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(日本語訳：樺太引揚者のイメージの形成)

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The making of Karafuto repatriates

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学位論文内容の要旨

This dissertation examines the mechanisms through which Karafuto repatriates were constructed in the early period of the post-war. Existing research has focussed on the meaning of repatriates for Japan's decolonization after 1945 and the difference between "repatriate" and "official" narratives of the former empire and its collapse in August 1945. By concentrating on Japanese repatriates who moved from Karafuto to Hokkaido, this dissertation moves away from other research which is overwhelmingly based on the example of Japanese who were in Manchuria.

The time period chosen for analysis also includes the pre-war and wartime to place repatriates within a "trans-war" context. In the early years of the post-war, many repatriate groups were formed. Previous research has viewed these as an expression of

the growth of civil society in the wake of the Occupation's reforms to Japanese society.

However, in the case of repatriates from Karafuto, many of the groups which formed in Hokkaido were dominated by "men of influence" from pre-war and wartime society.

Their status in Karafuto society was what qualified them to take on positions of responsibility in the post-war. Repatriate groups were, therefore, less an expression of popular democracy than another example of the "passage through" to the post-war of wartime elites.

The origins of repatriate groups such as Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei show that they were closely tied to the State. Previous research has argued that, on the subject of the former empire, the Japanese government was largely silent until the 1980s. By following the activities of repatriate groups in building monuments and writing histories, this dissertation argues that the State was influential in the construction of public narratives about the former empire during the first three decades of the post-war. Previously described as "repatriate activists", the men who played influential roles in repatriate groups can be better understood as "semi-officials" who worked closely with government officials and politicians. One consequence of the actions of repatriate groups was the co-opting of dissonant narratives. The success with which alternative views of the end of the empire were incorporated into the narrative of the Karafuto

repatriate (but before the boom in *jibunshi* writing in the late-1970s) has led to the misleading view that Japanese existed (and still largely exist) in a culture of silence and denial about the former empire. During the 1950s and 1960s alternative interpretations did exist but the influence of repatriate groups and the semi-officials who led them meant that they found increasingly less expression in public narratives. This was the foundation upon which the thousands of “self-histories” about the empire were later written.

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Introduction

The 48th floor of the Sumitomo Building in Tokyo's "skyscraper district" of Shinjuku is the unlikely site for the Heiwa kinen tenji shiryō kan (平和祈念展示資料館・Museum for Peace and Reconciliation). Opened in 2000, the museum collects oral history interviews and publishes materials about repatriates, Siberian detainees and veterans whose service was not long enough for them to qualify for a military pension. According to the museum's website, a repatriate is someone who "at the end of the Second World War was living abroad and who had to return to the homeland. Facing great danger, they left all of their possessions behind and, experiencing great hardship, they aimed for the homeland. During repatriation many of them died."¹ Run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the museum shows how the Japanese government commemorates the history of repatriates.

¹ Heiwa kinen tenji shiryō kan (Sōmu shō itaku), "Heiwa Kinen Tenji Shiryōkan to wa," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.heiwakinen.jp/taisen/hikiage.html> (accessed 22nd September 2013).

Within the academic literature, the subjects of repatriates and repatriation have, since the 1990s, received increased attention. The basic statistics of the population movement after the collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945 give an indication of the scale of what happened. In August 1945 there were approximately 3.5 million Japanese civilians living in the colonies and occupied territories of the empire. Added to this number were 3.2 million Japanese soldiers. These 6.7 million represented 9% of Japan's population of 72 million. However, the mass movement of people was not restricted to Japanese but also included Koreans and Taiwanese. As Imperial subjects, some had chosen to move and others had been forcibly moved to Japan prior to 1945. After the empire collapsed, many of these people sought to leave Japan. About 1.6 million left Japan as "returnees" (送還者・帰国者) after August 1945. In addition, a further 1 million people are thought to have moved between Northeast China (Manchuria) and Korea shortly after Japan's defeat. Therefore, in total, after the

collapse of the empire, 9 million people had moved within the space of a few years.² As a population transfer resulting from decolonization, this was one of the largest movements in the 20th century.

The remainder of this introduction will analyse the most important literature on repatriates and the collapse of the Japanese Empire. This is followed by a brief introduction to some of the research that exists on population movements in other parts of the world. The final section will outline the problem and approach of this dissertation.

English language literature

Only in the last few years has a book-length study of repatriates been published. Prior to this, two of the most famous scholars on Japanese history – John Dower and Andrew

² Araragi Shinzō, "Ima, Teikoku hōkai to hito no saidō o tō," in *Teikoku hōkai to hito no saidō - hikiage, sōkan, soshite zanryū*, ed. Araragi (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2011), 6.

Gordon – had highlighted the subject as being one worthy of investigation.³ In 2009 two books appeared which took contrasting approaches. The following section will outline the argument of these important works and then suggest which areas require further research.

When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan. By Lori Watt (2009)

Watt's book tries to answer the question of "what happened to a people mobilized for empire after the failure of the colonial project"?⁴ Her thesis is that the distinction that existed between Japanese during the time of empire as "*gaichi no hito*" (literally "a

³ John Dower, *Embracing Defeat - Japan in the Aftermath of World War II* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 50; Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 230.

⁴ Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home* (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 17.

person from the outer territories”) and “*naichi no hito*” (literally “a person from the inner territories”) transformed after August 1945 into “repatriates” (*hikiagesha*) and “ordinary Japanese” (*ippan no Nihonjin*). Japanese who had been living in the colonies and occupied territories were described as repatriates and this stigmatized them in post-war society. This stigmatization allowed metropolitan Japanese to distance themselves from the failed colonial project. In effect, repatriates became scapegoats for Japan’s imperial misadventures. The category of repatriate then became a term which could be associated with various post-war anxieties such as the contamination of Japanese women by foreigners and the indoctrination of Japanese men by communism. As such, the figure of the repatriate became an “internal other” against which “Japanese-ness” could be defined. The stigmatization of repatriates was shown to have ended by the 1980s when *Chūgoku zanryū koji* began to arrive in Japan. Instead of being called repatriates they were referred to using the discourse of migration. This showed that Postwar Japan no longer needed to distance itself from its former empire.⁵

⁵ Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 18.

Watt's research is based on thirteen oral history interviews, government publications, newspapers, works of literature and film. In Chapter 1 she traces the migration of Japanese to the empire and then the process of repatriation. In Chapter 2 she introduces the concept of "labeling" to argue that the Japanese government's bureaucratic efforts to manage repatriation created repatriate as an official category. Watt also explores how the "repatriate community" engaged with this classification to "co-produce the figure of the repatriate". In her third chapter, Watt examines how the repatriate figure was reproduced through the Japanese media. She identifies two stereotypes as being particularly important: the impoverished woman and child repatriate fleeing from Manchuria and the "communist-propaganda brainwashed" man from Siberia. In Chapter 4 Watt explores how the repatriate figure was depicted in literature, film and song from 1945 up to the late-1980s. She argues that in many of these forms of cultural production, the repatriate figure represented a person who "was not quite Japanese". The fifth chapter traces the movement by repatriates to receive compensation for lost assets and the subsequent efforts to commemorate the repatriate experience (such as the opening of the Heiwa kinen tenji shiryō kan). In her conclusion

Watt makes comparisons with two other mass-movements of people: post-1945 Europe and the expulsion of “ethnic Germans” and the end of French rule in Algeria and the movement of the *Pied-noir*.

The provocative question which guided her research also marks what should be the starting point for further research (“what happened to *a people* mobilized for empire after the failure of the colonial project”?) If by “a people” Watt is referring to metropolitan Japanese then she presents a strong explanation for why the “the cold winds of the *naichi*” blew so strongly: the stigmatization of colonial returnees is how a metropole is disentangled from the empire.⁶ However, if she also means to include those who were repatriates then she is less successful. What Watt’s work presents is how the Japanese

⁶ Other researchers writing about European decolonization have also shown how this happened after the end of the Dutch, French and Portuguese empires between the late-1940s and early-1970s. See: Andrea L Smith, “Introduction,” in *Europe’s Invisible Migrants*, ed. Andrea L Smith (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 30-31.

government, the media and metropolitan Japanese viewed repatriates. Apart from a brief discussion of the “repatriate community”, there is little on how repatriates themselves tried to negotiate repatriation and reintegration.

Memory Maps: The State and Manchuria in Postwar Japan. By Mariko Tamanoi
(2009)

The other book to appear in 2009 set out to examine the memory of three groups of Manchuria and, in particular, the role of the Japanese state. The three groups are Japanese settler-colonists-turned-repatriates, Japanese who were children when they were left behind in China during the repatriation and who several decades later returned to Japan, and Chinese who lived in Manchuria under Japanese rule. Taking a historical anthropology approach to her subject, Tamanoi used oral history interviews and written memoirs as her main sources. She argues that by presenting the “memories of many

people of different nationalities, classes, genders, and generations”, she can “get closer to such truth” that is “the power of the Japanese state”.⁷

For the purposes of this dissertation, the most important chapters of the book are those that deal with the first group: the settler-colonists-turned-repatriates (hereafter referred to as ‘repatriates’). By August 1945, Manchuria contained over 1.5 million Japanese civilians which were over twice as many as the Korean Peninsula - the next most heavily populated part of the empire. As other researchers have argued, Manchuria’s importance went beyond the numbers of Japanese situated there; the strategic, economic, social and cultural importance meant that it was the keystone of “a total

⁷ Mariko Tamanoi, *Memory maps: the state and Manchuria in Postwar Japan*

(Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 161.

empire”.⁸ Tamanoi (as well as Watt), therefore, understandably chose to focus her research on the case of Manchuria.

In her introduction, Tamanoi briefly explains what she means by the notoriously slippery term “memory”. She states her interest as understanding “how [repatriates] remember (or have forgotten) the power of the Japanese state”.⁹ To examine this problem, she proposes to “use ‘the present’ to refer to multiple points in time of the postwar era where individuals stood (...) and remembered Manchuria in ‘the past’”¹⁰

Chapters 2 and 3 represent the most important parts of Tamanoi’s research for the subject of repatriates. In Chapter 2 the author expands on how she proposes to examine memories. She interprets her role thus: “while honoring memory as a

⁸ Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 13.

⁹ Tamanoi, *Memory Maps*, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

depository of facts, oral historians are also expected to explore what happens to experience on the way to becoming memory”.¹¹ Therefore, Tamanoi states, she will “reconstruct the life of Japanese agrarian colonists in Manchuria in the age of empire (historical truth) and explore the subjectivity of these former colonists in remembering the power of the Japanese state (interviewees truth in their remembering)”.¹² She explains that in their post-war remembering, few repatriates held a critical stance towards their own decisions and actions. Rather, they maintained that the decision to emigrate to Manchuria was taken because they were following state policy. The state also tricked them by promoting Manchuria as a vast, unsettled land and the best solution to overcoming poverty in Japan.¹³

¹¹ Tamanoi, *Memory Maps*, 24.

¹² Ibid., 24-25.

¹³ Ibid., 51.

The third chapter investigates the connection between history produced by repatriates and “national history”. Tamanoi identifies the “official history” of the “Japanese state as that produced by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in a series of books called *Hikiage engo no kiroku* (Records on the support of repatriation). In its official history, Tamanoi argues that “the postwar Japanese state seems to have highlighted certain facts while neglecting others”.¹⁴ Turning to repatriates’ history as recorded in *hikiagemono*, Tamanoi stresses that these differ from the “official discourse of repatriation” by being more critical of how the state treated repatriates in the post-war.¹⁵

Tamanoi’s book, by using oral history interviews and written memoirs (that were authored by professional writers) to “listen to the voices” of repatriates, fills some of the space left by Watt’s work. The obvious limitation of her approach is its focus on repatriates who were agricultural settlers in Manchuria. As Tamanoi herself

¹⁴ Tamanoi, *Memory Maps*, 62.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

acknowledges, even within this one group “gender, age, status, and location in Manchuria greatly affected the degree of suffering of each colonist” and, therefore, the subsequent remembering that took place.¹⁶

More importantly, Tamanoi’s methodology is weak on the processes behind the production of repatriate memoirs (and also the oral testimonies she helped to create through her fieldwork). Firstly, most repatriate memoirs, about not only Manchuria but other parts of the former empire as well, were written from the end of the 1970s onwards. Tamanoi’s approach, therefore, leapfrogs from “the past” of Japanese in colonial Manchuria to “the present” of post-war remembering when the memoir was written or the oral testimony was given. The decades in-between, and how events during these years, affected the memories that she analyses are almost completely ignored (she makes a brief reference to the “national level” campaign for compensation). Secondly, Tamanoi fails to explain in any detail about the circumstances in which the memoirs were written. Possibly, they were all the result of individual effort. However, considering

¹⁶ Tamanoi, *Memory Maps*, 56.

the importance of repatriate groups in post-war society, there is a strong possibility that many of the authors chose to write about their experiences as a result of prior involvement in such organisations. The activities of repatriate groups would seem to be an important (but missing) link in processes of repatriate remembering and forgetting that Tamanoi seeks to explain.

Other English-language research

As well as Watt and Tamanoi's books, two other pieces of research about repatriates are important to mention. Firstly, in his important monograph 'The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan' (2001), James Orr includes a section on "Compensation for Repatriates". He follows the campaign for compensation of lost overseas assets that was led by the National Federation of Repatriate Groups (引揚者団体連合会; also known as 'Zenren') from 1946 until the end of the 1960s. During this time, two payments were made to repatriates (in 1957 and in 1967) as a result of the negotiations between Zenren's leaders (whose political power depended on them being able to claim to have influence over how 3.5 million repatriates voted) and conservative politicians of the Liberal Democratic Party who dominated the

government. Orr's argument, as it relates to repatriates, is that by agreeing to make payments to repatriates from the national government's budget, this helped to "validate and legitimize repatriate belief that [the repatriate experience] was national history".¹⁷

This was part of the process by which a "shared national myth" formed in the post-war whereby all Japanese were to a certain extent victims of the war and wartime complicity was downplayed.¹⁸

Although his section on the compensation campaign forms part of a broader argument about post-war ideology, he has provided an important insight into some of the motivations behind the politics of repatriates during the 1950s and 1960s. However, whilst not stated explicitly, the focus of his analysis is on the leadership of Zenren and politicians based in Tokyo. As with all studies of interest group politics, there is a

¹⁷ James Orr, *The Victim As Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 168.

¹⁸ Ibid.

question about how far the Zenren leadership can be considered as representative of repatriates. Another issue is how repatriate groups interacted with the Zenren leadership which was more of a loosely organized coordinating group than a well-established leadership.

One further piece of important research in the English language about repatriates is a book chapter by Nicole Leah Cohen about the post-war lives of Japanese who were born in Colonial Korea and repatriated when they were children or in the early stages of adulthood. She explains how these “second-generation” repatriates had a “hybrid identity” meaning that they self-identified with Colonial Korea as the place where they were born and raised as well as Japan which was their “ancestral homeland”. After repatriation, Cohen argues, these repatriates could no longer easily identify with Korea. That they had not been born in Japan also made post-war society’s emphasis on “the Japanese” as a mono-ethnic island nation a difficult concept to embrace. According to Cohen, the sense of “void” felt by many second-generation repatriates who had been “removed from their native places (*furusato*)” meant that they became enthusiastic

participants in “cultural associations” such as alumni groups and the Japan-Korea Association.¹⁹

By emphasizing that groups of repatriates formed for cultural reasons, Cohen’s approach misses the political element that is also an inherent part of much activity. As suggested by Orr, during the two decades after repatriation, the politics of compensation interweaved with the seemingly apolitical activities of alumni and cultural associations. A particularly important problem, which Cohen does not investigate, is how the activities of the “first generation” of repatriates shaped the ways the second generation came to interpret their experiences.

The above section has critically examined four of the most important works on repatriates in the English language. The approaches taken by the four authors differ

¹⁹ Nicole Leah Cohen, "Return of the Natives? - Children of Empire in Post-imperial Japan," in *Postcolonial migrants and identity politics: Europe, Russia, Japan and the United States in Comparison*, ed. Ulbe and Oustindie (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 169.

according to their disciplinary backgrounds: Watt and Orr's work is more historically based and addresses more macro-level questions such as nation-wide representations and ideologies. Tamanoi and Cohen's research employs a more anthropological viewpoint to examine individual and small-group memories. The connection between the broad trends of the "national level" and dynamics in the regions and localities however, remains to be examined.

Japanese language literature

In her seminal essay about "public memory" and the post-war historiography of Japan, Carol Gluck argued that within Japanese society, "custodians of the past produce[d] different interpretations of the way things were, and why". Gluck's point was that public memory in Japan – "the dominant sense of the past" – had, since 1945, gradually "shifted toward the conservative social and national center".²⁰ She highlighted "status quo or establishment history" as having "the greatest institutional power" and as

²⁰ Carol Gluck, "The Past in the Present," in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 65.

dominating “official public memory”.²¹ For Gluck, “conservative consensus history” was about “an ever rising national trajectory from destruction to prosperity, from international humiliation to the status of economic superpower”.²² One of the main counterpoints to this type of history, she stated, came from “progressive intellectuals” who dominated “the academy and intellectual discourse”.

The conservative consensus and the Japanese historiography of repatriates

Gluck’s analysis provides a useful overview of much of the existing Japanese literature about repatriates and repatriation. These subjects have a place in histories written from a conservative consensus and progressive standpoint. Within the former, the MHW’s official histories (analysed by Tamanoi) and the depiction of repatriates as presented by the government-backed museum in Shinjuku have made an important contribution to

²¹ Gluck, “Past in the Present”, 73.

²² Ibid., 72.

depicting “the repatriate experience” as a narrative of Japanese suffering and victimhood.

As suggested by Tamanoi however, many repatriates felt that the official history of repatriation failed to provide an adequate account of the hardship they went through.

This gap is reflected in the thousands of repatriate-authored memoirs and “self-histories” (*jibunshi*), which are more critical of the Japanese government. Therefore, the

conservative consensus contains two strands: one is “state-approved” and concentrates

on government assistance as well as repatriate victimhood and the other is a more

“popular” telling which stresses repatriate suffering and the lack of government

assistance. What these two strands have in common is an emphasis on events after the

collapse of the empire (little mention is made of history prior to August 1945 in either the

MHW’s account or that of many memoir writers), the hardship endured by Japanese

repatriates and their strong desire to make it back to Japan.

The first scholarly treatment of repatriates sought to reconcile some of the differences

between the official history and repatriates’ memoirs. Wakatsuki Yasuo, relying mainly

on sources from the MHW and Foreign Ministry archives, stated that the purpose of his

book was to reveal “this intensely sad [aspect] of Japanese people’s history”.²³ Writing at the end of the 1980s, there had recently been much coverage in the popular press about the arrival of *Chūgoku zanryū koji* in Japan and public interest in the “forgotten” history of Japanese in Manchuria. Wakatsuki highlighted the “unprecedented” aspect of repatriation in the same way as the MHW: the “return only a few years after the war’s end of almost 10% of our fellow countrymen to the war-torn Japanese mainland”.²⁴ However, Wakatsuki’s analysis went beyond the MHW’s by emphasizing, as he saw it, the “responsibility” of the USSR for what Japanese in Manchuria had experienced. This was the history as told in “several hundred memoirs about the extreme suffering of repatriates from Manchuria and the north of the Korean peninsula”.²⁵ Wakatsuki, who had previously written one of the first books on Japanese prisoners of war detained in

²³ Wakatsuki Yasuo, *Sengo hikiage no kiroku* (Tokyo: Jijitsūshinsha, 1991), II.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

the USSR, also did not hold back in his criticism of the former superpower. In Manchuria, Wakatsuki stated, “the atrocities of the invading Soviet military...nearly all happened after the Japanese Army had put down its weapons”.²⁶ He also drew attention to how experiences varied according to which of the colonies and occupied territories a person was in. He described the situation thus: “for Japanese, their fate divided into life and death” depending on which Allied Power’s military jurisdiction they found themselves under.

Two other important works that, like Wakatsuki, start with an assumption about the primacy of Japanese repatriates’ suffering are by Masuda Hiroshi and Yokote Shinji.

Both authors examine, through the topic of repatriation, the periodization of the “end of the war” (*shūsen*) and the “beginning of the post-war” (*sengo*) and how these historical labels relate to the start of the Cold War. Masuda Hiroshi argued that the general confusion and diplomatic wrangling over repatriation meant that the period known in

²⁶ Wakatsuki, *Sengo hikiage no kiroku* , 326.

Japanese as the “end of the war” actually carried over into the “post-war period”.²⁷

Furthermore, although the Cold War is assumed to have begun over tensions in Europe between the superpowers of the US and USSR and then spread to Asia between 1948 to 1949 culminating in the Korean War, the situation was more complex. Masuda states that the starting point for the “Asian Cold War” actually occurred when the Japanese Empire collapsed in August 1945 because at this moment the “old order” had to be replaced. Repatriation was one issue around which the “new order” in Asia took shape.²⁸

Yokote Shinji has taken the connection between repatriation and the emerging Cold War order in Asia a step further by arguing that, “The negotiations over the Japanese

²⁷ Masuda Hiroshi, “Hikiage/Fukuin kenkyū no shikaku to shūsenshi no minaoshi,” in *Dai Nippon Teikoku no hōkai to hikiage/fukuin*, ed. Masuda Hiroshi (Tokyo: Keio Gijuku Daigaku, 2012), 2.

²⁸ Ibid.

detainees and their actual repatriation process became a fundamental ideological battle in Japan, contributing to the formation of the US-Japan camp against the USSR before the conclusion of the formal security treaty in 1951."²⁹ Yokote explained that the USSR's decision to use Japanese prisoners for labour rather than complying with the terms of the Potsdam Declaration which stipulated the prompt return to Japan of demobilized soldiers caused widespread resentment amongst the Japanese. This was compounded by the repeated failure of the USSR to provide prompt and accurate information about the number of Japanese prisoners being detained and those who had died in detention. According to Yokote, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru – a man whose conservative politics were controversial in late-1940s and early-1950s Japan, was also able to use repatriation as an issue with which to undermine support for the Japan Communist Party.³⁰

²⁹ Shinji Yokote, "Soviet Repatriation Policy, US Occupation Authorities, and Japan's Entry into the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 31.

³⁰ Ibid., 50.

Wakatsuki, Masuda and Yokote all emphasized the connection between repatriates and the Cold War world that emerged in Asia in the late-1940s. Wakatsuki in particular, and to a lesser (and more academically balanced) extent Yokote have been critical of the actions of the USSR and how these affected Japanese repatriates in Manchuria. As Yokote has argued, the politics of repatriation and repatriates became enmeshed with wider political issues of the post-war years. This has affected how repatriates have been portrayed in the Japanese historiography – a point which has been taken up by several historians writing from Gluck's "progressive" perspective.

The "progressive" approach to the historiography of repatriates

The 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 1995 led to debates about "war responsibility" and "historical consciousness" becoming more prominent within academia in Japan (and elsewhere). There began to be a reassessment of the place of the Japanese Empire in the academic literature and, more broadly, in post-war society. Questions were asked about the movement of money, goods and people and throughout the empire. Several Japanese scholars also took a more critical stance towards repatriation and repatriates. This was summed-up by the title of an article that

appeared in 2004: "Hikiage as a way of viewing history." In the article, Abe Yasunari and Katō Kiyofumi called for research that "overcame the taboo of post-war history" and avoided "emphasising only the tragic aspects of repatriation".³¹ The "taboo" was the question of why Japanese had had to become repatriates. Was it because of the Soviet Union or was it the result of Japan's history of imperialism? By focusing on repatriates as a way of understanding Japan's 20th century history, they argued, post-war Japanese society had avoided confronting the legacies of empire.

