing to revert and turn into an opportunity to fulfill its own interests forcing the military bases on the people.

I have in this paper conducted a historical research, and although there are many important issues in conducting historical research, in particular I advocate Giddens’ theory of structuration. Giddens (1979) argues that social life is fundamentally recursive, and that structure and agency are mutually dependent (69). Structure is both enabling and constraining where agents act in a pre-existing structure while agents are constitutive of such structure. Understanding relationship between our being and the social world we live in, or gaining pertinent knowledge of history and our constituency as such becomes a prerequisite to action. Pertinent knowledge of the past allows us to see the present as a continuation of it, locate ourselves within such continuation, and finally see how our actions and inactions are playing a part of the making of the structure. I believe such
analysis is emancipatory in nature because it offers to those who exist today the
imagination of the possibility of change in the current structure of social reality for it is
our actions that are constituting it, regardless of us being conscious of it or not. I believe
one can nurture one’s power of imagination to grasp the reality by studying the past.
Statistics on civilian casualties vary by sources. Ota (2000) Okinawan casualties counted to 140,000 whereas U.S. troop casualties were 14,005 and Japanese troops 74,796. Mini encyclopedia on Okinawa edited by Ryukyu Shimpo (2003) states Okinawan casualties were over 100,000 while U.S. military casualties were 12,500 and Japanese military 90,000. Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum's statistics are as follows: Okinawan civilian casualties were over 94,000, and over 120,000 when local conscripts are included. U.S. military casualties were 12,520 and Japanese military casualties were 94,000 including the locally conscripted. It seems the general understanding of the casualties incurred by civilians is that a quarter of the population perished in the Battle.

Inaizumi (1966) states that in the early 1950s when military base construction began, one-fifth of all farm land in Okinawa was expropriated by the military, and majority of those farmers who lost their land to the military bases became wage workers at the bases (16).

Base worker since 1960. Former Air Force Branch executive and subsequently became the president of Zenchūrō Okinawa Office.

Former Zengunrō executive. Currently a Prefecture Assemblyman of Social Democratic Party.

It is interesting here to see the name Yūai Kai used. Yūai Kai was one of the first labor organization formed on mainland Japan in 1912 that spread its membership nationwide in late 1910s. The fact that the same name being used for the study group implies that there were workers conscious of and knowledgeable on labor issues.

Text of the Joint Communiqué on reversion read as follows:

[6] The Prime Minister emphasized his view that the time had come to respond to the strong desire of the people of Japan of both the mainland and Okinawa, to have the administrative rights over Okinawa returned to Japan on the basis of the friendly relations between the United States and Japan and thereby to restore Okinawa to its normal status. The President expressed appreciation of the Prime Minister’s view. The President and the Prime Minister also recognized the vital role played by United States forces in Okinawa in the present situation in the Far East. As a result of their discussion it was agreed that the mutual security interests of the United States and Japan could be accommodated within arrangements for the return of the administrative rights over Okinawa to Japan. They therefore agreed that the two Governments of would immediately enter into consultations regarding specific arrangements for accomplishing the early reversion of Okinawa without detriment to the security of the Far East, including Japan. They further agreed to expedite the consultations
with a view to accomplishing the reversion during 1972, subject to the conclusion of these specific arrangements with the necessary legislative support. In this connection, the Prime Minister made clear the intentions of his Government, following reversion, to assume gradually the responsibility for the immediate defense of Okinawa as part of Japan's defense efforts for her own territories. The President and the Prime Minister agreed also that the United States would retain, under the terms of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, such military facilities and areas in Okinawa as required in the mutual security for both countries.

[7] The President and the Prime Minister agreed that, upon return of the administrative rights, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security and its related arrangements would apply to Okinawa without modification thereof. In this connection, the Prime Minister affirmed the recognition of his Government that the security of Japan could not be adequately maintained without international peace and security in the Far East and, therefore, the security of countries in the Far East was a matter of serious concerns for Japan. The Prime Minister was of the view that, in the light of such recognition on the part of the Japanese Government, the return of the administrative rights over Okinawa to Japan in the manner agreed above should not hinder the effective discharge of the international obligations assumed by the United States for the defense of countries in the Far East, including Japan. The President replied that he shared the Prime Minister's view. (New York Times, November 22nd, 1969)

7 Former Youth Division executive.

8 The most well-known scholar on movement history in Okinawa.

9 Former Youth Division union member.

10 Former Okinawa Teachers' Association member. A Hansen Binushi, or a landowner who oppose signing a lease contract for military base use.

11 Former Youth Division executive, currently Zenchūrō Okinawa Office executive.
REFERENCES


Interview Notes: Gabe, Masaaki. July 7th, 2003 at Ginowan City.

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Ryukyu Shimpō. May 15th, 16th, 18th, 20th, 2002.