This argument emerged in the work of several scholars who sought to deconstruct how post-war society had come to narrate the experiences of repatriates. Particularly important was a chapter by the political historian Asano Toyomi, examining how the experiences of repatriates were incorporated into post-war society. He argued that the term 'repatriate' came to obscure time spent by overseas Japanese as 'colonist'. In the first years of the post-war, the hardship and suffering of repatriates' experiences were

³¹ Yasunari Abe and Kiyofumi Katō, "Reconsidering "Repatriation" after World War II (2)," *The Hikone Ronso* 350, (July 2004): 62-65.

emphasised. According to Asano, despite differences in occupation, all repatriates shared the experience of detention in camps whilst they waited to be repatriated, loss of virtually all possessions, uncertainty about when friends and relatives would be able to repatriate and transportation back to Japan. This became the standard experience of repatriate hardship. The narrative was used by repatriate groups to lobby the Japanese government to provide relief and compensation. During the Occupation, Asano states, arguing against assistance for repatriates risked being challenged as “un-patriotic”.³²

The issue of Japanese overseas awaiting repatriation had become a significant problem in the cold war tensions of the late 1940s. It was put forward as one affecting the Japanese people and, as such, beyond political divisions. As the “political character” of

³² Asano Toyomi, "Oritatamareta Teikoku - Sengo Nihon ni okeru 'Hikiage' no kioku to sengoteki kachi," in *Kioku to shite no Paaru Haabaa*, ed. Hosoya Chihiro, Iriye Akira and Oshiba Ryō (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobo, 2004), 311-312.

The same article, with minor changes, also appears in: Asano Toyomi, *Teikoku Nihon no shokuminchi hōsei* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku, 2008),

repatriates formed around the portrayal of suffering – and thereby incorporated into other Japanese narratives of wartime suffering – the question of colonial responsibility faded from view.

The importance of cold war politics in shaping how repatriates were viewed in post-war society was taken-up by Katō Kiyofumi. He examined one of the main tenets of the narrative of repatriate hardship – the experiences of Japanese in Manchuria. More repatriates came from Manchuria than any other area of the empire. Furthermore, the reports of widespread sexual violence against Japanese women and girls by Soviet soldiers meant that Manchurian repatriation generated a considerable amount of writing and reporting. According to Katō, many of these accounts concentrated on the fates of agricultural settlement groups and orphans left behind to the extent that these became the “symbolic” experiences of Manchuria. Experiences had actually varied according to an individual’s position in society and the region of Manchuria they were in: there was

no “typical tragedy”.³³ What emerged in post-war Japan, however, was a “stereotype of the repatriate”.³⁴ This was based on accounts of violence and rape in Manchuria and detention in Siberia. For much of the post-war this stereotype was part of the image many Japanese held of the USSR and communism. Katō’s point was that by concentrating on Manchurian repatriation, “the origin of the repatriation problem (why were Japanese people there [the colonies and occupied territories] in the first place?)”

³³ Katō Kiyofumi, “Sengo higashi Ajia no reisen to Manshū hikiage,” *Higashi Ajia Kindaishi* 9, (March 2006): 132-133.

³⁴ Ibid.

was ignored.³⁵ For Katō, “post-war Japanese” had “forgotten the empire at the same time as only listening to the tragic experiences of repatriates”.³⁶

Much of the existing literature has, therefore, taken a sceptical view of how “Post-war Japan” has understood repatriates’ experiences. In an important article in 2006, Narita Ryūichi argued that when discussing “repatriation” five points were important. Firstly, that repatriation was a return movement. To discuss repatriation without including the outward migration made little sense. Secondly, this return movement was not a direct, one-way flow of Japanese from the colonies to Japan. It was a stop-start movement that was multi-directional. Thirdly, experiences of repatriation varied depending on where in the former empire a person was located. Fourthly, the departure of Koreans and

³⁵ Katō Kiyofumi, “Kaigai hikiage mondai to Nihonjin engo dantai,” in *Sengo Ajia ni okeru Nihonjin dantai: Hikiage kara kigyō shinshutsu made*, ed. Kobayashi Hideo, Shibata Yoshimasa and Yoshida Sennosuke (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2008), 76.

³⁶ Ibid.

Taiwanese from the Japanese mainland was also part of “repatriation” and, therefore, also deserved to be investigated. Fifthly, despite the experiences of repatriates being told in thousands of memoirs few writers had addressed the subject of empire. For Narita, this was indicative of how “colonial consciousness” still remained in post-war Japan.³⁷

These progressive historians have, therefore, questioned the assumption that any narrative about repatriates should start from the premise that it is a story of Japanese suffering and hardship. As Asano, Katō and Narita have shown, this narrative was largely a construct of the Cold War politics of the post-war. As a result, “public memory” (to borrow Gluck’s phrase) became fixated on a stereotype of the Manchurian repatriate. One of the most important consequences of this narrative has been to prevent “the

³⁷ Narita Ryūichi, “'Hikiage' to yokuryū' ” in *Iwanami Kōza Ajia/Taiheiyō sensō 4*

Teikoku no sensō keiken, ed. Kurazawa Aiko (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2006), 180-182.

Narita’s first four points have become widely accepted as “the starting point” for examining repatriation.

Japanese” from more fully comprehending the post-war history of Japan in Asia and how public opinion in surrounding countries views the collapse of the empire.

For the purposes of this dissertation, this brief summary of the Japanese literature shows the importance of examining repatriates from an area other than Manchuria. The stereotype of the Manchurian repatriate has become firmly established in post-war society. Therefore, examining how repatriates from another part of the former empire negotiated their reintegration would provide a fresh approach. It would also lead to insights about how other repatriates negotiated this Manchurian stereotype.

In summary, in the Japanese language research, analysis has concentrated on both “recovering” a “forgotten” the history of a marginalized group (repatriates), or critically questioning how repatriates have been incorporated into “national history” and what implications this has for “Japanese people’s” historical awareness.

Population movements after the Second World War

As mentioned above, in terms of the mass movement of people as a result of decolonization, the repatriation of Japanese after the collapse of the empire was one of

the largest of its kind in the 20th century. For example, another decolonization in Asia that occurred in the latter half of the 1940s was the end of the Dutch Empire (an end that was directly influenced by Japan's wartime actions). Between 1945 and 1963, 300,000 people arrived in the Netherlands from the Dutch East Indies and the Dutch West Indies, many leaving before Indonesian independence in 1949.³⁸ Probably one of the most well-known examples of decolonization was the ending of Colonial Algeria after the brutal French-Algerian war of the 1950s and early-1960s. Approximately 1.5 million people left Algeria for France over the course of a few months in 1962. One of the last European countries to disband its empire was Portugal which was ruled as a dictatorship until the mid-1970s. At around this time, Portuguese colonies in Africa – Angola and Mozambique – became independent (but soon descended into a state of civil war) and 800,000 “retornados” arrived in Portugal between 1974 and 1976.³⁹

³⁸ Smith, “Introduction”, 13.

³⁹ Ibid., 32.

These statistics show that the Japanese Empire stands out in terms of the numbers who moved.

There are two further examples of the mass movement of people which occurred at around the same time as the collapse of the Japanese Empire in the mid-to-late 1940s: the expulsion of 12 million “ethnic Germans” from Eastern and Central Europe after 1945 and the post-partition transfer of 18 million refugees after the end of British colonial rule in India in 1947. The historical context in Europe and India means that these movements were not the product of decolonization in the same way as for Japan, the Netherlands, France and Portugal. Many of the German “expellees” had a history of settlement in the areas from which they were removed that went back several centuries.⁴⁰ At the time of India’s independence, approximately 100,000 non-official British citizens remained in the country to see out terms of employment. There was no sudden rush to leave along with the withdrawal of the ruling colonial power. The

⁴⁰ Andrew Demshuk, *The lost German East: forced migration and the politics of memory, 1945-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 35.

movement of 18 million refugees took place as violence amongst Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs worsened as the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan progressed.⁴¹

The remainder of this section will briefly summarise the most important findings of a fraction of the research on post-partition India and European decolonization that is of relevance to this dissertation.

The introduction to Japan's MHW-authored *Hikiage engo no kiroku* contains a brief reference to co-operation between the Indian government and Japanese officials over how best to manage the large-scale movement of people.⁴² The implication being that the MHW, having recently overseen the repatriation of almost 5 million Japanese and

⁴¹ Ian Talbot, "The End of the European Colonial Empires and Forced Migration: Some Comparative Case Studies," in *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Panayi and Virdee (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 31, 38-39.

⁴² Hikiage engo chō, *Hikiage engo no kiroku* (Tokyo: Hikiage engo chō, 1950), Jo 14.

the return of 1.5 million Koreans and Taiwanese, had the know-how to assist the Indian authorities planning for the reintegration of partition refugees. Although the level of assistance given is unclear in the MHW's account, this point is of interest because of the parallel in how Japanese and Indian officials subsequently wrote about the State's role in facilitating the population transfers. In Indian government accounts published twenty years after the partition, officials described how there had been largely uncontrollable and spontaneous violence that necessitated the state intervention to ensure people were able to move safely from Pakistan. The same account also presented a standardized picture of the refugee experience with the emphasis placed on official efforts to assist people in moving.⁴³ There is a striking similarity with the MHW's portrayal of the "unprecedented" repatriation of Japanese because of war and the end of the empire.

⁴³ Ian Talbot, "Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances," *Modern Asian Studies* 45 no. Special Issue 01 (January 2011): 111-115.

Some of the most insightful research on partition refugees engages with the stereotypes that have developed from the official history and out of refugees' own narratives. In the context of Indian society, it stressed the continuation of social hierarchies because of class and caste that were hidden by standardized images of the refugee. Ian Talbot has found that individual accounts were "no less selective and influenced by legitimization needs than the more obviously constructed national discourse".⁴⁴ He concluded that images of the refugee presented a common experience that was actually based on a narrow section of the migrant population. In the case of India, therefore, refugees' rehabilitation was influenced by "social status and cultural capital" but this point has been obscured by official, popular and academic histories of the partition.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Talbot, "Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation," 125.

⁴⁵ Udit Sen, "The Myths Refugees Live By: Memory and history in the making of Bengali refugee identity," *Modern Asian Studies* First View Article, no. (May 2013): 1.

Scholars researching the history of European decolonization from the 1940s to the 1970s have also suggested the importance of social and cultural capital possessed by those who moved. In the context of post-war migration to Europe, many former colonial settlers who migrated to France, the Netherlands and Portugal in most cases had the advantage of already holding citizenship status of the country to which they were moving as well as speaking the language of the metropole, having familiar educational qualifications and being white. These factors seemingly distinguished them from the “problems” associated with the political and cultural assimilation of other migrants who came to industrialized European countries in the 1950s and 1960s.

This brief overview of some of the literature about other large-scale population movements in the 20th century has shown the necessity of further investigating within broad categories such as refugee and repatriate.

The focus of this dissertation

The most important finding of the above literature review is how much of the existing research situates repatriates in the context of Japan’s transition from an empire to a

nation-state. In the English language literature, repatriates are analysed from the following perspectives: (1) their stigmatization by metropolitan people (Watt); (2) their ambiguous post-war relationship with the “Japanese State”, primarily defined as the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Tamanoi); (3) their campaign for recognition from the Japanese government in Tokyo and subsequent incorporation into the “national ideology” of Japanese wartime victimhood (Orr); and (4) their “hybrid identity” resulting from being raised in the colonies and their subsequent discomfort with a further post-war national ideology – that of the myth of the “Japanese” as a homogenous people of an island nation (Cohen). The Japanese language literature too, by examining how repatriates have been folded into “Japanese” discourses on the war, has also largely privileged a national perspective.

In much of the existing research, one of the underlying questions is “how did repatriates reintegrate into post-war society?” One definition of “to reintegrate” is “to be remade or reaccepted as a member of a social group”. The existing research implicitly assumes that the group to be analysed is the nation-state of “Japan”. This assumption has led to an emphasis on repatriates as depicted in the national media during the Occupation

period when news coverage was at its peak. It has also led researchers to pick-up the subject of repatriates in the 1990s and 2000s at around the time when the Japanese government in Tokyo opened its new museum in Shinjuku. The relationship between repatriates as a group in post-war society and other actors such as “the State/government in Tokyo” and “metropolitan people” has, therefore, been examined. However, if the question being considered is the reintegration of repatriates, is this focus on repatriates as being primarily a national issue adequate? Did repatriates see themselves mainly as actors on a national stage or were other kinds of connections and commonalities more important for smoothing reintegration? Whilst examining repatriates in the setting of the national is important, it cannot alone provide an adequate explanation for reintegration.

From the literature review, two further points are apparent. Firstly, the overwhelming emphasis on sources drawn from the case of Manchurian repatriates. Secondly, the historiography’s coverage of either repatriates as “history” (recovering the history of “what happened” around August 1945 and the early years of the Occupation period) or repatriates as “historical memory” (how historical events have been remembered in

contemporary times by repatriates and “Japanese society”). In the research about the history of repatriates, scholars have tried to find documents from 1945 to around 1950 on which to base the analysis. For historical memory, the main sources have been repatriate memoirs and *jibunshi*, which quickly appeared from the late-1970s onwards until, over 30 years later, copies held in the National Diet Library in Tokyo numbered in the thousands. The result is that few researchers have studied the period between the end of the Occupation and the start of the steady rise in *hikiagemono*.

Out of Manchuria – repatriates in Karafuto and Hokkaido

Because the Manchurian repatriate has been an important image in Japan’s post-war society and in the historiography, research about repatriates from other parts of the empire remains underdeveloped. The starting point for this dissertation, therefore, is to examine repatriates from somewhere other than Manchuria. A local case study by the historian Kimura Kenji investigated the repatriation of Japanese colonial settlers from Korea to a town in southwest Honshu. In the article, Kimura made the important point that the post-war settlement of repatriates was uneven across Japan and was especially concentrated in Hokkaido and Kyushu. Data from the 1950 National Census indicated

that of all the prefectures in Japan, Hokkaido had absorbed the largest number of repatriates.⁴⁶ Kimura also noted that many of the repatriates who had settled in Hokkaido had come, not from Manchuria, but from Karafuto (present-day Sakhalin). The 1950 Hokkaido Yearbook showed 471,000 repatriates as living in Hokkaido, which represented 11% of the island's then population of 4.2 million. The authors of the yearbook, in fact, specifically mentioned repatriates as one of the major causes for the jump in Hokkaido's post-war population.⁴⁷ This dissertation, therefore, will focus on repatriates who went from Karafuto to Hokkaido after the fall of the empire.

This dissertation's approach, however, offers more than simply a different regional perspective on a familiar subject. As has been shown elsewhere, the term repatriate

⁴⁶ Kimura Kenji, "Hikiagesha engo jigyo no suii," *Nenpō Nihon Gendaishi* 10, (2005):

125.

⁴⁷ Hokkaido Shinbunsha, *Hokkaido Nenkan (1951 nenpan)* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shimbunsha, 1950), 112, 124.

was a label created by government officials working as part of a national bureaucracy. It was applied to “Japanese” people moving from previously imperial spaces to the national territory of Japan. To accept this point, however, is not the same as showing that the people who had the label applied to them understood their situation in the same, bureaucratically defined terms (this is the argument Watt makes with her concept of “co-production”). Despite much of the research being aware of the theory of labeling, most analysis of repatriates treats them as though the majority of people viewed their circumstances as officialdom did (as an undifferentiated group of people who had returned from the *gaichi*). By focusing on Karafuto and Hokkaido, this dissertation moves away from the official terms which have dominated most conceptions of repatriates and locates people in a regionalized context. As will be explained, when Japan was an imperial polity, Hokkaido and Karafuto were often considered as one regional bloc. This regional dimension can be found in other parts of the empire as well (although not necessarily as developed as Hokkaido/Karafuto) including southwest Honshu/northern Kyushu and Korea, and Okinawa and the Nan'yō. To examine repatriates according to the terms on which they understood their circumstances

requires a particular focus on a “region” such as Hokkaido and Karafuto as well as the well-studied imperial/national dimension.⁴⁸

Between the “history” of repatriates and the “historical memory” of repatriates

The historical period on which this dissertation will focus is primarily from 1945 until the middle of the 1970s (although the first chapter will address events that occurred before the end of the empire). This dissertation, therefore, examines a period given only passing attention in much of the existing research. Watt focused the bulk of her research on the Occupation period (mainly the years 1945 to 1950) as the moment when the repatriate figure was “co-produced”. She argues that from the 1950s onwards, there was a “domestication of repatriation” meaning that the subject was recognized within national discourse about the war. Whilst acknowledging that the commemoration

⁴⁸ This dissertation does not attempt to examine the case of Sakhalin Koreans. Neither does it engage with the literature on the experiences of “repatriates” from Sakhalin with an Ainu, Uilta or Nivkh background. These are important topics for historians which would require a separate dissertation to examine them in the necessary detail.

and narration of repatriation “began on the local level soon after the war”, Watt provides little explanation of how this influenced repatriates’ reintegration.⁴⁹ Yet, the 1950s and 1960s were an important time which preceded the publication of thousands of repatriate memoirs and self-histories beginning in the late-1970s and early-1980s.

Tamanoi’s book, which uses some of these memoirs, also includes no detailed research into the decades between the events described by the authors and the time of writing (or speaking in the case of oral history interviews). Furthermore, in analyzing the friction between “history” as recorded by repatriates and as given by the Japanese State, Tamanoi possibly overstates the importance of the accounts written by the MHW. When the subject of investigation moves away from Manchuria, the State-Repatriate tension that supports Tamanoi’s approach becomes less taut. In the case of Karafuto, one notable feature of many repatriate memoirs is that when a source is required with details about “what happened” or as an account to argue against, the one usually chosen is not the MHW account. The book *Karafuto Shūsen Shi* (hereafter KSS’) is regarded by many

⁴⁹ Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 180.

as representing the “official story” of what happened and as a reference for basic information.⁵⁰

KSS was researched and written in the late-1960s before being published in 1973. The publication of this book marks the end of the period analysed in this dissertation. An analysis of the period prior to the writing of this book is, therefore, important for understanding how repatriates negotiated post-war history and memory.

Unpicking the repatriate label

After geographical location and periodization, the third perspective that defines the approach taken in this dissertation from the previous research is the attention paid to the category of repatriate. Whilst the existing research is precise about how institutions such as the MHW identified and categorized people as repatriates, it remains vague on the problem of self-identification. For example, Watt employs the term “repatriate community” when she probes the co-production of the repatriate figure. Tamanoi settles

⁵⁰ Karafuto shūsenshi kankōkai, *Karafuto shūsenshi* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, 1973).

for the term “settler-colonists-turned-repatriates” in her analysis. Neither study engages with the crucial questions of who accepted the repatriate tag, who reformulated it and who ignored it.

After the last years of French rule in Algeria when thousands of former colonial settlers started to cross the Mediterranean Sea to France, and following Partition when millions of refugees moved between India and Pakistan, images of the migrants as a largely undifferentiated mass of people soon spread in the receiving societies. Such images, especially those promoted by a government trying to shape public opinion, often depicted those who had moved as having few options (and therefore in need of public support). In Japan also, in 1948 and in 1949 the Japanese government under the guidance of the Occupation, organized *Ai no undō* campaigns to generate public sympathy for repatriates. Repatriates were portrayed as virtually destitute and in dire need of support. Responses to this campaign were varied (at the time, some criticized the campaigns for the stigmatizing effect) but some repatriate groups also played on such imagery to win government and public support. Phrases such as “with only the clothes on my back” (着の身着のまま) and “without a red cent” (裸一貫) were coined

during the Occupation period to describe repatriates and they continue to appear in repatriate memoirs as shorthand for the typical repatriate experience. Without minimising the seriousness of the situation that confronted most repatriates on their arrival in post-war Japan (in 1946 and 1947 especially, when almost 80% of repatriates arrived, millions in Japan were close to starvation)⁵¹, even during a time as difficult as the early years of the Occupation, analysis of repatriates should start from the perspective that options existed and choices were made. This approach is more helpful than uncritically following the stereotype of repatriates as having to start from “nothing” after repatriation.

One of the most fundamental choices people took was whether to use or ignore the label of repatriate. Because Japanese repatriates already had citizenship status, shared the same language and looked similar to metropolitan Japanese, if desired, a person could downplay repatriate status to reintegrate relatively smoothly into society. He could migrate within Japan to a city to look for work, or to a place like Hokkaido where

⁵¹ Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, 228.

schemes existed to resettle people on uncultivated land. He could pass as “an ordinary Japanese” without too much difficulty. This is what millions of repatriates did. Using the label of repatriate, on the other hand, meant defining oneself as part of a group that existed within society and was distinct from “other Japanese”.

This dissertation will focus on those who self-identified as repatriates. This was one option for repatriates to ease their reintegration. It was, however, as Frederick Cooper has argued, a potentially risky one because in a time of decolonization, governments and metropolitan people have little interest in acknowledging a group whose claims are based on a discredited status – that of colonial settler.⁵² Taking the option of assimilation in post-war society as a migrant would seem to be the path of least resistance in terms of a smooth reintegration.

The question of why some repatriates chose to take the option of “identity politics” has, to a considerable extent, been answered by the existing research. As Watt and Orr

⁵² Frederick Cooper, “Postcolonial Peoples: A Commentary,” in *Europe’s Invisible Migrants*, ed. Smith (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 169.

explained, they believed that it was the most effective way to achieve political goals such as greater government support, the speeding-up of repatriation and financial compensation. This dissertation moves back from the why to consider more precisely the who, how, what and when of the production of the repatriate. Who were the repatriates who identified most strongly with the repatriate figure? What figure did they identify with and how did they do it? When did they identify as a repatriate? The most important question is what effect did their self-identification have on others? Through these questions, this dissertation aims to move beyond the conclusion that repatriates, by emphasizing their status as victims, were obscuring their past as colonizers and, therefore, contributing to post-war Japan's historical amnesia of the wartime suffering of other peoples in Asia. This is an obvious facet (similar accounts of people's past lives emerged in Holland, France and Portugal after decolonization) of a complicated history.

Chapter 1 – Pre-war and Wartime Karafuto

Japan's defeat in August 1945 and the American-led Occupation (also known as 'Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers'; hereafter 'SCAP') which began a few weeks later was supposed to mark a clean break between the militarism of the pre-war and wartime years and the start of a new democratic nation. At the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the leaders of the Allied Powers had made plans for what Asia might look like after Japanese control had been ended. The Japanese Empire, which had expanded over the previous 50 years, was to be quickly dismantled. Plans for what was to happen to Japanese who were in the colonies and occupied territories were vaguer although there was agreement that all Japan's military personnel should be disarmed and promptly repatriated. By late-1945, with the Occupation of Japan underway, SCAP instructed the Japanese government to put in place a bureaucracy to manage the repatriation. The organisation of repatriation, and the designating of people as repatriates, received considerable attention in the Japanese press. The coverage (which was closely monitored and frequently censored by SCAP) revolved around the situation in the former colonies for Japanese and how such a large number of people

would be reintegrated into post-war society where food, jobs and shelter were all at a premium.

The official and media approach to the subject of repatriates during the early years of the Occupation period set the tone for much of the subsequent historiography. As a word which took on its meaning shortly after August 1945 once the fate of the Japanese Empire became clearer, *hikiagesha* (repatriates) has, as Lori Watt states, served to mark people in a post-war moment.¹ Repatriates, however, had a pre-war and wartime history, even if the Japanese government and press were more concerned with their status in the post-war.

The structure of the repatriation system, therefore, has made emphasising repatriates in a trans-war context rather than a primarily post-war one difficult. Those who returned from Karafuto also became known as repatriates. In the early years of the post-war, the word was used by repatriate groups which formed and by the men who led those groups. The aim of this chapter is to identify the pre-war and wartime background of several of

¹ Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 57.

the most prominent repatriate leaders who re-appeared in the early post-war years at the head of repatriate groups. Situating these “men of influence” within the local society of Karafuto is also important because it shows that the “repatriate community” was being dominated by certain “types” of individual. A further task is to examine what kind of rhetorical appeals these men made and to which sections of local society they aimed their efforts. The overall purpose of the chapter is to show that during the early post-war years when repatriate groups formed, there were significant continuities in terms of ideology and personnel that can be traced from the pre-war and wartime periods.

An overview of the Japanese Empire

As argued by Andrew Gordon, Japan’s “trajectory to empire” was one of the most revolutionary changes brought about by the Meiji leaders in the 1870s and 1880s. By the end of the 19th century, Japan was pushing for control over Korea and had become the colonial ruler of Taiwan.² Over the following 50 years, Japan came to exert control over neighbouring countries through a variety of means and for varying lengths of time.

² Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, 115.

The empire was ended in August 1945 when Japan's leaders accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. The surrender document stated "Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as we determine".³

The empire consisted of a relatively small number of colonies and the indirect control of large parts of China. The colonies included Taiwan (annexed in 1895), Karafuto (annexed in 1905), the Kwantung Leased Territory which was leased in 1905, Korea (annexed in 1910) and the Nan'yō (mandated under Japanese rule by the League of Nations in 1922). In China, Japanese control took various forms. In Northeast China (also known as Manchuria) Japanese dominance steadily increased from 1905 onwards until 1931 when armed occupation began. After this date, the independent-in-name-only state of Manchukuo was formed. During the Second World War the Japanese Empire

³ Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 36.

expanded to include much of China and Western colonies in Southeast Asia as part of the short-lived Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁴

Japan's leaders had multiple reasons for expanding the territory under their control although particular emphasis is often given to the importance of national security. The Japanese Empire involved expansion in the "near abroad": territory was usually acquired with the justification that it was necessary for "defence". However, much recent research has stressed that the empire was not shaped by the nation's political leaders alone but also by the interests of soldiers, bureaucrats and private individuals. Also important is the point that the expansion of empire was not a smooth process. Rather, the political, economic and social factors that lay behind expansion changed and varied in intensity over time. For example, there was a period of enlargement during the late-Meiji period that lasted until the end of the First World War. The 1920s, however, was a decade when few attempts at expansion were made. Then, in the 1930s,

⁴ Y Tak Matsusaka, "The Japanese Empire," in *A companion to Japanese history*, ed. Tsutsui (Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 225.

expansion once again became an integral part of government policy but in an even more aggressive form.⁵

Prominent politicians, high-ranking bureaucrats, military top-brass, business, entrepreneurs and emigration companies all tried to use public opinion to support the empire. Public backing was, however, never consistently behind further expansion. Empire-building was costly and this often dampened public enthusiasm. The strong support that appeared during times of war was quick to dissipate once fighting had ended. The Japanese who went to the colonies, occupied territories and the Americas did so for multiple reasons and cannot be reduced to a single factor such as “service to the empire”. Chain migration, in particular, was an important reasons why Japanese left Japan.

A good example of how a few people from a village or town might first go overseas and later encourage others from the same area to join them is Japanese in Korea. Those who migrated came predominantly from the regions of northern Kyushu, Chugoku and

⁵ Matsusaka, “The Japanese Empire”, 226-227.

Kinki. Nearly all who went before 1910 and most arriving after went as “voluntary migrants” rather than as part of government sponsored immigration. According to Peter Duus the attraction of moving to Korea, especially after its annexation, was “a whole new structure of economic opportunities for Japanese seeking to better their lives”.⁶ Emigrants sent information back to close relatives, former neighbours and friends and this persuaded more people to migrate. Patterns of migration to other colonies such as the Nan'yō showed a similar trend whereby most migrants came from regions that were in relatively close proximity (Japanese migration to the Nan'yō was dominated by migrants from Okinawa).

More effectively incorporating the motivations of “ordinary Japanese” into the analysis is necessary because of the way the empire was formed. Unlike the European empires, in the case of Japan, the processes of empire-building occurred during roughly the same period as those of industrialization and nation-building. Jun Uchida has argued that

⁶ Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword – The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1995), 319.

“Overseas settlers were a critical link between national formation and imperial expansion in the rise of modern Japan”.⁷ This concern with the role of Japanese settlers in the empire has also extended to the analysis of the make-up of colonial society. In Korea the society was stratified into three main groups. At the top stood the Governor-General and colonial government officials and situated at the lowest level was the Korean population. The middle level was occupied by Japanese settlers. The relations between these groups was complex and cannot be captured adequately by simplistic explanations of the “colonized/colonizer”.

Aside from Korea, Manchuria came to occupy a particularly prominent position within the empire. Prior to 1931, Japan had developed a sphere of influence in Northeast China through the South Manchurian Railway Company (hereafter ‘SMR’). Established in 1906 to control the railway concession received in the negotiations after the Russo-Japanese War, by the 1920s the SMR had expanded into mining, manufacturing

⁷ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire - Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945*

(Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 2011), 9.

and trade. The SMR was supervised from the Kwantung Leased Territory which was a small area on the tip of the Liaotung Peninsula. This was the seat of Japanese colonial power in Northeast China, a fact reflected by the large number of soldiers stationed in the area. By 1919 the army garrison for the railway zone had been renamed as the Kwantung Army. In 1931, senior officers played an important role in the build-up to the “Manchurian Incident” when some track of the SMR was destroyed in an explosion that the Kwantung Army blamed on the Chinese military. This led to attacks by Japanese military on Chinese forces in the area and by March the following year the Kwantung Army had brought-in friendly Chinese leaders to head the puppet-regime known as Manchukuo.⁸

The year 1931 has, therefore, become regarded as a crucial moment when Japanese turned their energies towards building a new kind of empire. The importance of this period has been identified, not only in regards to the areas now under colonial control, but also for Japanese domestic society. The historian Louise Young has argued that

⁸ Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, 188.

1931 should be viewed as the moment when “two imperial systems – one in the colony and one in the metropolis” were created.⁹ Young links her discussion of the cultural impact of empire building in Manchuria on Japanese society to the development of “mass culture” and argues that during the 1930s “empire building in Manchuria touched the lives of most Japanese”.¹⁰ Thus, popular involvement for all Japanese was achieved not just by “encounters with Manchukuo in local politics, in schools, or in the morning news” but even through the “ideas and symbols of popular culture”.¹¹ In Young’s words, Manchuria was an example of “Total Empire”.

⁹ Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

The empire and Karafuto

The “flattening” of pre-war and wartime colonial society into the undifferentiated post-war mass of people encapsulated in the term repatriate has been noted for Japan, for decolonization in other parts of the world and as a feature of forced migrations in general. Recent research on the history of the Japanese Empire has explored the complexity of colonial society. It has shown how the colonizer/colonized framework of analysis is often unable to explain adequately how society functioned in places such as Korea and Taiwan. Karafuto too, has also begun to be examined by historians interested in comparative research of Japan’s colonies. The following section will draw upon some of this literature to provide an overview of the colonial society in Karafuto. In doing so, the aim is to highlight the complex background from which repatriates emerged after 1945.

Compared to the other colonies that made-up the empire, even prior to August 1945, Japanese researchers paid relatively little attention to Karafuto. After 1945, the subsequent historiography about the Japanese Empire has also tended to overlook the colony. According to Takeno Manabu, this reflects the uncertainty about how to best

describe the colonial society that existed. In the theory of economic history, colonies are usually classified as either “settlement” or “investment”. The case of Karafuto is a poor fit with these categories because Japanese moved there in large numbers (making it more than an investment colony) but those who went moved relatively frequently and often migrated for seasonal and temporary work (meaning the colony cannot necessarily be described as “settled”).¹² That the Japanese of Karafuto formed 95% of the colony’s overall population by 1945 has also been given as a reason why the island has received less academic attention. This population structure meant colonial society in Karafuto had a different appearance from Japan’s other colonies.¹³

¹² Takeno Manabu, "Karafuto," in *Nihon Shokuminchi kenkyū no genjō to kadai*, ed.

Nihon Shokuminchi kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Atene sha, 2008), 156.

¹³ As a percentage of the overall population, Japanese comprised 5% in Taiwan, 3% in Korea, 59% in the Nan'yō, 15% in the Kwantung Leased Territory and 2% in Manchuria (as of 1940). In addition to the Japanese population of Karafuto, by 1940 Koreans

Sakhalin/Karafuto, circa 1850 to 1950

During the 19th century, the island known as “Sakhalin” in Russian and “Karafuto” in Japanese became a “zone of contact” (接触地帯) between Russia and Japan. The border between these two expanding powers changed several times, resulting in the movement and re-settlement of the people living on the island. From the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th, historians usually divide the history of the island into four periods: (1) the 20 year period from 1855 and the conclusion of the Treaty of Shimoda (日露通好条約) when the island was declared a “joint possession” of the two countries; (2) the 30 year period from 1875 after the conclusion of the Treaty of St. Petersburg (樺太千島交換条約) when Japan exchanged its rights to the island in exchange for Russian rights to all of the Kuriles north of Etorofu; (3) the 20 year period from 1905 after the Russo-Japanese War (including a Japanese military invasion of the entire island) and the following Treaty of Portsmouth (日露講和条約) which confirmed

comprised the next largest group (approximately 24,000), followed by several thousand indigenous peoples – mostly Ainu, Uilta and Nivkh.

Japanese control over the southern half of the island and Russian control over the northern half; and (4) the 20 year period from 1925 following the signing of the Russo-Japanese Convention (日ソ基本条約) until 1945 when the Soviet military invaded the southern half and the border across the island lapsed.¹⁴

Whilst this periodization reflects the various diplomatic agreements and compromises that were reached regarding the island, the experience of people living “on the ground” did not follow such a tidy timeline. For example, John Stephan mentions that after 1875 when the whole of Sakhalin became Russian territory, “Japan’s role in the island was reduced but not extinguished”.¹⁵ Japanese consular authorities, as well as almost 7000 fishermen, were working on the island in 1904 shortly before it was occupied by Japan’s Imperial Army in the last days of the Russo-Japanese War.

¹⁴ Hara Teruyuki, "Nichiro Sensō ki Saharin tō shi no kenkyū no gaikan to kadai," in *Nichiro Sensō to Saharin tō*, ed. Hara Teruyuki (Sapporo: Hokkaido Daigaku, 2011), 2.

¹⁵ John J Stephan, *Sakhalin - A history* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 66.

The next time the island was caught-up in fighting was in August 1945 during the final weeks of the Asia-Pacific War. Following the Red Army's invasion of Karafuto and the establishment of a civilian administration, over a quarter of a million Japanese spent between one to four years living under the Soviet authorities. Therefore, although Japanese control had ended in 1945, the mass repatriation of Japanese from Sakhalin was not completed until 1949.

The political status of Karafuto, 1905-1945

In 1907, two years after the Japanese annexation of Karafuto, the Karafuto Colonial Government (Karafuto-chō) was established. Civilian government was first based on the south of Karafuto in the port town of Odomari before being moved inland to Toyohara. The political status of Karafuto within the Japanese Empire was the subject of significant debate amongst the political leaders of the day. Eventually, a decision was made to appoint a Director General (長官) to head Karafuto-chō. This meant that the legal status of the Karafuto administration was on a different footing from that of Japan's other colonial possession, namely Taiwan. The Director General could not issue edicts with the force of law, which the governor-general of Taiwan could do. However, as for

Taiwan, Karafuto was considered to be an administratively distinct territory where legislation was implemented by Imperial Ordinance. The Director General had the same administrative tasks as a prefectural governor as well as managing railways, communications, mining and taxation. His broad powers were the equivalent of a cabinet-level minister. Karafuto-chō had a separate budget which covered administrative expenses and colonial projects such as construction, railway-building, communications and land settlement.¹⁶

Administratively, the main difference with the colonies of Korea and Taiwan was that Karafuto's legal system (in terms of the courts) was basically the same as Japan-proper (内地). According to Shiode Hiroyuki, this reflected the fact that immigrants from Japan were the majority population on the island.¹⁷ In terms of citizenship, however, Japanese

¹⁶ Hiroyuki Shiode, "Nation or Colony? The Political Belonging of the Japanese in Karafuto," *Social Science Japan Journal* 12, (2009): 104.

¹⁷ Ibid., 105.

in Karafuto were in the same position as the population of Japan's other colonies. They had no right to send representatives to the National Diet in Tokyo. Unlike Korea and Taiwan, the residents in Karafuto also had no assembly. Local politics was restricted to the city, town and village level and even here, the leaders and local councils were appointed by officials.

Despite various proposals to change the administrative status of Karafuto and to extend the franchise, such an alteration did not happen until the last years of Japanese rule. In 1943, Karafuto was included into Japan-proper and the franchise was granted in 1945. This was at the same time as Korea and Taiwan.

Japanese settlement and economic development of Karafuto

Soon after the army established control in 1905, it was announced that Japanese settlers would be welcome. Karafuto-chō tried to encourage settlers to come and take-up farming by advertising various benefits such as free land, houses, equipment and relief from taxes.¹⁸ Despite these inducements, the number of Japanese who

¹⁸ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 87.

accepted such an offer consistently remained below Karafuto-chō expectations throughout the entire period of Japanese rule.

Just a few years after Karafuto-chō was established, however, government policy changed from trying to encourage the arrival of individual farmers to attracting large companies by making land grants. Karafuto-chō intended for companies with sufficient capital to begin large-scale forestry. In 1910, Mitsui Zaibatsu and Oji Seishi began operations in Karafuto and pulp and paper production became the industrial base for Karafuto's economy. The possibility of work in these industries proved more of an incentive for Japanese to come to Karafuto. In 1919, Karafuto's forests were badly affected by an outbreak of disease. This led Karafuto-chō to find ways of diversifying the island's industrial base. The Karafuto Development Plan (樺太拓殖計画) followed in the 1930s with an emphasis on coal mining and sugar beet production.¹⁹

¹⁹ Miki Masafumi, "Sōsetsu," in *Nihon teikoku o meguru jinkō idō no kokusai shakaigaku*, ed. Araragi Shinzō (Tokyo: Fuji, 2008), 390-391.

Between 1905 and 1915 fishing was the most lucrative sector of the economy. It comprised over 60% of the colony's income but rapidly dwindled so that by 1920 the equivalent figure was 20% and in 1925 it had made-up only 10%.²⁰ In the early years of Japanese rule, the fishing industry attracted large numbers of Japanese to Karafuto although over half of those who came would leave during the winter months.²¹ However, with the arrival of big business, the population of Karafuto steadily increased so that by the 1920s statistics showed that the colony was ahead of Taiwan and behind Korea. By 1944, the population was estimated to be approximately 450,000.²²

The colonial society that developed in Karafuto is a subject that has only recently begun to be examined in detail in the literature. In terms of employment, statistics from 1942 show how Japanese were employed in Karafuto:

²⁰ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 88.

²¹ Shiode, "Nation or Colony?", 105n4.

²² Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 111.

Table showing the structure of employment for Japanese in Karafuto: ²³

Occupation	% of workforce
Farming	23
Fishing/fish produce	8
Mining	15
Manufacturing	17
Commerce	11
Transportation	7
Public servant	10
Domestic worker	1
Other	8.1

²³ Takeno Manabu, "Karafuto kara no Nihonjin hikiage to Hokkaido" (paper presented at the Saharin/Karafuto Shi Kenkyūkai, Sapporo, 22nd May 2010) 4.

Compared to Japan's other colonies, these statistics show that Karafuto had a relatively high percentage of Japanese who were classified as working in "farming" (the equivalent figures for Korea and Taiwan were 4% and 3%). On the other hand, the number of people defined as "public servants" was lower for Karafuto than in the other colonies (Korea = 40%; Taiwan = 36%). Importantly, Karafuto's workforce was characterized by a high degree of mobility. People who described their main occupation as farming would often have side-jobs as well as take seasonal work in the fisheries and forests. Therefore, the above statistics do not reveal of the flexibility of many workers who moved between the different sectors and around the island as and when opportunities arose.

Colonial society in Karafuto

One of the most significant facets of local life in the colony, which is revealed in several studies, is the divergence between the policies of Karafuto-chō and the actions and behaviour of much of society. Such differences between the colonial government and local residents emerged almost as soon as Japanese first started to come to Karafuto in

the 1910s. They continued into the late-1930s and were spread across different sections of society.

During the early years of Japanese rule, when many Japanese came to Karafuto to fish, disputes occurred between family fishers and Karafuto-chō over the rules and regulations pertaining to fishing. Family fishers organised and petitioned the colonial government to improve the terms on which they could fish. Preventing poaching was a particular concern of local officials and led to increased tensions with local fishers.²⁴

During these early disputes, Karafuto-chō (and the large-scale pound trap operators who hoped to reduce the number of family fishers) were critical of fishers for not taking-up agriculture which was regarded as a more desirable form of employment for people because it meant settlement on the land.²⁵

²⁴ David L Howell, *Capitalism from within: economy, society, and the state in a Japanese fishery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 148-151.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

The plans Karafuto-chō had for agriculture and the intentions of Japanese coming to the colony often conflicted. Encouraging agricultural settlers was a long-term aim of the colonial government. However, by the 1930s there was disagreement between farmers and officials over the most effective farming methods. At the time, the centrepiece of Karafuto-chō's agricultural policy was the concept of 'Northern Farming' (Hoppō Nogyō). The main proposal was to create 'self-sufficient' farmers who would produce their own food and fertilizer, and raise their own livestock. This plan was seen as the best way to overcome shortages of capital amongst farmers. A crucial feature of the plan was the promotion of a diet based on foodstuffs that could be produced locally such as bread and oatmeal. From the point of view of officials, farmers' attachment to a 'Japanese-style' diet of rice led to unrealistic expectations for a higher standard of living.²⁶

²⁶ Takeno Manabu, *Karafuto nōgyō to shokumingaku - Kindai no kenkyū dōkō kara* (Sapporo: Sapporo daigaku keizai gakubu fuzoku chiiki keizai kenkyū jo, 2005), 59-61.

During the 1930s, whilst Karafuto-chō was pushing its Northern Farming policy, many farmers had their own ideas about the kind of methods they would use. Farmers consistently argued with officials to provide them with access to low-interest capital. When this was not forthcoming, farmers continued to farm with the intention of selling their produce in order to generate a cash income. Over the winter months, many farmers also left their farms to find seasonal work in the forests and fisheries. Despite officials' attempts to encourage a change in diet, most farmers remained committed to eating rice. Eating rice was not only a preference of taste, but was also about maintaining the standard of living to which a farmer felt accustomed.²⁷

Officials and farmers, therefore, had a quarrelsome relationship for much of the decade. The official attempt to introduce the ideal of Northern Farming was met with indifference by most farmers. This was despite Karafuto-chō making considerable effort to promote

²⁷ Takeno, *Karafuto nōgyō to shokumingaku*, 60.

the policy through the local media and through the work of the Central Agricultural Station.²⁸

The friction between Karafuto-chō and various groups in colonial society reveals the degree of agency that Japanese who came to Karafuto had. Whether a person was a farmer or a fisher, dispute with the colonial government was a feature of everyday life.

The actions of local residents were particularly effective in the long-running debate about whether or not Karafuto should be incorporated into Japan-proper and receive the franchise. From the mid-1920s onwards, Japanese residents lobbied for the right to vote in national elections. The basis on which they made their argument was that, unlike Japan's other colonies, society in Karafuto was dominated by Japanese.²⁹ However, once the consequences of becoming a part of Japan-proper became clearer to

²⁸ Nakayama Taishō, "Karafuto-chō chuō shikenjo no gijutsu to shisō," *Nōgyōshi kenkyū* 45, no. (March 2011): 59.

²⁹ Shiode, "Nation or Colony?", 107.

Japanese in Karafuto (leaving the colonial system meant losing government subsidies), back-sliding began.³⁰ According to Shiode, “the settler-colonists’ opposition was the major reason that demands for suffrage never bore fruit”.³¹ By the late-1930s, the residents of different towns in Karafuto were calling for opposing solutions. People in areas that benefitted from government contracts wanted to keep colonial status; those in areas that usually lost out insisted on incorporation into Japan-proper.

In summary, comparative research on the Japanese Empire has begun to break down the framework of “the colonizer” to examine how life on the ground in the various colonies differed. For Japanese in Karafuto, their overwhelming presence in local society shaped how they viewed themselves and Karafuto’s place within the empire. Furthermore, much of the previous research has shown how internally, Karafuto was a colonial society where there was considerable friction between Karafuto-chō and the

³⁰ Shiode, “Nation or Colony?”, 109.

³¹ Ibid., 114.

local Japanese residents. Importantly, the residents should also not be seen as a monolithic group: divisions existed by economic sector (between family fishers and pound trap operators) and by region.

A Karafuto identity?

Returning to the starting point of this chapter and the necessity of connecting repatriates to their pre-war and wartime pasts, one researcher who has made such a link is Tessa Morris-Suzuki. Her research makes an important contribution to understanding the social and cultural atmosphere of colonial Karafuto. In the article “Northern Lights: The Making and Unmaking of Karafuto Identity”, she explores how the “Karafuto identity” of Japanese colonists was imagined through the production of a film and works of literature in the 1930s and 1940s. Her argument is that the 1942 film “Northern Lights”, which was financially supported by the Karafuto Colonial Government (Karafuto-chō), reflected local officials’ attempt, “On the one hand [...] to promote a sense of belonging; on the other, they needed to temper the resistance, both toward metropolitan elites and

toward the colonial administration itself".³² This "resistance" is something,

Morris-Suzuki argues, that can be found in the literary works of writers such as

Samukawa Kōtarō and Yuzurihara Masako, as well as the journal *Karafuto*.

Morris-Suzuki's work has proved provocative for other researchers. Some have

questioned how representative the identity that she highlights actually was for "the

islanders" and whether it was primarily a figment of the imagination of officials from

Karafuto-chō. There is a gap in Morris-Suzuki's argument in that she does not address

how the Karafuto identity was received and interpreted by Japanese in the colony.

There is the evidence of the handful of writers that she quotes to show that there was a

strong sense of dissent towards the colonial authorities. The connection between these

writers, the Karafuto magazine and the rhetoric of the late-1930s and early-1940s about

Karafuto is, however, one that she does not make. Reading the Karafuto magazine

shows that by this time, the dissenting elements of society (including many of the

³² Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Northern Lights: The Making and Unmaking of Karafuto

Identity," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 3 (August 2001): 657.

Karafuto “homeplace” writers) were working with the colonial government to promote a Karafuto as a certain kind of place. Understanding how this vision was projected, who it was aimed at and what it consisted of is an important step for analysing the post-war emergence of repatriates.

Underpinning Morris-Suzuki’s approach is the assumption that a Karafuto identity was devised and promoted by Karafuto-chō for the Japanese residents to identify with.

Variously described as “an emerging colonial middle class”, “settlers”, “settler community”, “Karafuto residents” and “migrant workers”, this identity was supposed to bind Japanese to Karafuto as project.³³ The precise character of that project was, as Morris-Suzuki states, often ambiguous: was Karafuto a frontier at the edge of imperial expansion or was it an inherent part of the Japan-proper?

This approach, however, is problematic because of the sharp division assumed between Karafuto-chō and the Japanese residents. The identity promoted by Karafuto-chō was important but so to was the means by which rhetoric about Karafuto

³³ Morris-Suzuki, “Northern Lights”, 651-652 and 656-657.

was disseminated. Crucial to the process were individuals who were not full officials of Karafuto-chō but neither were they the farmers and fishers promoted as the “pioneers” who were settling Karafuto. The ambiguity of these individuals’ positions in local society was what qualified them to speak on behalf of “Karafuto Japanese”. Usually, these figures claimed the right to be a spokespeople through a combination of time spent living in Karafuto, connections to Karafuto-chō and the requirements of their job.

Morris-Suzuki’s approach also de-contextualises the historical moment in which the identity was being promoted. Whilst “Northern Lights” can be read as a project to encourage greater colonial identification it should also be recognised as a film produced at the time when Japanese society was being mobilized to fight a “Total War”. Society in Japan-proper and the colonies was becoming increasingly organised through the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (hereafter ‘IRAA’) and saturated with propaganda about creating a “New Order”. One aspect of Japanese society at this time was the blurring of boundaries between “officials” (*kan*) and “the people” (*min*). Against this wider background of wartime Japan, the “local advisors” described by Morris-Suzuki, who form a crucial part of the evidence she uses, begin to be revealed in a different

light.³⁴ They appear less as locals brought in to advise on the film's production and more as important men of influence who were familiar with officials from Karafuto-chō and who felt comfortable trying to mould society in the interests of the wartime government.

The late-1930s and early-1940s: the “New Order” and Karafuto

The slogan “New Order” appeared in 1938, the year after Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro had given his full support to the Japanese military launching an all-out offensive against Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government. As the historian Andrew Gordon succinctly states, the advocates of the new order “sought to replace messy pluralism with central planning and control of the economy, authoritarian rule grounded in a single unified political party, and firmer social discipline”.³⁵ Under the New Order slogan, influential figures from politics, the military and the bureaucracy looked for ways

³⁴ Morris-Suzuki, “Northern Lights”, 658.

³⁵ Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, 212.

to organize the economy and society from the top-down in order to improve efficiency and social order. In Japan-proper, from July 1940 political parties were disbanded and replaced by the IRAA. By 1943, business and industry was organised in a nationally-uniform system. Factory workers were enrolled in factory councils. However, throughout Japan, the state's attempts to reorganise everyday life around the IRAA were often poorly understood by large sections of the population.

Interpreting what the New Order might mean for Karafuto was a task that was taken up by the Karafuto magazine. This publication had begun in 1929 and by the early-1940s was the colony's main magazine. It had offices in the colonial capital of Toyohara which had become the administrative and cultural centre for Japanese living in Karafuto.

Throughout the 1930s, the Karafuto magazine had essays, roundtable discussions and investigative articles both written by, and about some of the leading figures in local society. Although the magazine reached a considerably smaller readership than the Karafuto Nichi Nichi Shinbun, the essay format of the writing and the length of the

publication enabled extended discussion of important topics of the day.³⁶ From 1943 onwards, Karafuto appeared under the name of Hoppō Nihon. Unlike magazines published in Tokyo, Hoppō Nihon remained relatively unaffected by shortages of paper and printing delays. The magazine continued to be published throughout the last years of the war right up to July 1945 when the final edition appeared.³⁷

³⁶ The Karafuto Nichi Nichi Shimbun was the main newspaper in the colony. In early-1942 it was merged with four other newspapers to create the Karafuto Shimbun which had a circulation of 65,000 copies. The Karafuto magazine had a circulation of 4000 copies. Karafuto shūsenshi kankōkai, *Karafuto shūsenshi* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, 1973), 34.

³⁷ Demura Fumitada, "Karafuto (1905-1945) no shuppan jijō," in *Saharin o yomu - haruka 'Karafuto' no kioku*, ed. Zaidan Hōjin Hokkaido bungakukan (Sapporo: Hokkaido bungakukan, 2009), 87.

During the 1930s, the pages of *Karafuto* reflected some of the keenest debates about matters affecting colonial society. At the time the Northern Farming policy was being implemented, the magazine carried several articles extolling the benefits of a barley-based diet. The rhetoric in such articles often became inflated, describing Karafuto as part of a cold-climate culture where barley rather than rice was the basic form of sustenance. Other important issues in the mid-1930s included addressing the growing anxiety that Karafuto would be “forgotten” by Japan’s leaders now that Manchukuo had been created in the Northeast of China. Government sponsorship of Manchurian emigration had a knock-on effect in the elite circles of society in Karafuto where there was much talk of the colony becoming an irrelevance in the grander scheme of empire.

The beginning of the New Order, therefore, led to an opportunity for *Karafuto* to run numerous articles where various public figures and well-known writers were invited to discuss what they thought this political turn might mean. In keeping with the theme of renewal in the New Order, the government’s new policy was said to herald the start of a revived place for Karafuto in the empire. At the forefront of the New Order as it applied

to Karafuto was the Karafuto People's Patriotic Association (*Karafuto Kokumin Hōkōkai*, hereafter 'Hōkōkai'). This organisation was intended to bring 'the people' and 'the officials' together. As with elsewhere in Japan-proper, each town and village in Karafuto also had its own Patriotic Association (*Chōson Kokumin Hōkōkai*). Below these were boroughs (*chōnaikai*) or hamlet associations (*burakukai*) and beneath these were neighbourhood associations (*tonarigumi*).³⁸ By March 1941, there were over 150 neighbourhood associations and over 250 village associations.³⁹

In addition to the Hōkōkai, other groups were established to target specific sections of the community. There was the "Karafuto Commerce and Industry Economic Association" (*Karafuto Shōkō Keizai Kai*) which was intended to mobilize small business owners. There was also the "Karafuto Farming Association" (*Karafuto Nōgyō Kai*). Both were

³⁸ Karafuto-chō, "Karafuto kokumin hōkōkai - setsuritsu junbi iinkai ni okeru chōkan aisatsu," *Karafuto Jihō*, March 1941, 8.

³⁹ Karafuto shūsenshi kankō kai, *Karafuto shūsenshi*, 17.

formed from pre-existing organisations which were revamped and brought under the IRAA organisational umbrella. The leaders of these organisations were nearly all civilians but ones who had an established reputation in local society which had been built up over the two previous decades. The media, such as the magazine Karafuto, portrayed them as long-term residents who were capable of bringing “the state” and “the people” closer together – the main tenet of the New Order.

The Nōgyo Kai was considered vital for improving the efficiency of farming in Karafuto. This had been a long-standing aim of Karafuto-chō; as explained above, the Northern Farming policy was introduced for this purpose. A leading figure behind Northern Farming was Sugawara Michitarō – an agricultural expert employed at the Central Agricultural Station. He vigorously supported the formation of the Nōgyo Kai which was achieved in mid-1944.

One of the most prominent figures in the Nōgyō Kai was Orito Sōichi. He was previously described as “the one person capable of controlling industrial unions throughout Karafuto” and as “someone who got the job done even when this caused friction and

complaints”.⁴⁰ These qualities were to be important as the war began to turn against Japan from 1943. The need to produce more food in Karafuto became an ever greater problem requiring more and more drastic solutions and the Nōgyō Kai was the body with responsibility for mobilizing people to boost agricultural production. In December 1943, Orito boldly stated that, “it was a big mistake to think that only those with a deep knowledge of farming could become farmers”, and that “those with no experience whatsoever were more than capable of making a comfortable living from farming”.⁴¹ In tandem with the Keizai Kai, the Nōgyō Kai became part of an all-out effort by officials and civilian leaders to move people out of work adjudged superfluous to the war and

⁴⁰ Karafuto, "Shi no hito," *Karafuto*, August 1942, 81-82.

⁴¹ Orito Sōichi, "Shokuryō kessen to wareware no kakugo," *Hoppō Nihon*, December 1943, 58.

onto the land. In June 1945, Orito announced to his readers that he too “was going to the fields with hoe in hand”.⁴²

The centrepiece of the propaganda effort to raise food production was the “Development Promotion Corps” (*Kaitaku suishin tai*). Small shopkeepers, in particular, were put under great pressure to resettle as farmers in various locations. A leading figure in the promotion of these farms was Matsuyama Matsuichi. He urged people to move into these farm villages not only to raise food production, but in order to “establish for eternity the foundations of a Greater East Asia Northern Region Co-Prosperity Sphere”.⁴³ In 1945, officials had planned for 500 households to be settled on farms established on the plains surrounding Toyohara.⁴⁴ However, despite considerable effort, officials’ attempts to persuade and cajole more people to move onto these farms ended

⁴² Orito Sōichi, “Jissen jikatsu yōki no kensetsu e,” *Hoppō Nihon*, June 1945, 8.

⁴³ Matsuyama Matsuichi, “Shin nōgyō no kensetsu,” *Hoppō Nihon*, June 1944, 84.

⁴⁴ Karafuto shūsenshi kankōkai, 78.

largely in failure in terms of actual numbers settled.⁴⁵ The three men mentioned above – Sugawara, Orito and Matsuyama – were all to have important positions in post-war repatriate groups.

Karafuto as discourse

These three men, during the late-1930s and early-1940s, made regular appearances in the pages of *Karafuto*. They engaged in numerous roundtable discussions where the dialogue was published in the magazine and also wrote opinion pieces which would sometimes stretch to four or five pages. The effect of their actions was to contribute to the production of Karafuto as discourse. This means that they contributed to a cultural understanding and rhetoric that was aimed at encouraging local Japanese to think in terms of the idea of Karafuto and to have aspirations as settlers of that space. Amidst the rhetoric, there were certain themes that kept recurring. One was the divide between the so-called first and second generation of Japanese. The first generation were loosely

⁴⁵ Takeno Manabu, "Senzenki Karafuto ni okeru Shōkō gyōsha no jitsuzō," in *Teikoku hōkai to hito no sai idō*, ed. Araragi Shinzō (Tokyo: Bensei, 2011), 454.

defined as Japanese who had moved to Karafuto as adults in search of employment and opportunities. The second generation were those who had either been born or who had grown up on Karafuto. Connecting the two generations was the idea of the “culture” of Karafuto. The responsibility of the first generation was to pass this on to the second. As well as the rhetoric about “Karafuto culture”, there were also prominent “rhetoric-makers”. One of the most prominent was Sugawara Michitarō but there were also other particularly active individuals such as the journalist Kimura Keiichi and the head of the Nōgyo-kai, Orito Sōichi.

The ‘first generation’ – “5 men reforming Karafuto”

The quotation above was the title for an article in the Karafuto magazine that appeared early in 1939. The five men in question held influential positions in their respective professions and were collectively described as being at the forefront of moves to “reform Karafuto”. The idea of reforming Karafuto encapsulates how a small, but influential, group of civilians and semi-officials saw their role at a particular moment in the short history of Japanese rule in Karafuto. The writings of many of these men showed uneasiness about more than how their Japanese compatriots living in Tokyo

viewed them or about acquiring the trappings of a respectable middle-class life. Whilst these concerns did exist, during the late 1930s and early 1940s, one of the central themes that appeared in the writings by and about such individuals was the presence of groups defined by generation. By the early 1940s, many of those who had moved to Karafuto as adults and who now occupied positions of influence were entering their mid-40s and mid-50s. They were in a position to look back on the previous 35 years of Japanese rule in Karafuto and to reflect on the kind of society they had had a hand in creating.

One way that they posed these questions and put forward solutions was through the pages of the magazine Karafuto. At the time when the political elite of Japanese society was urging change in order to achieve a breakthrough in the war in China, men of influence in Karafuto also clamoured for a New Order more locally. As the previous section has shown, after 1940 society in Karafuto was reorganised. Shortly before Karafuto-chō introduced these changes, the September 1940 edition of Karafuto went to press with the question of what the New Order meant for Karafuto as its theme. One article was a roundtable discussion with three discussants, all of whom were regular

contributors to the magazine and prominent figures in their respective professions. Over the course of a summer evening at a teahouse in Toyohara they expanded on what they thought the New Order meant for Karafuto.

Cultural critique of Karafuto (Karafuto bunka ron) and the New Order

Culture was a word that came up frequently at the roundtable and in many of the discussions. During the 1930s, it had become a keyword in the intellectual debate underpinning many of the most popular concepts and theories of the day. At the root of much of the political and cultural criticism in Japan by the end of the 1930s was, what two historians have described as, the “Japanese vision of itself as an alternative model of culture superior to the achievements of the West”.⁴⁶ Although there were numerous academics and writers whose work contributed to this model, scholars such as Watsuji

⁴⁶ Tetsuo Najita and Harry D Harootunian, "Japanese revolt against the West: Political and cultural criticism in the Twentieth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Japan - Vol 6: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 743.

Tetsurō and Yanagida Kunio were particularly influential. Watsuji's arguments about how climate affected culture, and Yanagida's writings about the importance of rice cultivation to a Japanese sense of identity provided a frame of reference for much of the discussion about Karafuto.

Building on academic theory popularized by Watsuji Tetsurō about climate determining culture, Sugawara Michitarō enthusiastically promoted his claim that Karafuto was characterized by a 'cold-climate culture'. This, Sugawara maintained, made Karafuto 'unique' because Japan-proper and colonies such as Korea and Taiwan had a 'warm-climate culture'. During the mid-1930s, the implication that Sugawara drew from his theory was that one part of Karafuto's unique culture was a non-rice diet. However, the work of Yanagida Kunio had popularized the idea that consumption of a rice-based diet was fundamental to the Japanese sense of self. It was at this point where Sugawara's theories and the political interests of Karafuto-chō intersected. As also mentioned above, officials were seeking to promote foodstuffs other than rice as the staple diet of Japanese farmers in Karafuto. Sugawara's theorizing was, in part, an

attempt to re-package a barley-based diet in a more acceptable form to the local consumer.

By putting their own ideas alongside some of the most fundamental debates of the day, the men of influence in Karafuto sought to establish the credibility and importance of their own arguments. Debates about the nature of Japanese culture and the necessity of overcoming the restrictions and deficiencies of Western modernity provided the intellectual rationale behind calls for a New Order. As shown above, by following such demands, from 1940 onwards local officials were able to increasingly re-organise towns and villages along more authoritarian lines. Men of influence, such as those featured in the Karafuto magazine, held positions of power within the reorganised system. Their willingness to follow the New Order was, in part, a product of Japan's deepening militarism. However, also important was the sense that it could provide solutions to the problems they perceived as facing people in Karafuto.

One recurring question was whether a greater level of "culture" would encourage more people to settle, or whether the establishment of a settled population led to culture.

Many of the most prominent advocates for improving Karafuto's culture believed that

this would encourage more people to settle permanently. They used this argument to call for more investment in public facilities as well as the extension of the right to vote to Japanese living in Karafuto. An important part of this viewpoint was that officials from Karafuto-chō were not doing enough to build-up the civic realm. Instead, local officials were said to be more interested in making sure that the local economy continued to turn a profit.

The opposing argument was that attention should only be turned towards culture once a certain level of economic wealth had been reached. The discussants for the Karafuto magazine were often critical of views such as this. The writers for Karafuto were more certain about what was not culture. They were especially scathing of those who thought culture was merely about “putting up a radio aerial, playing the latest records and drinking coffee”.⁴⁷ Those who held such views believed in little more than the idea that

⁴⁷ Sugawara Michitarō et al., "Atarashiki Karafuto no kōsō," *Karafuto*, September 1940,

more money would lead to culture. Overcoming this supposed dilemma between the pursuit of money and the fostering of culture lay at the heart of 'Karafuto *bunka ron*'.

The devotion to money-making that the discussants thought they perceived in local society stemmed from the way they saw development as having occurred in Karafuto. According to their interpretation, big business had come to Karafuto in search of profits from extractive industries and people had followed for work. Those who came to Karafuto with the intention of farming found they lacked the skills and the know-how to work the land successfully in a cold climate. As a result, farmers too had decided to go and work in local industries to make money. Few people had any intention of living permanently in Karafuto and most always planned to go back to Japan-proper at some point in the future. This kind of attitude had led to a "culture of the migrant worker" (*dekasegi bunka*) and was the reason why discussion about culture usually went no further than shallow talk about "promoting pleasure-seeking".⁴⁸ The three discussants each had their own ideas for how to overcome the problem of *dekasegi*.

⁴⁸ Sugawara, Ichikawa and Kimura, "Atarashiki Karafuto no kōsō," 42.

Sugawara was by far the most prominent member of the panel. He had made a name for himself as a researcher on agricultural techniques at the Karafuto Central Agricultural Station (hereafter 'CAS'). The CAS was established in 1930 and was located just outside of the main city, Toyohara. However, he did not restrict himself to just technical experiments; he energetically sought to inspire farmers in Karafuto to follow a certain way of life. According to Sugawara, agriculture should form the basis on which culture would be created. Sugawara's agricultural ideal was the self-sufficient farmer who produced his own food, feed and fertilizer. Such a farmer would be firmly established on the land. Only with this type of farmer could culture be successfully introduced.⁴⁹ This concept of the self-sufficient and established farmer had formed the centrepiece of Karafuto-chō policy on agriculture since the mid-1930s although, in practice, large numbers of Karafuto farmers had to spend the winter months working as seasonal labourers in the forestry, fishing and mining industries.⁵⁰ From the farmers'

⁴⁹ Sugawara, Ichikawa and Kimura, "Atarashiki Karafuto no kōsō," 39.

⁵⁰ Takeno, *Karafuto nōgyō to shokumingaku*, 45.

perspective, this was essential if they were to have enough money to live on and to manage their land. In the opinion of Sugawara, such seasonal labouring contributed to farmers' susceptibility to leave their land in search of better-paid work – a cause of *dekasegi bunka*.

Two of the other panellists added their own perspectives to the discussion. One was a prominent journalist called Kimura Keiichi. He felt that what was lacking was the necessary 'spirit' for living in Karafuto. This deficiency had two main causes. Firstly, people had followed capital to Karafuto. Kimura chose to contrast this with the example of settlers in Hokkaido during the early Meiji period who had emigrated because they had nowhere else to go. In Kimura's opinion, this had meant they had little other choice but to make a success of their farms. Subsequently, this had fostered an attachment to the land and the rise of civilian groups from which the "traditional developmental spirit flowed".⁵¹ Secondly, teachers in Karafuto did not do enough to instil "Northern spirit"

⁵¹ Sugawara, Ichikawa and Kimura, "Atarashiki Karafuto no kōsō," 43.

(*hoppō seishin*).⁵² This was because most had come from Japan-proper and, therefore, were said to lack such a spirit themselves. Northern spirit also had to come from the family and society. The problem was that the first generation of settlers who only knew *dekasegi* culture were in no position to meet this challenge. The implication of the discussion was that society in Karafuto was in an impasse: ‘culture’ could not be achieved with the present *dekasegi*-type mind-set but to overcome such attitudes, greater culture was required. The solution, according to the discussants, was for a “New Order” to be created. Sugawara stated that “the only way was to establish a new organisation for farmers”.⁵³ At various points in the discussion, a similar idea was also proposed for “intellectuals” and for “islanders of all classes”.⁵⁴

⁵² Sugawara, Ichikawa and Kimura, "Atarashiki Karafuto no kōsō," 51.

⁵³ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 41.

In July 1940, the theme of the discussion and many of the ideas suggested fitted with the wider discourse circulating in Japanese society at the time. As Andrew Gordon states, “[advocates of a New Order] sought to remake the economic, political and social order. They wanted to restructure industrial workplaces and agriculture and transform cultural life”.⁵⁵ There are clear parallels between such plans and the arguments that night at the Toyohara restaurant about organising people living in Karafuto. As Gordon also notes, “the majority of intellectuals supported the war with enthusiasm”.⁵⁶ The participants in the roundtable discussion referred to themselves as the “intelligentsia” and declared that they had a role to play in “enlightening the islanders”.⁵⁷ Although censorship of the press had gradually increased since the outbreak of full-scale war in 1937, by mid-1940, the government had not yet begun what was to become “a radical

⁵⁵ Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, 212.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁵⁷ Sugawara, Ichikawa and Kimura, “Atarashiki Karafuto no kōsō,” 41.

mobilization of the mass media".⁵⁸ The discussants, like many other civilian men of influence at the time were captivated by the rhetoric of a New Order. A significant part of the attraction was the nebulous nature of the New Order. This allowed orators and writers to use the slogan to meet their own needs. Sugawara, Kimura and many others all sought to channel New Order discourse into their vision for Karafuto.

The second generation

Amidst the rhetoric about fostering a northern spirit and overcoming *dekasegi bunka* there was one group in Karafuto society that the discussants put at the centre of that vision: young Japanese who had been either born in, or had moved to and grown up in Karafuto from an early age. Also in September 1940, Karafuto published an article that featured a discussion between three young men chosen to participate in a meeting for leaders in the IRAA, and two prominent civilian figures (one of whom was Kimura Keiichi). In this second article, Kimura made a point of emphasising the role men and

⁵⁸ Gregory J Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 207.

women in their first years of adulthood should take in leading the youth of Karafuto. The account of the discussion as printed in Karafuto hints at the strength of feeling with which Kimura raised the subject of the role of the Karafuto youth.

Although the article did not appear until September 1940, the actual meeting attended by the three young representatives was held in Tokyo in December 1939. In total, 219 delegates were sent from all of the prefectures, plus Hokkaido and Karafuto. Apart from the three young people sent from Karafuto, no one else was invited from the other colonies. The meeting was arranged like a camp with the participants eating, exercising and working together. In the evenings, a series of lectures was held about various aspects of the IRAA. Most of the material presented was about “the Japanese Spirit”, with the lecturer quoting from the *kojiki* and expanding on the importance of the emperor.⁵⁹

One important point that the three representatives had grasped during the meeting was the central role envisaged for the ‘youth’ (*seinen*) in plans for the IRAA. According to

⁵⁹ Satō Yoshirō, "Yokusan seinen no rinen," *Karafuto*, September 1940, 40-41.

one of the representatives, by the time people reached a certain age they had become “fixed” on particular ideas, one of which was “capitalism”. Once a person “had an economic foundation” from which they derived their status in society, they “naturally” became conservative in their outlook on life. As a result, any attempt to introduce new ways of thinking was difficult and usually led to “friction”. In contrast, youth had no position in society and few material assets to consider. Furthermore, their thought was “pure”. This meant they were the ideally placed to form the core of the IRAA.⁶⁰

The argument outlined by the representative about the role of the young in the IRAA overlapped with many of the other roundtable discussions featured in the *Karafuto*. In particular, the problem of *dekasegi bunka* amongst the first generation of settlers in Karafuto and the importance of the second generation as the vanguard for change showed clear similarities. Kimura was present at the discussion with the three representatives. He impressed upon the representatives his desire to hear what they thought should be the role of Karafuto youth. The question that Kimura was especially

⁶⁰ Satō, "Yokusan seinen no rinen," 44.

interested in was about who was best placed to lead the young. As reported in the article, the Ministry of Education proposal was said to be for Japanese aged 20 and below to be formed into youth groups (*seinen dantai*). Those aged 21 and above would form part of the regular IRAA (*Kokumin sōshiki*). In the Ministry of Education's plan, the youth would be led by adults, usually people who were aged 40 and above. In the following passage, Kimura pressed one of the representatives for his views on what should be done in Karafuto.

Araki (one of the three representatives sent to the Tokyo meeting): I think because the IRAA is highly political, any leadership must be fully trained to possess a politically astute mind.

Kimura: What I am asking is not what the Ministry of Education and the IRAA think, nor am I asking for a summary of the present situation. I am asking you, who attended the meeting, what ideas you came away with [...] what world and historical viewpoint should the youth movement be based upon?

Minagawa (Kimura's co-panelist): Not just Karafuto as a part of Ministry of Education's proposal, [but] what Karafuto should do independently [...] ⁶¹

⁶¹ Satō, "Yokusan seinen no rinen," 46.

In the article, Kimura and his fellow “first-generation” panelist put forward their views as to how the youth movement might be implemented differently in Karafuto from Japan-proper. Of crucial importance was finding a role for Karafuto youth who were aged between 20 and 25. The participants in the discussion agreed that the leaders of youth groups in Karafuto should be drawn from this age group. Kimura was even in favour of grouping the youth of Karafuto for the IRAA in a way that went beyond the level of organisation contemplated in Japan-proper. In response to a proposal that young people be organised into IRAA groups according to the sector of the economy in which they worked, Kimura pointed out that although such an idea would cause too much “friction” to be implemented in Japan-proper, it was possible in Karafuto.⁶²

At the time of the debate about a New Order in Japanese society, individuals such as Kimura and Sugawara sought to position Karafuto within that discussion. The New Order represented an opportunity to establish Karafuto within the Japanese empire. Their rhetoric at the time, as reproduced in the magazine *Karafuto*, showed a deep

⁶² Satō, “Yokusan seinen no rinen,” 49.

concern with the future role of the youth of Karafuto. The youth were seen as a factor in Karafuto society that marked an important point of difference from Japan-proper. The future development of Karafuto was seen as being indelibly tied to how the younger generations of Japanese were taught to view the land where they were growing-up. This was a prominent theme in the pages of Karafuto in the late-1930s and the first years of the 1940s. Much of the writing of Sugawara Michitarō in particular, stands out for how he expressed the connection between the responsibility of the young and the destiny of Karafuto.

Sugawara Michitarō's vision for the youth of Karafuto

During the early-1930s, as well as being a researcher, Sugawara was also involved in the leadership of his local youth group. His first book, published in 1935, was entitled 'Farm village youth and the future of Karafuto farming'. In this book, Sugawara stressed that despite his background as a graduate from an imperial university and position at an elite government institution, he was someone that empathised deeply with young farmers. In his introduction, he stated, "[you farmers] are my fondest and most

trustworthy friends on this island [Karafuto]”.⁶³ Sugawara had a reputation for being highly skilled with words and by 1940 he was using his abilities to try and define a role for Karafuto youth.

For Sugawara, an important problem in Karafuto society was the question of ‘connection’ (*en*). As mentioned above, Sugawara believed that one of the reasons why he and his colleagues at the CAS had such difficulty in getting farmers to stay on their land was the history of Karafuto as a site for seasonal labour. Such seasonal labourers, Sugawara argued, had little connection with Karafuto. Yet, there was another section of society that was in danger of having even less of a connection with Karafuto: the youth. Sugawara was particularly concerned about young people who were academically inclined. The lack of a university in Karafuto meant that many of those earmarked to continue their studies beyond the compulsory age of education left for Japan-proper. Sugawara was deeply anxious that such young Japanese had little interest in furthering

⁶³ Sugawara Michitarō, *Karafuto nōgyō no shōrai to nōson seinen* (Toyohara: Karafuto sha, 1935), Introduction.

the development or culture of Karafuto. In order to address this problem, Sugawara advocated improving the educational facilities in Karafuto.⁶⁴ However, Sugawara was not just concerned with more academically inclined youth. In addition to schools, he argued that there were two other institutions through which the minds of the young could best be reached. One was the youth group. Sugawara stated that youth groups should be made compulsory for all the young aged 15 and above. The other was in the family home. All three institutions were necessary to “train the mind and body” and, Sugawara argued, all three were deficient in Karafuto.⁶⁵

What Sugawara thought should be instilled in the minds of the young was a particular image of Karafuto. That image was a product of the discussions and debates of the mid-to-late-1930s about “new culturalism” and the idea that Japan’s role was to lead the

⁶⁴ Sugawara Michitarō, "Karafuto seinen no jidaiteki igi," *Karafuto*, October 1940, 23-25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

rest of the world to a level of culture that went beyond Western modernity.⁶⁶ In 1935, Watsuji Tetsurō had published his famous essay 'Climate and Culture' (*Fūdo*) in which he expounded on how distinctions in climate explained differences between Europeans and Asians.⁶⁷ Whilst Sugawara's ambitions as an intellectual did not take him as far as a treatise on how to overcome modernity, he did his best to popularize the idea of Karafuto as having a 'cold-climate culture' (*kantai bunka*).

The cultural Other of Sugawara's theory was Japan-proper and the southern reaches of the empire, which had a 'warm-climate culture'. Sugawara had several reasons why he spent such time and effort propounding his own theory of cultural difference based on climate. As shown above, one was to provide an intellectual justification for Karafuto-chō's policy of trying to encourage settlers to give-up rice in favour of a barley-based diet. Barley had the advantage of being produced locally but rice, on the

⁶⁶ Najita and Harootunian, "Revolt against the West", 712.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 746.

other hand, had to be shipped in from outside Karafuto causing a drain on local finances.⁶⁸ Another reason was as boosterism for an area of the empire that was often disparaged as lacking in culture.

With this hypothesis as his starting point, Sugawara addressed the question of what kind of place was Karafuto and what the role of young people should be. In the youth groups, they would learn the skills necessary for 'northern industry'. In the case of farmers, this meant the agricultural techniques that Sugawara had spent much of the previous two decades perfecting. They would also practise the military skills required to fight in a cold environment. At home, parents – with an awareness of their own historical role as the “builders of Karafuto” – would raise their children, and in doing so contribute to the nurturing of the youth.

The threat to Karafuto, as constructed by Sugawara, was the youth who turned his back on his home-place and left; or, as printed in the magazine, “[the youth who] throws away

⁶⁸ Takeno Manabu, "Shokuminchi Karafuto Nōgyō no jittai " *Shakai keizaishi gaku* 66, no. 5 (January 2001): 94.

his home-place and escapes".⁶⁹ The perception of an urgent need to prevent such cases increasing led to proposals such as the one by Kimura that the youth aged between 21 and 25 should be entrusted with a prominent role leading those who were even younger. To prepare the young for such a responsibility, the idea of Karafuto and its place within the cold-climate culture was a concept that could underpin the education given to the young. What the 'idea of Karafuto' meant in concrete terms remained vague but it included making the youth aware that they had, "grown-up surrounded by the nature and society of Karafuto".⁷⁰ Sugawara used the Japanese term *shūren*, which held the connotation of shaping a person's character, abilities and learning. A Karafuto youth was also someone who "was being prepared for building Karafuto in the future". By the time the youth had reached 'leadership age', his identity as a child of Karafuto and its cold-climate culture should have become second nature.

⁶⁹ Sugawara, "Karafuto seinen no jidaiteki igi," 27.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 20.

By 1942, Sugawara's writing had become more ambitious in its aims. As the military expanded control over territory to the south, Sugawara urged his readers to use this as further inspiration to "build the northern region".⁷¹ By 1943, the magazine *Karafuto* had been renamed *Hoppō Nippon*. The writing that was published, including Sugawara's frequent contributions as a top official in the *Karafuto* branch of the IRAA, changed. The need to produce writing that prepared all Japanese for the increasingly imminent 'decisive battle' meant that discussion of the uniqueness of *Karafuto* within Japan became of lesser importance. Greater central government censorship of the press also made the expression of such views, which might be deemed irrelevant to the war effort, increasingly unlikely. Life in *Karafuto*, as for elsewhere in the empire, was increasingly organised so as to promote "enforced homogeneity". The goal, according to the

⁷¹ Sugawara Michitarō, "Dai tōa hoppō shinsetsu no kōsō," *Karafuto*, March 1942, 13.

historian Yamanouchi Yasushi, was “to unite all the people under the slogan of a common destiny as citizens of a single national community”.⁷²

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has argued that by the early-1940s the beginning of the New Order in Karafuto led to an outpouring of rhetoric about “Karafuto as native place”. This propaganda did not come primarily from the colonial government but depended on the efforts of numerous men of influence whose position in society can be described as “semi-official”. They were not full representatives of the state but neither were they simply “civilians”. They also re-claimed influential positions in the early post-war years as leaders of repatriate groups.

⁷² Yasushi Yamanouchi, “Total-War and System Integration: A Methodological Introduction,” in *Total War and 'Modernization'*, ed. Yasushi, Koschmann and Narita (Ithaca, NY,: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1998), 3.

Nearly 40 years after the end of Japanese rule on Karafuto, in 1983, the magazine *Suzuya* was published for the first time by the Toyohara-kai. Many members of the group had been living in Toyohara, the administrative capital of Karafuto, when Soviet tanks rolled into the town in the summer of 1945. In the first edition was an article by Keiichi Kimura who had been a journalist on the Karafuto Shinbun and one of the leading writers for the Karafuto magazine. Writing in 1983, Kimura described how he had acquired some rare copies of the Karafuto Shinbun which he assumed had been secretly brought back from Sakhalin during repatriation. The copies included the editions published on the 20th, 21st, 23rd, 25th and 26th. Kimura recalled how the newspaper had continued to be published until the 28th August when soldiers from the Red Army marched into the editor's office and demanded that the print run be stopped. Within the 10 pages of print that made-up the remaining copies, Kimura's attention was drawn to one item in particular. On 21st August, across the bottom of the second page covering the local news was printed the following:

The impression of this day will become the legend of Karafuto.

Let us make the memory of Karafuto a beautiful one! The more beautiful that memory is, the deeper the love for Karafuto in our hearts and the stronger the

*will for our lost northern land that will be cultivated. Imperial subjects! Let us not leave an impression of panic but of solemnity. Let us leave a pure Karafuto! Make this impression the legend and the first chapter of a new history of Japan!*⁷³

There are two points to note about this quotation. Firstly, as one of the few pieces of evidence surviving from the last years of wartime society in Karafuto it reveals how reliant propaganda had become on using the concept of 'Karafuto' as a device to try to channel and control people's actions and behaviour. Even as the Red Army's tanks and infantry were sweeping through Karafuto towards Toyohara, and as Soviet bombers were flying sorties overhead, the journalists of the Karafuto Shinbun sought desperately to invoke an imaginary Karafuto as a way of containing the public's growing sense of panic and fear.

The second point of interest is that nearly four decades after the newspaper was published, one of the journalists involved at the time found himself drawn to the article

⁷³ Kimura Keiichi, "Tsuisō no kiroku - "Nihon Karafuto" saigo no hibi," *Suzuya*, October 1983, 18.

and decided to reproduce it in full for the benefit of his readers. Although there was nothing to suggest so in *Suzuya*, prior to August 1945 Kimura Keiichi had been a prolific writer on the subject of Karafuto. Perhaps Kimura felt that this fragment of Karafuto's past illustrated more than just one final, desperate attempt at propaganda during the last days of the Japanese empire; it perhaps represented some of the thoughts and attitudes that had come to shape much of the post-war discourse about Karafuto and repatriation.

Chapter 2 – Repatriate groups

In November 1945 the Asahi Shinbun published a letter from a “Karafuto repatriate”.

Mitani Yukiko had been evacuated from Karafuto shortly after the USSR entered the war against Japan. She wrote about how life in post-war Japan was hard because her only means of supporting her young children was a small amount of savings and the kindness of relatives. Her husband was still in Karafuto so her family had no source of regular income. When she approached officials at the local town hall for assistance they had curtly informed her that she was not the only person in such a situation. She now felt desperate enough to write, “Is there not a boat to take me back to my husband in Karafuto?”¹

Why did Mitani prefix the word repatriate with Karafuto? There can be no definite answer but this chapter will argue that her choice of words reflects an overlooked aspect of repatriates in the post-war. Although the official bureaucracy created the category of repatriate, how repatriates identified with the term was often influenced by where they

¹ Asahi Shinbun, *Koe 1 (1945-1947)* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun, 1984), 73-74.

had come from. Mitani identified as a *Karafuto* repatriate; in doing so, she was drawing on ideas and images that represented Japanese from one part of the former empire as being different from those from other colonies and people from Japan-proper. During the first few years after the Japanese surrender, these representations were being worked through in society.

Existing research has dealt vaguely with repatriates during the latter half of the 1940s meaning that analysis only goes as far as identifying them as one monolithic group engaged in a dialogue with the Japanese government, the media and metropolitan people. This chapter will closely examine the so-called “repatriate community” to find out who its leaders were and what aims and motivations they held. Repatriate groups emerged soon after August 1945. They sought to bring individuals like Mitani Yukiko into their political project. How they did this was crucial to the process of reintegration and, more broadly, the emergence of the repatriate figure in post-war society.

The war's End Game in the north of the Japanese Empire

Mitani Yukiko was caught-up in the invasion of Karafuto by the Soviet military in the middle of August 1945. This was part of the short but ferocious war between Japan and the Soviet Union which took place at the very end of the Second World War. Whilst Japan and the Soviet Union signed a Neutrality Pact in 1941, plotting and scheming for further military action was carried out by both sides in the months and years that came after. As Andrew Barshay explains, "The years that followed the signing of the Japan-USSR Neutrality Pact were years not of peace but of "no war yet".² The Kwantung Army had engaged in a massive military build-up in Manchuria by mid-1942 when the war turned decisively against Japan with defeat at the Battle of Midway. Therefore, the Kwantung Army was seen by Josef Stalin and his most senior military officials as the main weapon of a Japanese military threat which went back to at least

² Andrew E Barshay, *The Gods Left First - The Captivity and Repatriation of Japanese POWs in Northeast Asia, 1945-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013),

1890. The Russo-Japanese War, the Siberian Intervention, the Battle of Nomonhan and the Kwantung Army Special Exercises – this was the military backdrop to the Japanese-Soviet War as seen from the Soviet side.

There was also a diplomatic context to what happened in August 1945 on Karafuto. As the war with the United States and Britain stalled and then started to go against Japan, the wartime leadership looked for ways to bring about a resolution to the conflict. One option pursued from mid-1944 to early-1945 was to negotiate with the USSR to achieve a more favourable settlement on the Asian mainland in the event that the Japanese Empire collapsed. Amongst the various “sweeteners” that Japan’s military and diplomatic leaders offered to the Soviets was the southern half of Sakhalin Island (Karafuto).³

This background to August 1945 is necessary to understand the invasion of Karafuto as less a part of a “surprise attack” by a USSR willing to betray Japan in light of the

³ Yukiko Koshiro, "Eurasian Eclipse: Japan's End-Game in World War II," *American Historical Review* 109, no. 2 (April 2004): 426.

existence of the Neutrality Pact, and more as the result of the Japanese-Soviet War of 1945 which followed on from almost 150 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and Russia. By the 1940s, the Second World War presented Stalin with the opportunity to increase Soviet influence in East Asia. In talks at Cairo and Yalta, the Soviet leader indicated his willingness to fight Japan (once the threat from Germany had been dealt with) to the other Allied Powers and then his requirements for doing so. The agreement negotiated in secret at Yalta included the return of the southern half of Sakhalin.

The Soviet declaration of war against Japan came on 8th August 1945 with a full-scale military invasion of the “jewel in the crown” of the Japanese Empire – Manchuria – beginning a few hours later on the 9th. Within a week, the Red Army had taken control of the whole of Manchuria. On the Asian mainland, the Soviet campaign continued with a move south towards the 38th parallel in Korea. It also continued on the islands to the north of Hokkaido: Sakhalin and the Kurils. Fighting in these areas lasted until the end of August and the Habomai Islets located just off the coast of northeast Hokkaido were occupied without resistance from the Japanese military by 4th September.

The Soviet invasion of Karafuto

According to John Stephan, “until 11 August Karafuto had avoided the scourges of war.

It was an island of calm in a sea of chaos”. Furthermore, “The vast majority of the

people there had not dreamed that such a remote island would become a battlefield”.⁴

The situation within Karafuto during the early-to-mid-1940s is beginning to be examined

by researchers. However, considering the increasing scepticism over the depiction of

relations between Japan and the USSR in 1945, the likelihood is that in a territory that

shared a border with the USSR, many local people were probably more aware that

hostilities were likely than has been usually suggested in the historiography.⁵

⁴ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 142.

⁵ Nevertheless, it is still common for researchers to argue that the Japanese military planning on Karafuto continued to be made in preparation for an attack by the US on the south of the island. For example, Katō Kiyofumi, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai* (Tokyo: Chuō Kōron Shinsha, 2009), 204.

The Soviet military attacked across the border of Karafuto on 11th August. The 88th Division of the Japanese Fifth Area Army is thought to have had approximately 19,000 soldiers and 10,000 reservists on Karafuto. About 5000 were situated near the border area where the fiercest fighting with the Soviet troops occurred. The Red Army outnumbered and outgunned the Japanese forces manning the border defences and had taken control of the north of Karafuto by the 15th August. The Red Army then moved south to take the capital of Toyohara by the 25th. A separate attack was launched by the Soviet military on the west coast of Karafuto at the ports of Esutoru (16th) and Maoka (20th). The military historian David Glantz states that the Red Army “completed clearing the Japanese forces from southern Sakhalin on 25-26 August, capturing 18,320 Japanese soldiers”.⁶

As this description of the military campaign on Karafuto shows, the fighting continued for at least a week after the Emperor’s Imperial Rescript on 15th August announcing that

⁶ David M Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria, 1945: 'August Storm'* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 294.

Japan was accepting the terms of unconditional surrender. On Karafuto, and across the empire, the Rescript's broadcast did not mean that Japanese soldiers immediately put down their weapons. As subsequent research has shown, Japan's leaders (as well as the Allied Powers) were concerned that soldiers in the field would continue fighting rather than accept surrender. On Karafuto, this confusion was added to by the Soviet military campaign which continued to be fought with the intention of capturing Karafuto in preparation for further action on Hokkaido. Contradictory orders reached Japanese soldiers in the field and fighting went on until late-August.

Stephan's idyllic description of Karafuto also ignores the organization of civilians across Japan-proper into auxiliary groups as part of the government's planning for a "final battle" (*hondo kessen*). Known as the "Kokumin Giyūtai" (国民義勇隊), on 14th August some of the civilians on Karafuto were placed under military command armed with "swords, hunting rifles and bamboo spears".⁷ Some of these civilians were later

⁷ Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 207.

caught-up in fighting Red Army units landing at Tōru near Esutoru on the 16th.⁸ The landing of Soviet troops at Esutoru and Maoka (20th) was followed by fierce fighting with the Japanese soldiers stationed there during which thousands of civilians were killed.⁹ Both towns later became known as sites where group suicides occurred (nurses at the Taihei Mine Hospital near Esutoru and telephone operators at the Post Office in Maoka).¹⁰

The Soviet invasion led tens of thousands of people to flee south in the direction of Toyohara, Odomari, Maoka and Honto. Since June 1945, Karafuto-chō and the military had been planning for the mass evacuation of civilians (excluding men of fighting age). The degree of organisation, which included officials on Karafuto liaising with their counterparts on Hokkaido, meant that between the 13th to the 23rd approximately 85,000

⁸ Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 207.

⁹ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 154.

¹⁰ Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 208, 211.

people were evacuated. As far as the existing research shows, a similar officially planned evacuation of civilians did not occur in the other parts of the empire. Importantly, however, there is evidence that a hierarchy existed amongst those able to board the evacuation boats, with places on the first boat going to the relatives of colonial officials and military officers.¹¹ As well as the ships carrying evacuees, up to 24,000 people are thought to have escaped Karafuto in small fishing boats. Most of these people fled in August and September 1945 but attempts continued right up to the start of the official repatriation in December 1946.

These attempts to flee south and onto boats leaving for Hokkaido were later recalled as being the significant wartime experience for tens of thousands of people on Karafuto.

The sense of panic and fear was added to by the bombing and strafing of the train station in Toyohara on 22nd as it was crowded with thousands of people arrived on trains from the north heading for the port of Odomari. The casualties from the attack were

¹¹ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 152.

estimated to be around 100 people.¹² On the same day, three boats carrying evacuees were attacked by an unidentified submarine off the west coast of Hokkaido near the city of Rumoi. Two of the boats were sunk and the other was badly damaged. In total, 1708 of the people on board were killed or missing.¹³ The following day, the Red Army occupied Toyohara and its troops entered the harbour at Odomari preventing any more ships from leaving. As Stephan described the situation, although the Soviet military announced that there were close to 18,000 captured soldiers in Karafuto, “If those who could not return to Japan were included, there were over 300,000 prisoners”.¹⁴

The evacuated, the escaped and the detained

By September 1945, the population of Karafuto was roughly divided between those who remained on the island and those who had either evacuated or escaped to Hokkaido.

¹² Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 211.

¹³ Ibid., 212.

¹⁴ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 155.

Mitani Yukiko was in the latter group whilst her husband and brother were in the former.

By the time Mitani's letter was published in the Asahi Shimbun, repatriate groups were beginning to form in Hokkaido. Drawing attention to relatives and friends who remained in Karafuto was one of the aims of such groups.

Official repatriation from Karafuto did not begin until December 1946 after the "US-USSR Joint Agreement on Repatriation" was concluded. Between the end of 1946 and July 1949, the official repatriation was divided into 5 phases. The process was subject to much political machination as the two Cold War rivals jockeyed for advantage. By the time the last repatriation boat arrived at the Hakodate Repatriation Reception Centre, the figure for the total number of repatriates from Karafuto (and the Kurils) stood at 292,590.¹⁵ Included in this number were indigenous people who decided for a variety of reasons to settle in Japan rather than remain on the island. However, Koreans who had moved to Karafuto as imperial subjects, or who had been forcibly moved to work on the island, were not included in the terms of the agreement.

¹⁵ Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 215.

Research into the period 1945 to 1949 when Japanese detained in Karafuto experienced life under the Soviet political system is beginning to be done now that archives on Sakhalin have been opened. Shortly after the Red Army had occupied Karafuto, a military government was established and Japanese were told to return to their homes. Captured Japanese soldiers were disarmed and sent to labour camps in the north of the island or on the mainland.¹⁶ From early-1946 Karafuto was incorporated into the Soviet administrative system and renamed as Sakhalin (to discuss the situation for the Japanese who remained, the following section will use the term 'southern Sakhalin')

Archival sources show that the aim of the Soviet commanders was to restart the local economy as quickly as possible and, for this reason, skilled and non-skilled Japanese were needed. Japanese officials from Karafuto-chō were also kept in their posts to

¹⁶ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 156.

operate the bureaucratic system.¹⁷ By the end of 1945, the Soviet authorities began a round-up of senior officials, business leaders and prominent public figures. Along with them, the Governor of Karafuto – Otsu Toshio – was arrested at the end of December and sent to Siberia. This moment marked the end of Karafuto-chō.¹⁸ Prior to his arrest, he had had to work closely with the Soviet head of the Civil Administration.

Many Japanese were re-employed at their former places of work. They were employed under the same conditions as Russians and received the same levels of pay. Unlike most Japanese interned in Siberia, in southern Sakhalin there was little effort made by the Soviet authorities at “political re-education”. The continuation of shrine and temple

¹⁷ Mariya Sevela, "'How Could You Fear or Respect Such an Enemy?' The End of WW II on Sakhalin Island," in *The Japanese and Europe: Images and Perceptions*, ed. Edstöm (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000), 175.

¹⁸ Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 213.

activity as well as Japanese festival celebrations such as *Obon* was also permitted.¹⁹

The most significant problem for people (apart from the uncertainty of not knowing if or when repatriation would be possible) was food. Under Japanese rule rice had had to be imported to Karafuto. In 1946, devastation to crops in the Ukraine caused serious problems to food supplies across the USSR. In response, in southern Sakhalin soybeans were imported from northeast China and rice from North Korea. The food shortage also led to Japanese being mobilized by the Soviet authorities to assist with taking in the spring herring run.

From 1946 onwards, settlers from other parts of the USSR started to be brought to southern Sakhalin. The shortage of available accommodation meant that many Japanese were instructed to share their houses with the arriving Russians. In the words

¹⁹ Katō Kiyofumi, "Soren gunsei shita no Nihonjin kanri to hikiage mondai -

Dairen/Karafuto ni okeru jittai," *Gendaishi kenkyū* 5, no. (2009): 14.

of one historian, “in this way the Japanese became able to understand the everyday life of Russian people and the social system of the USSR”.²⁰

The Soviet authorities tried to prevent Japanese escaping from southern Sakhalin and those caught could be punished severely. Despite this, the apparent lack of interest shown by the Soviet side in the issue of repatriation meant that many Japanese did try to cross the Soya Straits to Hokkaido. In some settlements along the coast nearest to Hokkaido, the pre-war and post-war population dropped by almost half as many residents used fishing boats to escape.²¹ Including the numbers of people evacuated with those who escaped shows that by the time official repatriation had started, approximately one-quarter of the island’s Japanese wartime population had already left.²²

²⁰ Katō, “Soren gunsei shita,” 15

²¹ Ibid., 14.

²² Ibid.

Most of the approximately 100,000 people who evacuated or escaped from Karafuto landed on Hokkaido at the port of Wakkanai or along the surrounding coastline of the Soya district. Almost 70,000 evacuees arrived in Wakkanai during the 10-day period when the evacuation was being carried out. This was almost three times the size of the town's population and local officials struggled to provide food and temporary shelter. A queue that lasted for several days snaked from the railway station all the way to the harbour side as people waited to board a train to continue their journey.

Crowding at the port at Wakkanai has been cited by one local historian as the reason why the three evacuation ships attacked by a submarine on the 22nd August 1945 were travelling south towards the port of Otaru.²³ One of the ships, the Dai 2 Gō Shinkōmaru, was badly damaged but remained afloat and diverted to the port of Rumoi. There,

²³ Yano Makio, "Dokumentari - Dainishinkyōmaru no hinan to Rumoi no machi no hitobito," *Suzuya*, June 2006, 104.

emergency relief was provided by the local authorities including temporary shelter of approximately 3000 survivors in local people's houses.²⁴

At the end of 1945, local newspaper coverage about evacuees from Karafuto was describing them as “war victims” (戦災者) rather than as repatriates. The use of the term war victims shows how media discourse was still being shaped by an official category which had come into use in Hokkaido during the last 12 months of the war. In May 1945 as American bombers were devastating the main urban areas on Honshu, the Japanese government announced that evacuees from the cities would be sent to Hokkaido. Groups would be allocated uncultivated land on the northern island and expected to become independent farmers. These evacuees from Tokyo, Osaka and other cities were called “The Northern Farmer-Soldier Corps” (拓北農兵隊). Hokkaido-chō and farming associations were involved in the scheme and extensive coverage was provided by the Hokkaido Shimbun. This included articles encouraging local residents

²⁴ Yano, “Dainishinkyōmaru no hinan,” 117.

to display suitable wartime camaraderie to the newcomers.²⁵ After August 1945 the scheme continued but with a title that dropped the reference to “soldiers” (拓北農民団・集団帰農者). By November 1945, 17,305 people had been “settled” in 137 towns and villages across Hokkaido.²⁶

Until July 1945, Hokkaido was spared from the bombing. However, in this month the US military carried out air raids on several towns and cities on Hokkaido. Its navy shelled the ports of Nemuro and Muroran causing hundreds of deaths and extensive damage to buildings (approximately 70% of buildings in Nemuro were destroyed and nearly 400

²⁵ Sapporo shi Kyōikuinkai, *Shin Sapporo shi Dai 5 kan Tsūshigo (Jō)* (Sapporo: Sapporo shi, 2002), 315.

²⁶ Ibid., 318.

people were killed).²⁷ Therefore, by the time Japan surrendered, the issue of “war victims” was well-known in many communities across Hokkaido.

The first local newspaper in Hokkaido to re-start publication in the post-war was the Muroran Minpō. On 23rd December 1945 the newspaper announced that two campaigns were being started in the city. The first was a survey of the existing conditions for “war victims”.²⁸ The second was a campaign to obtain more food to prevent starvation. In the article, the term “evacuees” was incorporated into the overall category of war victims.²⁹ This included local residents whose houses had been badly damaged when the city was

²⁷ Seki Hideshi et al., *Hokkaido no Rekishi* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shimbunsha, 2006), 290.

²⁸ "Sensai hinkon sha no kyūzai," *Muroran Minpō*, 23rd December 1945, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Muroran Minpō (Microfilm) (1) Shō 20.12.8-Shō 21.6, Shō 21.9.1-20.

²⁹ Ibid.

shelled and people who had been evacuated to Hokkaido from towns and cities in Honshu. It also covered those families in financial difficulties because the male head of the household was still to be demobilized or had been killed in the war.

War victims and Karafuto repatriates

The evacuees and escapees from Karafuto who moved to Hokkaido in the last months of 1945 became part of this discourse about war victims. On arrival, obtaining emergency relief was necessary for many. However, in the months after the surrender and the beginning of the Occupation, the effectiveness of the response of local authorities was often patchy. Without clear instructions from the central government and, at a time when the corrupt use of publically owned property was rampant, accessing relief would have been difficult. For those from Karafuto who were often new to the local authorities, officials' responses were often indifferent to the circumstances of those coming to them. This is the impression that Mitani Yukiko conveyed in her letter to the Asahi Shimbun when she wrote of the official who had curtly told her "you are not the

only one in this situation".³⁰ For Mitani and others who had come from Karafuto, explaining what their "situation" was like was a necessary task in the first months of the post-war.

Repatriate groups in early post-war Hokkaido

One way that "the voice of repatriates" was projected in the post-war was through repatriate groups. In the Japanese literature, research has shown how in Manchuria and Korea repatriate groups stepped in to the space vacated by local officials to provide resources and services.³¹ In Manchuria especially, without such activity the number of

³⁰ Asahi Shinbun, *Koe 1 (1945-1947)*, 74.

³¹ On groups on the Korea peninsula see: Nagashima Hiroki, "Chōsen hantō kara no hikiage to 'Nihonjin Sewakai' no kyūen katsudō," in *Dai Nippon Teikoku no Hōkai to Hikiage/Fukuin*, ed. Masuda Hiroshi (Tokyo: Keio Gijuku Daigaku, 2012), chap. 5.

For repatriate groups in general see: Katō Kiyofumi, "Kaigai hikiage mondai to Nihonjin engo dantai," in *Sengo Ajia ni okeru Nihonjin dantai: Hikiage kara kigyō shinshutsu*

Japanese fatalities would have been higher.³² In Korea, organisations set-up and run by local Japanese were one of the main reasons why the US military was able to begin repatriation so quickly and carry out the process efficiently. In Japan too, groups formed amongst the recently repatriated. The groups varied in terms of the level of organisation, their longevity and their political aims. According to one historian, however, most groups had three main goals: the return of Japanese still in the former colonies, the increase of government aid to repatriates and the compensation of overseas assets that had been left behind.³³

The repatriate groups represent the earliest attempts in the post-war to organise people in a way that could influence political decisions. Leaders emerged to represent the

made, ed. Kobayashi Hideo, Shibata Yoshimasa and Yoshida Sennosuke (Tokyo:

Yumani Shobō, 2008), chap. 1.

³² Katō, “Sengō Higashi Ajia,” 123-127.

³³ Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 86.

groups in negotiations with other actors such as local government officials, members of the Occupation and the media. They also sought to draw repatriates into the groups because being seen to represent more members meant acquiring a greater level of political influence. The development of these groups in the early post-war years was, therefore, an important moment for the formation of the image of the repatriate. Despite surrender and the rapid collapse of Japanese rule across the empire suggesting a clear break with the pre-war past, the image of the repatriate as presented by repatriate groups to a large extent depended on personnel and policies that had been influential prior to August 1945. Pre-war and wartime men of influence dominated the repatriate groups analysed below and contributed significantly to the image of the repatriate that emerged during the Occupation.

In the case of Karafuto, strictly speaking “repatriates” were not responsible for organising repatriate groups. By the time official repatriation from southern Sakhalin began at the end of 1946, by one estimate, there were already over 100 repatriate

groups across Hokkaido.³⁴ Evacuees and escapees were vital to the formation of repatriate groups from Karafuto. As explained above, in December 1945 the Soviet authorities on southern Sakhalin began to round-up those Japanese who were suspected of encouraging support for the military during the war. This obviously meant that many of those who had held the highest positions in the pre-war and wartime social hierarchy were at risk of arrest. Such individuals were also more likely to have the access to capital and connections that could secure them a place on a boat making the dangerous trip across the Soya Straits. Two men who realised that they were likely to be on the Soviet's list of the wanted were Orito Sōichi and Sugawara Michitarō. As

³⁴ "Karafuto Hikiagesha Dantai Rengōkai no Kōsei," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st November 1946. Copies of the editions of *Hoppō Tsūshin* printed on 1st November 1946 and 25th December 1946 are held at Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei's Tokyo Office. I am grateful for Mr Kudō Nobuhiko for providing me with copies. All other editions of the newspaper quoted below were viewed at the Hokkaido Prefectural Library on microfilm. See: *Hoppō Tsūshin*, Purange bunko (Shimbun) (Maikuroshiryō) 207 (H-163).

shown in the previous chapter, both men had held prominent posts in the IRAA for Karafuto. In numerous magazine articles they had exhorted local people to make sacrifices for the benefit of the empire at war. Both men attempted to flee to Hokkaido: Orito was successful and arrived in February 1946, Sugawara was unsuccessful and was arrested and later sent to Siberia.

Orito Sōichi and the Karafuto Hikiagesha Dantai Rengōkai

An account of Orito Sōichi's escape from southern Sakhalin appeared several decades later in the "official history" *Karafuto Shūsenshi*.³⁵ Tipped off about his impending arrest by the Soviets and, in his words, committed to fulfilling a pledge made to the Karafuto Governor (Otsu Toshio) to build a "Karafuto Village" in Hokkaido, Orito fled in a boat with four others. During the crossing two of the escapees died and Orito recalled that he, and the others, only narrowly survived. A few months after landing, Orito emerged as the head of the recently formed repatriate group the Karafuto Hikiagesha Dantai Rengōkai (hereafter 'Rengōkai').

³⁵ *Karafuto shūsenshi kankō kai, Karafuto shūsenshi*, 608.

The Rengōkai's office was located in Sapporo near Odori Park. It published a newspaper twice a month which was distributed to repatriate groups located across Hokkaido where local leaders would pass on information to the repatriates. The newsletter was called *Hoppō Tsūshin*.³⁶

Repatriate newsletters and other sources convey an impression of a man who, during 1946 and 1947, threw himself into securing resources for the relief and rehabilitation of Karafuto repatriates. To raise awareness and make connections he spoke with various officials, businessmen, leaders of other repatriate groups and even foreign journalists.³⁷ He held positions in other groups that could benefit repatriates such as the Hokkaido

³⁶ All printed material during much of the Occupation was subject to censorship and SCAP kept copies of newsletters sent for checking. After the Occupation, these became part of the Gordon W Prange Collection, held at the University of Maryland, US (and subsequently microfilmed for archives in Japan). The archive has copies of editions 4 to 12 (March to September 1947) of the newspaper *Hoppō Tsūshin*

³⁷ "Gaijin kisha ni kyōryoku konsei," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st November 1946.

Development Association (Hokkaido Kaitaku Kyōkai).³⁸ He also visited local neighbourhood associations where large numbers of repatriates were present to give talks about the 'current situation in Karafuto'.³⁹ Orito explained that he wanted to help Karafuto repatriates because "he was a war victim too, [and] he was not working for his own profit".⁴⁰ However, as shown in the previous chapter, he had been making similar appeals based on his supposed sharing the hardships of the "ordinary person" two years before in his wartime guise as the Head of the Karafuto Agricultural Association.

³⁸ "Kaitaku kyōkai kaiso shin hassoku," *Takuhoku*, 1st April 1947, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Purange bunko (Shimbun) (Microfilm) 515(T-20).

³⁹ "Yama Kita Dai 12 Kōku Dai 4 Han Kairan," April 1946, Historical Museum of Hokkaido, Bunsho Shiryō, Shōzō Bango 70057.

⁴⁰ "Taidan," *Sensaisha Jihō*, 20 June 1946, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Purange bunko (Shimbun) (Maikuroshiryō) 445 (Se-64). All copies of *Sensaisha Jihō* referenced below are from this microfilm.

Orito was, therefore, an extremely well-connected repatriate with many years of experience at working with officials and business leaders. He sought to mould the leadership of the Rengōkai to include people with a similar background to his own. Amongst those who held posts were a former mayor, the head of a town chamber of commerce and the president of the journal 'Karafuto'.⁴¹ As more repatriates began to return from Karafuto in early 1947, the Rengōkai stated the importance of recruiting "the right men with influence" to "strengthen its leadership of repatriates' reintegration".⁴² The leaders of the Rengōkai drew attention to their pre-war and wartime backgrounds as 'men of influence' in Karafuto society and argued that this gave them the necessary experience to represent repatriates in the post-war.

Political connections with officials from different parts of the government were regarded as being a potentially important source of influence for repatriate groups. Orito and the

⁴¹ "Karafuto Hikiagesha Dantai Rengōkai", *Hoppō Tsūshin*.

⁴² "Jimukyoku no kōsō o kakujū," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st March 1947.

other leaders of the Rengōkai saw themselves as slotting in to the bureaucratic system for repatriates' reintegration. The other parts of the system included "the central government in Tokyo" as well as "the local government of Hokkaido-chō".⁴³ The role of the Rengōkai was to "intersect" the various organisations. According to the Rengōkai, "calls for an overall coordinating body had come from both repatriates themselves and the relevant authorities".⁴⁴ The Rengōkai also saw itself working closely with Karafuto-chō officials. As part of the evacuation planning (mentioned in the first section of this chapter) a number of Karafuto-chō officials had been sent to Hokkaido. After August 1945, some of these officials remained in Hokkaido where they cooperated with the Rengōkai. One such figure was the Head of the Karafuto-chō office in Hokkaido – Mitsui Kiyohide. He described repatriate groups led by the Rengōkai as having an

⁴³ "Ukeire taisaku iinkai," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st November 1946.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

important role in “ensuring that repatriates were not completely dependent on support from local authorities and made their own efforts to achieve reintegration”.⁴⁵

For the Rengōkai’s leaders, establishing connections with officials in Hokkaido-chō was vitally important. One opportunity to influence local officials was the ‘Policy Committee for the Relief of Repatriates’. Started in October 1946, apparently at the urging of the Rengōkai, the Committee was chaired by senior officials from Hokkaido-chō.⁴⁶ Divided into sections for relief supplies, housing, business and land settlement, meetings gave Rengōkai leaders the chance to put their views to Hokkaido-chō officials.⁴⁷ In mid-1947, the news that two former officials from Karafuto-chō held senior positions in the Public

⁴⁵ "Saiki wa kokudo fukkyō to tomo ni," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st November 1946.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Hokkaido-chō Minseibu Shakaika (hen), *Gaichi hikiagesha engo gajjo*, April 1947, 9, Hokkaido Monjokan, Kankōbutsu, Dai 1 Bunrui: 369.37, Seikyū bango: 396.37

ho-mi-shi.

Welfare Section of Hokkaido-chō attracted the attention of the Rengōkai. One of these officials – Oka Takeo – featured in Hoppō Tsūshin’s regular column ‘A Karafuto person’ (‘Karafuto jin’).⁴⁸ The column’s author explained that “Post-war welfare administration (...) is not so simple as to use unfair means such as favouritism and connections” but further down the piece argued “it has to be said there are high hopes of him because he too is a repatriate and has experience of repatriates’ difficulties and hardships”.⁴⁹

The Rengōkai tried to use the connections of its leaders to gain leverage over policies aimed at repatriates and administered at the regional level in Hokkaido. In talks with officials from Hokkaido-chō and the leaders of other repatriate groups (which will be covered below), the Rengōkai’s main policy had its origins firmly in the kind of society that the pre-war Karafuto Farming Association had tried to promote. This was the ideal

⁴⁸ "Karafuto Jin - Oka Takeo," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st April 1947.

⁴⁹ Ibid. As the following chapter will show, the Rengōkai writer’s hopes for Oka were largely misplaced.

of the settled agricultural farmer producing sufficient food to feed him and his family.

Other types of employment such as fishing and mining – both of which were important sectors in Hokkaido's economy – were rarely mentioned by the Rengōkai leaders. This emphasis on Karafuto repatriates as being suited primarily for farming contributed to the image being formed by the Rengōkai. Promoting a certain image was also useful for the leaders of the Rengōkai to distinguish Karafuto repatriates from other war victims in Hokkaido and other repatriates who were arriving from areas such as Manchuria. By making this distinction, the leaders hoped to gain access to whatever support was available. They also helped to establish the idea of the Karafuto repatriate as a “different kind” of war victim in Hokkaido society.

The agricultural settler ideal was so fundamental to the men involved in the Rengōkai that it was actually used as a device for keeping order and smoothing the process of evacuation during some of the most fraught days in August 1945. As explained above, Orito later recalled how he had escaped to Hokkaido to help start a “Karafuto Village”. Such a plan was given prominent coverage in the local wartime newspaper just days before Soviet tanks rolled into Toyohara and stopped publication. The Karafuto

Shimbun, in an editorial entitled “Hope towards building Karafuto Villages in Hokkaido”, on the 21st August 1945 and as the evacuation process was in full progress outlined the proposal.⁵⁰ It explained that during the war, the government had tried to settle evacuees from the Tokyo area as farmers in Hokkaido but this had been unsuccessful because “for city dwellers unknown land (...) seems to be difficult for them to live on”.⁵¹ In contrast, for those with experience of “the tundra of Karafuto (...) settling the uncultivated land of Hokkaido would present few problems”.⁵² According to the editorial, “for the majority of mainlanders living in Karafuto, Hokkaido is their home-place” and “people from Honshu (...) when they think of the war damage there might want to join a

⁵⁰ "Shasetsu - Hokkaido Karafuto mura kensetsu e no kitai," *Karafuto Shimbun*, 21st August 1945, Hokkaido Prefectural Library.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

'Karafuto Village' [in Hokkaido] as well".⁵³ Furthermore, "compared to the hardship of crossing from Tokyo to Hokkaido, going from Karafuto to Hokkaido has the meaning of 'return'".⁵⁴ The editorial finished with an attempt to assuage anxieties about possible treatment in Hokkaido. In the past, Karafuto had been looked down upon and described as "the boondocks (inaka) of Hokkaido".⁵⁵ The editorial finished with the upbeat message that "the people of Hokkaido cannot develop the land all by themselves and [Karafuto Villages] would become the core rather than a backwater".⁵⁶ Beneath the

⁵³ "Shasetsu - Hokkaido Karafuto mura", *Karafuto Shimbun*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

editorial was an advertisement for “Applicants to Build Karafuto Villages”.⁵⁷ People were encouraged to “construct a new Japan” by “building a second home-place in Hokkaido”.⁵⁸ The sponsors of the advertisement included Karafuto-chō, Hokkaido-chō and the Karafuto Agricultural Association.

The Karafuto Shimbun’s editorial offers a crucial insight into what locally based newspaper journalists (and by association the leaders of the Karafuto colonial government who worked closely with journalists on propaganda) perceived as being some of the most important concerns of their readers. Familiar experiences such as life in Karafuto’s cold climate and common features of people’s migration histories were invoked as reasons to be optimistic about resettlement on Hokkaido. Possibly in reference to the perception of tension between people from Karafuto and Hokkaido an

⁵⁷ "Karafuto mura kensetsu sha no boshū," *Karafuto Shimbun*, 21st August 1945, Hokkaido Prefectural Library.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

appeal was made for working together. The qualities and experiences of people from Karafuto, when combined with the support of people from Hokkaido, would make Karafuto Villages possible.

This plan for Karafuto Villages, printed during the evacuation and when many people were desperately unsure about what the future might hold, was propaganda. However, the plan remained an important part of the Rengōkai's policies throughout 1946 and 1947. Orito, in meetings with other repatriate group leaders, used it as a way to generate support.⁵⁹ At the Hakodate Repatriation Centre, early editions of *Hoppō Tsūshin* were reportedly made available to repatriates and news of Karafuto Villages featured prominently.⁶⁰ A map of Hokkaido showed where they were supposedly being built along with an example of how one such settlement was actually working. Farming was described as "fundamental to the revival of Japan" and various forms of financial

⁵⁹ "Taidan," *Sensaisha Jihō*.

⁶⁰ "Hoppō Tsūshin o hikiagebune e," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 25th December 1946.

support were listed as being available from various government agencies, Hokkaido-chō and agricultural associations.⁶¹ The Villages would ensure repatriates were self-sufficient whilst contributing to “the emergency development of Hokkaido” and therefore to the rebuilding of post-war Japan.⁶² There would be a multiplier effect too: repatriates with construction skills could be used to build the Villages. Perhaps most importantly, coordinating the building work would be a suitable task for men of influence such as those now leading the Rengōkai. In preparation, Rengōkai leaders had even ensured “vehicles” were shipped over from Karafuto in the last days of fighting.⁶³

The surviving copies of Hoppō suggest that the Rengōkai’s vision for Karafuto Villages never went beyond the discussion stage. Despite the lack of actual progress, the

⁶¹ "Kyōdō soshiki no chikara to ōseina kaitaku seishin," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st November 1946.

⁶² "Kaikon mo jibun no te de," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st March 1947.

⁶³ "Torakku katsuyaku," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st March 1947.

importance of the plans for Karafuto Villages lay elsewhere. As Orito's testimony in the 1960s showed, his commitment to the idea of the Karafuto Village was something that remained with him, enabling him to discuss his actions in the post-war with a certain amount of pride. The Karafuto Village could be pointed to as an example of how the pre-war and wartime elite of Karafuto had been concerned about what happened to people after the end of Japanese rule.

One important expression of that concern took the form of dialogue with Hokkaido-chō and local officials. Officials faced demands from many others who needed support from the state. Through the Policy Committee for the Relief of Repatriates (hereafter 'Policy Committee') which was organised by Hokkaido-chō, Orito managed to get officials to express some sympathy with the arguments of the Rengōkai. At a meeting in early 1947, Orito contended that in the allocation of land for resettlement, Karafuto repatriates were at a disadvantage because "there is an attitude that second and third sons should be settled first".⁶⁴ He received the encouraging message from a Hokkaido-chō official that

⁶⁴ "Shin nendo nyūshoku ichi man go sen to," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st March 1947.

“As for Karafuto, [Hokkaido-chō] does not think of [repatriates] as strangers, [we] fully understand their position is different from Manchurian settlers”.⁶⁵ More precise examples of this “difference” were not given by the speaker but the meeting showed how the Rengōkai was trying to leverage its political influence with Hokkaido-chō.

The Rengōkai's inclusion on the Policy Committee showed that Hokkaido-chō regarded the group as having a certain amount of credibility in terms of its claim to be representing repatriates. The Rengōkai's leaders needed to show that they had influence over repatriates across Hokkaido. Hoppō Tsūshin frequently printed a list of over 100 repatriate groups located across the island and said to be affiliated to the Rengōkai. The newspaper also covered the Rengōkai's ambitious plans for repatriates. In addition to the Karafuto Villages scheme, shortly after the beginning of official repatriation from southern Sakhalin, the Hoppō urged that the government concentrate less on relief (*engo*) and more on rehabilitation (*kōsei*). The difference between these two terms, as seen by the Rengōkai, was that the former was aimed mainly at women

⁶⁵ "Shin nendo nyūshoku", *Hoppō Tsūshin*.

and children whilst the latter would be for men – the assumption being that men returning from southern Sakhalin needed help to re-enter the labour force (“Until now, because the majority [of returnees] have been women and children rehabilitation activity has been of a small-scale and has been about relief [but] now men with business acumen and earning power [will arrive]”.⁶⁶)

The Rengōkai drew its leaders from the narrowest section of society in pre-war and wartime Karafuto. Men like Orito (and Sugawara Michitarō who became the head of the Rengōkai in 1948) were men of influence who had been active in Karafuto politics. They had also both played important leadership roles in para-statal organisations such as the IRAA and had close connections with the leading officials from the colonial government. This experience of working with government officials and familiarity with the bureaucratic system were important reasons why they took on leadership roles in the main repatriate group. They saw themselves (and were seen by others) as having the best qualifications to represent repatriates. However, as members of the wartime elite

⁶⁶ "Jimukyoku no kōsō o," *Hoppō Tsūshin*.

they were also tainted by their pre-August 1945 history. Furthermore, their credibility was also hindered by a lack of agreement amongst repatriates about how to interpret what had happened on Karafuto in the last weeks of the war. These problems for the Rengōkai are clear from the words of another repatriate group that was operating in Hokkaido – the Otaru Renmei.

Otaru Renmei, Sensaisha Jihō and Karafuto Jihō

In the late 1940s, the population of Otaru made it the second largest city in Hokkaido after Sapporo. A port city located on the Japan Sea coastline, Otaru was an important location for the island's fishing industry. Many fishing companies had offices in both Otaru and Karafuto, testifying to the significant business connections that existed between the two. After August 1945, Otaru was one place where recent arrivals from Karafuto began to congregate in search of shelter and work.

Towards the end of 1945, an organisation called the Otaru Renmei formed to represent the interests of repatriates from Karafuto living in the city. From March 1946, the

organisation started to publish a twice-monthly newspaper.⁶⁷ The name-changing of this newspaper provides a clue as to how the group's leadership sought to position the repatriates within the political debates of the day. The first 15 issues appeared under the title *Sensaisha Jihō*. This reflected early post-war discourse that placed repatriates alongside other war victims. From October 1946, as the leadership worked to press the case of repatriates from Karafuto, the newspaper was renamed as *Karafuto Jihō*. By mid-1947, it had been renamed once again as the *Hokkai Kōsei Shinbun*.

The Otaru Renmei, like the Rengōkai, had a leader who tried to keep a high-profile – a man called Masayama Gihei. He does not appear to have been as much of a “big name” in Karafuto society as Orito Sōichi. However, like Orito, he too drew on aspects of his pre-war past to justify his credentials to lead. Masayama's background was introduced in the newspaper thus: “What made him famous? In a word he is different (...) during the war when [people took up] bamboo spears (...) he caused problems [by asking] why do

⁶⁷ The Hokkaido Prefectural Library holds copies on microfilm from June 1946 to May 1947 of *Sensaisha Jihō* (*Karafuto Jihō*).

you do such meaningless things?"⁶⁸ How Masayama was able to move to Hokkaido before the start of the official repatriation is not clear. Once in Otaru, however, he too told a story about how his intention was to put all his effort into helping repatriates. A writer for the newspaper stated, "behind a slogan to help them [evacuees], repatriate groups were formed at the hands of a few men of spirit who had crossed to the mainland".⁶⁹ Masayama was described as being motivated to start the Otaru Alliance after coming to the city and witnessing the "miserable situation of Karafuto repatriate women and children".⁷⁰

⁶⁸ "Masuyama Gihei Fuusu hii," *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th May 1947, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Purange bunko (Shimbun) (Maikuroshiryō) 257 (Ka-67). All copies of *Karafuto Jihō* referenced below are from this microfilm.

⁶⁹ "Honshi sōkan yori genzai made," *Karafuto Jihō*, 25th May 1947.

⁷⁰ "Masuyama Gihei Fuusu hii," *Karafuto Jihō*.

Masayama had some contact with Orito and the Rengōkai and attended meetings held in Sapporo with the leaders of repatriate groups from different parts of Hokkaido. An interview between the two men was given front-page coverage in the *Sensaisha Jihō*.

The following section of the interview is of particular interest:

Orito Sōichi: I want to use my experience to build a Karafuto-village.

Masayama: A Karafuto village is going to be built!!! That is a good idea. At a time when businessmen from Karafuto are looking the other way, it gives me a lot of strength to see that you are willing to try to help.

*Orito: I am also one more person who is a war victim so I will work as hard as I can.*⁷¹

The quotation shows how Orito appealed to the leaders of other repatriate groups for support through the proposal to build Karafuto Villages. It also reveals Orito's skilful positioning of himself as being "just another repatriate" although, as shown above, his wartime history meant this was not the case. Masayama's criticism of "businessmen from Karafuto" was also noteworthy. One of the recurring themes in Otaru Renmei's

⁷¹ "Taidan," *Sensaisha Jihō*.

newspaper was that repatriates were regularly being let down by those who should be expected to help them.

The pages of *Karafuto Jihō* frequently contained strong criticism of government officials and repatriate leaders in the Rengōkai. Officials from Karafuto-chō were denounced.

Anger was expressed about “the forced evacuation of women and children”, sent to Hokkaido with little food or clothing in the belief that supplies would be sent by officials later.⁷² Although some officials were acknowledged to be trying to help Karafuto repatriates, others were alleged to have decided that the responsibility for providing relief for evacuees was now “completely with Hokkaido-chō”.⁷³ Despite Occupation censorship, some of the bitterness that existed over events during the fighting on Karafuto even made it into print in the newsletter. One writer blamed the “mistaken thinking by Japanese officials that plunged Karafuto into confusion” when violence

⁷² "Sanseki shiteiru Karafuto fujoshi to zanryūjin hikiage mondai," *Sensaisha Jihō*, 5th August 1946.

⁷³ "Mitsui Kiyohide ron fuusu hii," *Karafuto Jihō*, 20th November 1946.

engulfed the port of Maoka on 20th August 1945 as the Soviet Red Army “attempted a peaceful landing”.⁷⁴

Comments such as this meant that the Occupation’s censors kept a close watch on Karafuto Jihō’s editorials. A confidential report on the newsletter by SCAP’s Civil Censorship Detachment noted, “The tone of the editorials is for the most part Leftist, but only in scattered instances are outright Communist policies advocated.”⁷⁵ By ‘Leftist’ the censor was perhaps referring to the frequent references made in the newsletter to unequal treatment amongst repatriates. These included accusations that large amounts of supplies intended for the relief of repatriates was being distributed amongst a few (“relief organisations should not provide relief for only one section of repatriates but for

⁷⁴ "Kanryō yo hikiagesha no kōboku tare," *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th February 1947.

⁷⁵ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 8665, CIS 01294, KARAFUTO JIHO (Karafuto News)

Otaru, Japan (2 May 1947), 3.

the wider repatriate masses”⁷⁶). One writer – Wakayama Junichi – who witnessed the arrival of repatriates at the Hakodate repatriation centre wrote, “it is said that our homeland is now a democracy but it seems you only get treated as a human if you are an official or a salaried worker”.⁷⁷ He stressed the different circumstances that had faced evacuees who were all portrayed as living on the verge of destitution: the evacuated dependents of workers employed by large organisations had continued to receive the employee’s wages whilst fishermen’s families “were left to make their own way”.⁷⁸

Orito and the Rengōkai were also denigrated. One writer defended his attempt at a balanced assessment of the Rengōkai leader’s character (“despite putting much thought in [to the article] [I] heard many critical voices [saying] ‘what grudge made him

⁷⁶ "Shasetsu - Kanryōka saretsutsu aru engo dantai " *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th February 1947.

⁷⁷ "Hikiagesha o mukae ni Hakodate e " *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th February 1947.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

write about Orito in that way?"⁷⁹). The Rengōkai was accused of "not giving regional groups a single penny and using the bulk of contributions for its own purposes".⁸⁰ The Rengōkai's leadership was condemned as "having no one from the regions, its officials are all Sapporo people".⁸¹ However, the most damning assertion was that certain repatriate groups, "hiding behind the name of repatriate relief", were trying to advance business interests and to turn a profit. In doing so, they were neglecting to fulfil their more fundamental task of providing relief.⁸² The sole beneficiaries of this profit-making were said to be "the leadership of repatriate groups".⁸³

⁷⁹ "Fuusu hii ni tsuite," *Karafuto Jihō*, 20th november 1946.

⁸⁰ "Shasetsu - Chihō no hikiagesha dantai o kyōka se," *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th December 1946.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Shasetsu - Hikiagesha dantai no engo to jigyo " *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th April 1947.

⁸³ Ibid.

Otaru Renmei was included by the Rengōkai in lists of repatriate groups in Hokkaido that were supposed to be under its authority. However, as the Otaru Renmei's own newspaper shows, repatriate leaders in areas outside of Sapporo did not always see themselves as moving in step with the Rengōkai's leaders. The politics amongst repatriate groups was often fractious and bitter. These divisions were reflected in the range of competing interpretations that circulated amongst repatriates about "what had happened" in August 1945 and the post-war. Incidents such as the mass evacuation did not have a settled meaning. Whilst those involved in organising the evacuation such as officials and semi-officials believed that their actions had saved lives, many others resented being separated from family members and left to fend for themselves after arrival on Hokkaido. The large loss of life on the three evacuation ships near Rumoi was also an event that cast a shadow over how the evacuation was understood. Such themes are notable by their absence from the Rengōkai's newspaper. However, there was a further level to the disunity evident in repatriate newspapers that was connected to one of the more persistent themes of Karafuto society.

The second generation

The Rengōkai sought to use its leaders' backgrounds as men of influence from Karafuto to access political decision-makers in post-war society in Hokkaido. Experience gained and connections made over many years of political activity and work were what Orito and others like him looked for in their leadership group. Younger repatriates were less likely to have the kind of political influence that was useful in a leadership capacity to the group. However, this did not mean that the Rengōkai ignored repatriates in their twenties and thirties. The so-called second generation had been an important category in pre-war discourse on Karafuto and the concept re-appeared in the post-war. Furthermore, its re-appearance brought with it writing in the repatriate newspapers about other ideas that had been frequently discussed and repeated in Karafuto, namely those of "culture" and "home-place".

Behind much of this writing was another group of repatriates that, like the leaders of the Rengōkai, already had a long-standing pre-war background in developing the ideas that they were now trying to promote. During the pre-war and wartime periods they had identified themselves as second generation meaning a person who was born (or who

grew up from an early age) and raised on Karafuto. Identifying as second generation helped in styling themselves as a “Karafuto literary elite”. Through regular contributions to the Karafuto magazine and in books and other writings, they contributed throughout the latter half of the 1930s to the production of Karafuto as discourse. By the 1940s, most of these writers were producing copy in support of the war effort and according to the wishes of senior figures in the colonial government. The pre-war and wartime years were when they formulated their ideas about Karafuto. The war did not mean the end of such ideas nor did it end the writing activities of many of the Karafuto literary elite. Instead, several of them re-appeared in the pages of the repatriate newspapers where they once again wrote about “Karafuto”. The circumstances in which they were writing were, however, seemingly very different: the war had ended in defeat, the empire had collapsed the wartime ideology and ideologues had been discredited.

In the Karafuto Jihō, the writings of two of its most active contributors – Koderā Heikichi and Wakayama Junichi – reflected the widespread sense that the future direction of

Japan now lay with the Japan Socialist Party.⁸⁴ Wakayama had made little attempt to hide his views of how the repatriates stepping off the repatriation boats at Hakodate faced greatly differing futures depending on their social and occupational status. Koderu wrote about the pledge he had made with Wakayama as the two men arrived on Hokkaido: "Wakayama-kun, do you remember what I said to you on the boat as we escaped from Karafuto? If we make it to Hokkaido alive, the two of us have to tell people about Karafuto".⁸⁵ He continued, "I used the words democratic culture, I am convinced that the most advanced form of democratic culture is socialist culture".⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Andrew Gordon explains that post-war society was caught-up in "a fever of democratization". In mid-1947, the Japan Socialist Party won a plurality of seats in the National Diet in the first election under the new constitution. Gordon, *Modern History of Japan*, 232.

⁸⁵ "Hikiagesha to shakaishugi," *Karafuto Jihō*, 5th March 1947.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

The potential for such kinds of political opinion to spread amongst repatriates was an issue that was not only of interest to the SCAP censors but also to other repatriate groups such as the Rengōkai. The expression of this concern took a familiar form. In the first edition of the *Hoppō Tsūshin* to be distributed at the repatriation centre in Hakodate it was announced that a “Born in Karafuto Group” (*Karafuto umare no kai*) would be established.⁸⁷ It was necessary because of the concern for “Karafuto repatriates, especially youth and students’ spirit” and it would enable “those born in Karafuto to rise from the grief of losing their home-place and to build a new one”.⁸⁸ Such professed solicitude for the “youth of Karafuto” and the “second generation” had been a key part of pre-war and wartime rhetoric intended to foster people’s identification with an elite conception of Karafuto. As members of that elite reformed in the Rengōkai they also returned to past interpretations of Karafuto society such as the generational divide and the need to be vigilant about the attitudes of younger generation.

⁸⁷ “Karafuto umare no kai,” *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 1st November 1946.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Crucially, another figure from the pre-war literary group turned up in post-war Hokkaido and began to write again about “Karafuto culture”. Arazawa Katsutarō had been one of the main writers for the Karafuto magazine and, during the late-1930s and early-1940s penned numerous articles on the subject. He moved to Hokkaido after he was demobilized where he was reunited with his young family. He launched his own magazine called “New Home” and stated that “reviving the will for Karafuto culture would add to Hokkaido culture”.⁸⁹ He also took part in lectures and ran the youth section of the repatriate group in the suburb of Sapporo where many repatriates were being temporarily housed in converted dormitories. He even contributed the main article to the first edition of the Maoka Junior High School alumni magazine which was published in 1947. In it, he wrote, “I want to return to Karafuto. Although the land has changed to a Soviet name, for me no matter what anyone says, it is my birthplace in this

⁸⁹ “Karafuto jin,” *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 15th July 1947.

world”.⁹⁰ In the same month, at a time when tens of thousands of repatriates from Karafuto were arriving under the official repatriation, Hoppō Tsūshin again publicised “the progressive actions of the young [repatriates] to build a new home-place”.⁹¹ The report stated, “Building a new home-place and a cultured life was necessary [because of] the growing tendency for repatriates to use other repatriates”.⁹² This was a reference to the type of criticism that appeared in Karafuto Jihō that repatriate groups’ business ventures were little more than a front for the exploitation of repatriates’ labour. The ‘Umare no Kai’ would ensure “relief was provided with compassion for fellow

⁹⁰ Arazawa Katsutarō, "Maoka Chūgakkō Dōsōkaishi Dai ikkan" (Held at Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, Hokkaido Branch Office, Sapporo), 2-3.

⁹¹ "Shin kyodo kensetsu e," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 15th August 1947.

⁹² Ibid.

repatriates” and help to “rally all Karafuto repatriates and demobilized soldiers into a single Hokkaido-wide [group]”.⁹³

Conclusion

Although the remaining newspapers of the early post-war repatriate groups come from only a fraction of those that existed, this source provides an important insight into their work. In addition, Hoppō Tsūshin was the newspaper of the group deemed (by its own leaders and by Hokkaido-chō) to be in overall control of the other repatriate groups. This fragmentary source also contains a rich supply of detail on repatriates and how they tried to reintegrate into post-war society. The idea of the Karafuto repatriate was vital to reintegration.

Mitani Yukiko described herself as a Karafuto repatriate in November 1945. At this time repatriate groups were just starting to be organised and there would have been a growing awareness amongst some repatriates of the advantages of collective action to

⁹³ "Shin kyodo kensetsu e," *Hoppō Tsūshin*.

try to influence those in government who could provide access to much needed resources. The formation of such groups enabled the term Karafuto repatriate to be given various political and cultural meanings. Such meaning was not “natural” but the result of various actors projecting their ideas about who a person from Karafuto was and what requirements she had.

Perhaps inevitably those who held leadership positions in repatriate groups were individuals deemed to have the ability to influence political decisions. This meant the re-appearance of men of influence from the pre-war and wartime society on Karafuto. These men drew on pre-war and wartime ideas that they had been closely associated with as they sought to re-build their influence in post-war society on Hokkaido. The ideal of the self-sufficient farmer was transferred from Karafuto to Hokkaido as a suitable model for Karafuto repatriates to follow.

The re-appearance of the pre-war men of influence also led to criticism from other repatriates. However, even in this case, pre-war and wartime experience was often vital to the critics. Several writers for Otaru Renmei came from a mixed background in terms of how they had written critically of the colonial authorities in the pre-war period before

becoming co-opted into supporting the wartime state. In the post-war they returned to their critical stance of the wartime elite of Karafuto society but with a heightened sense of anger and indignation. This, in turn, led to the Rengōkai and writers associated with it to promote groups such as the “*Karafuto umare no kai*” which were intended to create a sense of shared feeling around “Karafuto”.

The pre-war and wartime past was, therefore, highly relevant to the leaders of repatriate groups. They used it to validate their claim to speak for repatriates. In effect, the experiences and social status gained during the pre-war and wartime years for these men of influence meant that they arrived in Hokkaido with a stock of social capital that lessened their vulnerability to the equalising effects of repatriation.

Of the hundreds of repatriate groups that had formed in cities, towns and villages throughout Hokkaido, the Rengōkai’s leaders liked to consider themselves as being the point of contact for talks between Karafuto repatriates and “outside” agencies such as Hokkaido-chō and the central government. Separating their target group from other war victims was a necessary tactic to ensure that “newcomers” such as evacuees from

Karafuto were not forgotten in the competition to receive scarce resources in the form of emergency relief.

Chapter 3 – The Occupation

The previous chapter addressed the movement of evacuees and escapees from Karafuto in August 1945. This chapter will examine the role of the Occupation forces (also known as the ‘Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers’; hereafter ‘SCAP’) in the repatriation process. This focus on the regional dimension in Hokkaido before policy-making at the national level is justifiable because of the date when official repatriation from southern Sakhalin began (December 1946). Within Hokkaido, the arrival of evacuees and escapees from Karafuto was an important factor in regional politics before SCAP turned its full attention to the repatriation issue on Japan’s northern island. However, once the official repatriation had begun, SCAP played an increasingly important role vis-à-vis Karafuto repatriates. One of the main effects of SCAP oversight was to direct the energies of local officials from Hokkaido-chō into addressing the “repatriate problem” on the island. Engaging with the issue also meant finding “repatriates” who could be listened to and assisted. Invariably, that meant Hokkaido-chō turned to “repatriates’ representatives” such as the leaders of the Rengōkai.

The repatriation policy of SCAP and how it fitted into the emerging Cold War dynamics in East Asia in the late-1940s has been examined by Yokote Shinji.¹ Using diplomatic documents from the American, Russian and Japanese archives he argued that Stalin's decision to take over half-a-million Japanese soldiers as prisoners (and thus contravening the terms of the Potsdam Declaration) and his subsequent failure to act promptly once the anger of Japanese public opinion became apparent led Japan into an alliance with the US. The Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru was able to use the issue to criticise the Japanese left at a time when his own domestic support was relatively weak.

Yokote's argument makes an important contribution to the field of the international history of the cold war although in his strong criticism of Soviet policy he perhaps over-emphasises the diligence and altruistic motivations of the Japanese civilian and military officials who, in the crucial months at the time of surrender and shortly

¹ Yokote, "Soviet Repatriation Policy," 31.

afterwards, engaged in efforts to repatriate the Japanese in Soviet-controlled areas.²

His paper, with its focus on diplomatic initiatives, also has relatively little to say about the domestic situation in Japan for repatriates. Apart from mentioning that SCAP was aware of “competition between the United States and the USSR for public opinion in Japan”, Yokote’s article does not examine how Occupation policy affected repatriates once they had been returned “home”.³

SCAP’s role in repatriation to and from Japan

Prior to defeat, the Japanese government had made few if any plans to repatriate the approximately 6.9 million of its nationals who were in the colonies and occupied territories. If the lives of Japanese soldiers and civilians who were outside of Japan-proper (not including Karafuto) were of relatively little importance to the wartime

² See Barshay for the argument that some Japanese officials were prepared to accept the capture of Japanese by Soviet forces in Manchuria: *The Gods Left First*, 37.

³ Yokote, “Soviet Repatriation Policy,” 41.

leadership, the fates of the empire's other subjects – predominantly Koreans and Taiwanese who were also living outside of their “homeland” were of almost no consequence at all. Nevertheless, in the first few weeks after surrender, government officials did try to produce some kind of coherent scheme to assist Japanese now stranded in the former colonies and occupied territories but defeat meant that they had almost no chance of being able to implement any concrete action.

The Allies on the other hand had formulated the outline of a plan for what to do once Japan was defeated. At a series of wartime conferences between 1943 and 1945, the leaders of the US, USSR, Britain and Nationalist China had decided that the Japanese empire would be dismantled. As for those Japanese who were in the empire, the Allies only made public their intentions for the 3.7 million military men. Under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, after being disarmed, they were to be returned to Japan and given the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives. No clear statement was made about the fate of the 3.2 million Japanese civilians who were outside of Japan. In General Order Number One, Japan was instructed to order its troops to stop fighting

and surrender to the US, USSR, Chinese Nationalist and British militaries. Which military a soldier surrendered to depended on where he was located.

Which colony or occupied territory a person had been living in, therefore, had a significant impact on “post-war” experience. John Dower notes that the term “post-war” had little meaning for many Japanese in places such as Manchuria where violence, disease and starvation remained a possibility until repatriation.⁴ In areas occupied by the US military such as the Japan’s colonies in the South Seas and the southern half of Korea, the repatriation of Japanese was organised promptly. In areas under Republican Chinese control (Taiwan, mainland China south of Manchuria, Hong Kong and French Indochina), repatriation had also begun by November 1945. Japanese soldiers who were in parts of Southeast Asia that were re-occupied by the British military often had to wait longer to be repatriated. This was because the British government decided to use “Japanese Surrendered Personnel” for a variety of tasks including not only building work but also for fighting alongside British soldiers against anti-colonial nationalist

⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 52.

movements. As explained in the previous chapter, those who were in Manchuria, the north of Korea, Karafuto and the Kurils came under the jurisdiction of the Soviet military. The intensive period of fighting and the concurrent violence against civilians (not only Japanese but Chinese and Korean as well), was followed by the decision of the Soviet leadership to capture 500,000 Japanese soldiers for forced labour in the USSR.

News of the chaotic situation in areas captured by the USSR soon reached the Japanese leadership (not least because many of the top officials, their families and those of military officers were evacuated in advance or shortly after the invasion by aeroplane). Pursuing numerous diplomatic avenues, during September and October 1945, the Japanese government tried to find a way of “rescuing Japanese overseas”.⁵ At around the same time, SCAP issued a simple command that it was going to deal with

⁵ Yokote, “Soviet Repatriation Policy,” 33.

repatriation and that the Japanese government, shorn of its diplomatic powers, was to await further instruction from Occupation officials.⁶

Beginning in September 1945, SCAP started to transport Japanese from southern Korea to Japan. Agreements were also arranged with the other Allied Powers with the exception of the USSR. Instructions to the Japanese government were formally presented in a series of documents called 'SCAPINS'. These documents outlined what SCAP expected of the Japanese government and were reissued as new developments required changes of policy. By early 1946, the framework for SCAP's repatriation policy was largely in place.

At the centre of the policy was the division of responsibilities between SCAP and the Japanese government. SCAP, in particular the section known as 'G-3', was to have overall responsibility for organising the shipping of Japanese military men and civilians back to Japan (as well as Koreans, Chinese and Taiwanese leaving Japan). The

⁶ The following summary of repatriation is based on Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 38-52.

Japanese government was tasked with operating repatriation reception centres which were located at various ports around Japan. The procedures at the reception centres varied according to a returnee's military or civilian status. The process also changed over time so that during the last two years of the decade repatriates remained at the centres for up to three or four days.

During the Occupation, SCAP officials maintained that how repatriates fared in Japan was a domestic issue for the Japanese government. As far as SCAP's official line went, it was concerned largely with the diplomatic negotiations surrounding repatriation. This explanation, however, distorts what was actually a very "hands-on" approach by SCAP to repatriates.

SCAP planning and repatriates

Although the mass repatriation of Japanese continued until 1950, by the end of 1946, almost 5 million people had been repatriated to Japan. Repatriation from US-controlled areas and those claimed by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party was winding down by May 1946. Whilst the British intransigence in the face of SCAP requests to speed-up

repatriation continued, by mid-1946 approximately 600,000 men had been repatriated from Southeast Asia. However, in terms of numbers, the most significant repatriation in this year was the so-called “million person repatriation”. Between May and the end of October, approximately 1,010,000 people were repatriated from Manchuria although the onset of the Chinese Civil War meant that repatriation became more difficult. Smaller numbers of Japanese were still being repatriated from Northeast China in the summer of 1948.⁷

From SCAP’s perspective, demobilizing the Japanese military was a high priority. This was made explicit in the Potsdam Declaration and, shortly after the Occupation began, SCAP’s G-2 Section took charge of the process. Japanese civilians overseas were less of a priority for American military planners. However, this does not mean that no preparations had been made. As part of the US government’s extensive pre-surrender planning to prepare for Japan’s eventual occupation, the Office of Strategic Service’s

⁷ The USSR removed most of its troops from Northeast China (with the exception of Dalian) by early-1946.

Research and Analysis Branch (hereafter 'OSS') produced numerous reports on many aspects of Japanese society. Written by some of America's leading experts on East Asian affairs, these reports were intended to provide the latest information to help inform occupation administrators' policy-making.⁸ One such report compiled by the OSS was entitled 'Japanese Civilians Overseas' and addressed the problem of the "large proportion of Japanese overseas [who] may soon be ordered to leave the countries in which they reside".⁹ At the time the report was written, the repatriation of Japanese civilians was yet to be decided. The authors explained, "If there is repatriation it seems reasonably safe to assume that the minimum number (...) involved will be 1,500,000. On the other hand the maximum is not likely to be more than 3,000,000 (...). If, as appears probable, Karafuto, and the Ryukyu, Bonin and Kurile Islands, which are

⁸ Eiji Takemae, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 208-209.

⁹ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 8345, ESS(D) 12324, Japanese Civilians Overseas (20 August 1945), iv.

now considered part of Japan proper, are also taken from Japan at the peace

conference, the total may be about half a million higher.”¹⁰

The report divided overseas civilians into the following categories: (1) “areas where Japanese have not exercised political or economic control”¹¹ which included North and South America, Hawaii and Europe; (2) “areas recently occupied by Japan”¹² which covered ‘China’ and ‘The Philippines’; (3) “areas which Japan had long dominated politically and economically”¹³ which meant ‘Manchuria’, the ‘Kwantung Leased Territory’, ‘Korea’, ‘Formosa’ (Taiwan) and ‘The Japanese South Seas Mandate’. A fourth category, included as an appendix, covered “Japanese in Karafuto, The Ryukyu

¹⁰ Japanese Civilians Overseas, 39.

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹² Ibid., 16.

¹³ Ibid., 21.

Islands, and other islands of Japan Proper”.¹⁴ For the countries and regions in the third section, the authors included information on “Japanese Economic Control” and “Relations with Natives”.¹⁵ Explanations included the following: (Manchuria) “special privileges and Japanese exploitation bred resentment and hatred amongst the natives. The attitude of Manchurians was one of submission under force”¹⁶, (Korea) “The favored status of the Japanese, attempts to impose Japanese culture, arbitrary police action and brutal manifestations of Korean nationalism created a general attitude of hostility towards the Japanese”¹⁷, (Taiwan) “The average standard of living of the

¹⁴ ESS(D) 12325, Japanese Civilians Overseas, Appendix C A11.

¹⁵ ESS(D) 12324, Japanese Civilians Overseas, 23-25.

¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷ Ibid., 28.

Japanese was higher than that in Japan and much higher than that of the Formosans”.¹⁸

Karafuto, however, was described thus: “Unlike other areas described in this report, the population of Karafuto is almost entirely Japanese; the Japanese completely dominate the economic, political, and social life of the island.”¹⁹

The report was therefore highly critical of overseas Japanese civilians’ action and behaviour (with the exception of Japanese in Karafuto). The conclusion explained “all those [Japanese] who have used their favored position to exploit the native population, will automatically be deprived of their means of livelihood”.²⁰ This was given as one reason why repatriation might be necessary. On the subject of exploitation the conclusion continued: “The economic status of the average Japanese overseas has been superior to that of the average Japanese at home. This superior economic status

¹⁸ Japanese Civilians Overseas, 30.

¹⁹ Ibid., Appendix C A11.

²⁰ Ibid., 39.

has been achieved in part at the expense of the natives of the countries under Japanese control, however.”²¹ The conclusion also mentioned how overseas civilians might be reintegrated after repatriation: “The return of Japanese administrators (...) who still have business connections or property in Japan, may not create a problem (...) but it seems likely that a large proportion of the repatriates will be indigent (...) The Japanese system of family responsibility may care for some of these, but it cannot be counted on to do the entire job”.²²

The OSS report’s authors were, therefore, deeply sceptical about how Japanese civilians had led their lives in the empire. In particular, they had enjoyed better living standards than other Japanese because of their exploitation of ‘the natives’. This aspect of “the repatriate” would require punishment. As well as this side, however, the repatriate should also be helped to re-start his life and this could be achieved with the

²¹ Japanese Civilians Overseas, 45.

²² Ibid.

help of “local customs” such as the “system of family responsibility”. The attitude towards repatriates evident in the OSS report can be traced in subsequent SCAP responses to media coverage and proposed Japanese government policies regarding returnees.

During the Occupation, SCAP enforced a strict system of media censorship. Early coverage of repatriates tended to depict them as being punished for their “colonialism”.

In January 1946, a Japanese reporter for the magazine *Bungei Shunjū* visited the repatriation centre at Uraga. He was allowed to write about the desperate conditions that he witnessed, including overcrowding, understaffing, a lack of food and widespread theft of repatriates' possessions.²³ By May, as thousands more repatriates arrived, the news coverage was starting to take a more sympathetic approach. Coverage of repatriates arriving from Manchuria at the Sasebo Repatriation Centre was captured on newsreel for the *Nihon Nyūsu* segment called “Everyone’s Voice” (みんなの声). The voice over, in response to a question about what was happening to Japanese in

²³ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 56.

Manchuria, explained that they were now being repatriated and that, because they too were the victims of the “militarists”, people should extend a sympathetic welcome to them.²⁴ No mention was made of their role in colonialism.

The foreign press was less restricted than their Japanese counterparts by SCAP censorship. The photo-magazine *Life* picked-up on the repatriate subject twice in relatively short succession. In December 1945, in an article about demobilized soldiers, *Life*'s journalist covered the story of a “Japanese farmer” who was supposed to typify what was happening in villages throughout Japan: “he is seen humbly settling into his immemorial place in the village, a place almost identical with that of half of Japan's

²⁴ NHK Dejitaru Aakaibusu Sensō Shōgen Aakaibusu, "Nihon nyūsu Sengohen Dai 20 go," NHK Dejitaru Aakaibusu, http://cgi2.nhk.or.jp/shogenarchives/jpnews/movie.cgi?das_id=D0001310020_00000&seg_number=003 (accessed 14th December 2013).

population".²⁵ Here was a clear reference to men returning from overseas having a "home" to go to. This ideal was again emphasised when, the following February, *Life* once more covered the subject of repatriates, this time by going inside a repatriation centre. Photographs included repatriates undergoing the various procedures at the centre including disinfection with DDT and a baggage search. The article explained, "After processing, each returning Japanese is required to go directly to his or her last former home in Japan".²⁶ Readers were also assured that repatriates were being suitably punished: "at first they sold their farms, stores and homes for fantastic prices but that was soon stopped by the US authorities".²⁷

²⁵ *Life*, "Japanese Farmer," *Life*, 24th December 1945, 67.

²⁶ *Life*, "Japanese Come Home From Lost Empire," *Life*, 11th February 1946, 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

The start of the Cold War and repatriates

SCAP's assessment of repatriates as participants in colonialism coincided with the Occupation's initial agenda for the demilitarization and democratization of Japanese society. From SCAP's perspective, in the democratic nation that was now being constructed, colonialism went with the militarism of the past as an example of how Japanese society had strayed from the path of democracy into its "dark valley" of the 1930s which led to continental expansion and The Pacific War. The deepening tension between the US and USSR, however, caused SCAP to reassess its policies.

Repatriates were caught-up in that reassessment as the US and USSR tried to use repatriation as an issue to score political points with the Japanese public. From mid-1946, as Cold War tensions increased, the stakes surrounding repatriation were also raised. The US could not afford to allow the USSR to make political capital from the issue. This led to a SCAP-supported emphasis in the media on the fates of Japanese who were still overseas. At the same time, any difficulties that repatriates in Japan might have had were minimized. Problems that did arise were depicted as being addressed by

relief measures intended for any Japanese in need – there were no specific problems that applied only to repatriates.

The Allied Council for Japan

One of the clearest examples of how repatriation became a political weapon for the US and USSR is the debates in the Allied Council for Japan (hereafter 'ACJ') over the issue. The ACJ had been established in early 1946 as one of two international bodies to advise General MacArthur on the running of the Occupation. Based in Tokyo, the ACJ had four representatives, one each from the US, the USSR, the British Commonwealth and the Republic of China. Throughout the course of the Occupation, there was regular criticism that the US-dominated SCAP and General MacArthur in particular, paid little attention to the ACJ. The commission was soon branded by many, including those who

sat on it, as primarily a 'talking shop' with virtually no influence on policy.²⁸ Yet, the ACJ did attract significant public attention through media coverage of its proceedings.

During 1946 when the issue of repatriation was raised several times at the ACJ, the US and USSR were engaged in exhaustive behind-the-scenes negotiations about how to transfer Japanese on the Soviet mainland, in the north of Korea, Sakhalin and the Kurils to Japan. By putting repatriation on the agenda of the 6th and 8th ACJ meetings held in June 1946, General Douglas MacArthur was aware of how this would draw public attention to the issue. The US representative to the ACJ – George Atcheson – raised the point that no repatriates had yet been returned by the USSR and that this was in

²⁸ Catherine Edwards, "The Allied Council for Japan and Cold War Politics," in *The Occupation of Japan: the international context*, ed. Burkman (Virginia: MacArthur Memorial Foundation, 1984), 61.

contravention of the agreement signed at Potsdam.²⁹ The Soviet representative to the ACJ, Kuzma Derevyanko, insisted that the issue was “not withing (sic) the cognisance of the Allied Council for Japan”; the exception was the discussion of repatriation as a domestic issue and the Japanese government’s response.³⁰

At the 6th Meeting, a discussion was held concerning “The integration of Japanese repatriates into the National Life of Japan”. According to Atcheson, MacArthur hoped to get the commission’s views on how “[repatriates] may be self-supporting and the danger precluded that as under-privileged or discontent (sic) elements of the population, they may come to constitute a menace to the achievement of the objectives of the

²⁹ GHQ/SCAP Records (RG331) Allied Council for Japan, ACJ 1 R1-443, Verbatim Minutes of the 8th Meeting (26 June 1946), 20.

³⁰ ACJ 1 R1-444, Verbatim Minutes 8th Meeting, 21.

Occupation".³¹ As he explained "the large number of displaced persons in Japan, [is] a very concrete problem which is a direct charge on the occupational authorities. They [SCAP] are bringing back repatriates every day. They are coming to Japan in large numbers."³² On this occasion, and at the 8th and 9th meetings, the ACJ made little progress in its discussions. Acheson repeatedly drew attention to statistics showing the numbers of Japanese repatriated by each member. The figure for the USSR was zero. Derevyanko did his best to deflect criticism over the Soviet failure to repatriate any Japanese, or to provide any detailed information as to their situation, by refusing to discuss the issue. General Chu Shih-ming, the Nationalist Chinese representative, mostly supported Acheson in criticizing the USSR. Meanwhile, the British

³¹ GHQ/SCAP Records (RG331) Allied Council for Japan, ACJ 1 R1-380, Verbatim Minutes of the 6th Meeting (12 June 1946), 31.

³² ACJ 1 R1-381, Verbatim Minutes 6th Meeting, 32.

Commonwealth representative, W Macmahon Ball, argued that SCAP was asking them to formulate policy, “without any specific or concrete information to work on”.³³

The British Commonwealth representative, in particular, proved to be an irritant to Acheson. Ball wanted to know numbers: exactly how many repatriates was the ACJ being asked to consider when offering policy advice to the Japanese government? As Ball succinctly put it: “there is a world of difference between a plan you might work out to absorb 3 million people and a plan ... to absorb three hundred thousand people”.³⁴

Although Derevyanko’s performance at the ACJ (as he tried to reconcile the policy of his superiors in the USSR to the situation in Japan) has been criticised, the ACJ minutes from 1946 show that the US representative Acheson was also less than sparkling in his contributions. In mid-1946, other than repeating the phrase “large numbers”, he avoided giving precise answers to questions about how repatriates were being reintegrated into

³³ ACJ 1 R1-451, Verbatim Minutes 8th Meeting, 28.

³⁴ ACJ 1 R1-448, Verbatim Minutes 8th Meeting, 25.

society in Japan.³⁵ Acheson's evasive responses indicate a degree of uncertainty about how repatriation was to be handled as a domestic issue at this stage of the Occupation.

The following year however, as Cold War political differences deepened and Japan's importance strengthened, repatriation was raised at the ACJ once again. By this time, Acheson's line was far clearer. At the 27th meeting, he presented a detailed report on the progress of repatriation to date. There was little of the ambiguity of his responses the previous summer. He presented the social unrest caused by the arrival of 1 million repatriates from Manchuria during 1946 as having been "impossible to anticipate".³⁶ Although the situation might have appeared serious enough to warrant discussion at the ACJ the previous year, as Acheson put it, "the Members may not have been fully

³⁵ ACJ 1 R1-448, Verbatim Minutes 8th Meeting, 25.

³⁶ GHQ/SCAP Records (RG331) Allied Council for Japan, ACJ 1 R1-828, Verbatim Minutes of the 27th Meeting (5 March 1947), 16.

aware ... the fact that from the outset of the program of repatriation there was necessarily put into operation a plan for the reception of repatriates”.³⁷ Acheson was upbeat about the situation for repatriates as they reintegrated into society; they would find work “through the local employment bureau or through [...] family”.³⁸ Those who could not find work or shelter would receive general relief, including housing in “former factories, barracks, [and] warehouses”.³⁹ However, Acheson stressed that, “It is estimated ... that by the end of 1947 only 15% of the repatriates will be so housed, and that the remainder will have secured shelter through their own resources or by ‘doubling up’ with relatives and friends”.⁴⁰ SCAP assumed the “typical” repatriate was, therefore, someone capable of finding work, probably through his family connections, and who

³⁷ ACJ 1 R1-828, Verbatim Minutes 27th Meeting, 16.

³⁸ ACJ 1 R1-820, Verbatim Minutes 27th Meeting, 8.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

had resources or relatives to rely on in his search for somewhere to live. Repatriates who did not fit this pattern would be a small minority. Acheson explained that SCAP was satisfied with the work of the Japanese government in handling repatriation and that, “the Supreme Commander has ... not been called upon to intervene directly to any large extent”.⁴¹

SCAP intervention

Acheson’s depiction of SCAP actions vis-à-vis the Japanese government’s handling of repatriation was not entirely accurate. Whilst the Occupation was careful to maintain in public that the domestic situation for repatriates was a matter for the Japanese government, in private SCAP officials made two important interventions. On both occasions, a proposal from the highest levels of the Japanese government, which would have significantly affected repatriates, was blocked by SCAP. Towards the end of 1946, a newspaper article was described in a SCAP report as having revealed that the Japanese government was making plans to provide loans to repatriates using an

⁴¹ ACJ 1 R1-817, Verbatim Minutes 27th Meeting, 5.

individual's claim to overseas property as collateral. According to the report, the newspaper article stated that such government action was necessary to "soften the anger of repatriates, now almost at igniting point, and to check the aggravating tendency of this political and social problem".⁴²

The first time SCAP intervened to stop the plan to provide loans to repatriates, a meeting was called and the relevant Japanese officials instructed to attend. The officials, from the Ministry of Finance and the Central Liaison Office, explained that repatriates were both in "dire need" and represented a "numerous and vocal section of the population".⁴³ The main justification for providing repatriates with loans, however, was that "these people are being treated less favourably than Japanese in Japan who will

⁴² GHQ/SCAP Records, box 2256, GS(B) 02597, CONCERNING THE PLAN OF MAKING LOANS ON OVERSEAS PROPERTY AS COLLATERAL (No date).

⁴³ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 2256, GS(B) 02597, Government Section MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD (11 December 1946), 2.

receive compensation for property at home lost or destroyed as a result of the war”.⁴⁴

The officials were told, directly, that their proposals were “unacceptable”.⁴⁵

Despite this early block to their plans, the Japanese government made another approach to SCAP in April 1947. This time, the proposal came right from the top of the Japanese government in a letter from Prime Minister Yoshida. It was addressed to General W Marquat, the head of SCAP’s Economic and Scientific Section (hereafter ‘ESS’). Yoshida’s letter stated, “repatriates, as compared with the home people including war-victims, are in practice at a distinct disadvantage”.⁴⁶ The cause of that disadvantage was “the fact that practically the only property owned by them is

⁴⁴ Government Section MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD, 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 2256, GS(B) 02596, [No title] COPY Dear General Marquat (2 April 1947).

composed of the assets now frozen overseas”.⁴⁷ As further justification, the intention of the plan was explained as “not to take any preferential action in favor of repatriates, but, in accordance with the principle of equity, to raise the level of their property rights at least close to that now enjoyed by home people.”⁴⁸

Yoshida’s letter, like the Finance Ministry’s plan, was quickly rejected by SCAP. An ESS internal memo gave four reasons for overruling both proposals. Firstly, compensation would be being made to one group of people at the expense of all taxpayers. Secondly, relief provided for any “indigent repatriates” had to be made equally available to all Japanese people.⁴⁹ Thirdly, the plan violated SCAP’s existing directives on Japanese assets held outside of Japan. In late 1946, these were still frozen and awaiting disposal

⁴⁷ [No title] COPY Dear General Marquat.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 2256, GS(B) 02596, MEMO FOR RECORD (14 April 1947).

later. Fourthly, the plan would mean compensating people “for assets acquired by exploitation of occupied countries”.⁵⁰ A reply sent by Marquat to Yoshida set out SCAP’s position in slightly more elegant language than the brusque internal memo. Marquat’s letter emphasised the second point from the memo: that no special benefits be given to a particular section of the population that were not available to all families in straightened circumstances. The fourth point relating to profiting from colonialism was not mentioned. Instead, Marquat closed his letter by arguing that the plan was also undesirable because of the inflationary effect it would have on the economy. Whilst he recognised the difficulties facing those repatriated from abroad, the Japanese government must work to improve the economic situation of all the people. For then “the cause of democracy in Japan will be materially advanced.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ MEMO FOR RECORD (14 April 1947).

⁵¹ GHQ/SCAP Reocrds, box 2256, GS(B) 02596, [No title] My dear Mr Prime Minister (16 April 1947).

This double intervention by SCAP was important to how the Japanese government dealt with repatriates. Officials from the Japanese government, faced with an increasingly well-organised and well-connected network of repatriate groups, had sought to implement a policy that would go some way to assuaging repatriate leaders' demands. Officials put forward the argument that repatriates were actually deserving of compensation to bring them up to the level of other war victims in Japan – a view that was advanced by many of the repatriate groups. SCAP rejected this assertion with a variety of reasons. Foremost amongst them was that the Occupation's task of building a "democratic Japan" was being successfully carried out and, therefore, anyone in financial need (such as an indigent repatriate) was already being provided for on the basis of Japan's new post-war system of relief. To accept that repatriates faced special circumstances would have been tantamount to admitting that the Occupation was failing to reform Japanese society. With Cold War considerations increasingly paramount, there could be no hint of such an admission.

This understandable concern on the part of SCAP had consequences for repatriates.

From mid-1946 onwards, US policy was to concentrate on the fate of Japanese who

remained in areas under the control of the USSR whilst maintaining that within Japan there were no serious problems to speak of. The Soviet aim was to highlight the domestic circumstances of repatriates to deflect attention from the questions about Japanese under its jurisdiction.

SCAP's insistence that the Japanese government faced only minor difficulties in reintegrating repatriates was a claim that many people disagreed with at the time and many years later. However, rather than the economic "realities" of reintegration, the more important impact of SCAP policy was on the perception of who a repatriate was. One aspect was the repatriate as colonist. This portrayal became less blatant in public discourse as SCAP and the Japanese government put their support behind the campaign by relatives for the return of Japanese still overseas. The more subtle side of the repatriate as conceived by SCAP was that he had a "home" to go to. This assumption was present in the earliest plans for what to do about overseas Japanese civilians. It was also a part of the American media's image of how SCAP was assisting Japan to become a "peaceful" country. Finally, it underpinned SCAP explanations for

why the domestic reintegration of repatriates could be expected to proceed smoothly when criticism was raised by the USSR at the ACJ.

The start of official repatriation from the Soviet zone

The conclusion of the Repatriation Agreement between SCAP and the Russian authorities in late-1946 meant that the first boatloads of repatriates from the Soviet zone started to arrive by the end of the same year. Repatriation from Karafuto, therefore got underway along with the return of the hundreds of thousands of former soldiers from the Kwantung Army who had been captured by the Soviet military during the invasion of Manchuria.

According to Lori Watt, the start of repatriation from the Soviet zone led to a shift in the cultural representation of repatriates in post-war society.⁵² The “million person repatriation” from Manchuria was accompanied by Japanese media images of women and children carrying just a few possessions back to Japan. These images were the

⁵² Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 126.

subject of anxiety and curiosity about “what” had happened to Japanese women in Manchuria during the chaotic months after the Soviets arrival. Rumours abounded in Japanese society about acts of rape and sexual violence by Soviet soldiers towards Japanese women. The sub-text was that many of these women may have been “contaminated” at the hands of the foreign enemy. In Watt’s account, this emphasis on the repatriate as a female figure began to change when men started to arrive from Siberia. This was most clearly shown by the media storm about “Red Repatriates” which took the headlines in the summer of 1949. Japanese men arriving at the repatriation centre in Maizuru were said to be singing The Internationale, ignoring their families and demanding to go to the Japan Communist Party (hereafter ‘JCP’) headquarters in Yoyogi, Tokyo. Suspicions about these repatriates were far less subtle with most media sources lamenting the “brainwashing” of the men into support for communism and the JCP.⁵³ The impact of all of these images of the repatriate was to increase the sense of stigma and discrimination that many repatriates felt in post-war society.

⁵³ Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, 127-131.

At the same time, as Yokote Shinji argues, the fate of Japanese in Siberia became *the* issue that defined the “Japanese public’s” view of the USSR, and by association the JCP. Relatives of many of the men detained by the USSR mounted campaigns and organised petition-drives across Japan to call for the return of their fathers, brothers and sons.

There is an important point that is, however, missing from Watt and Yokote’s interpretations: the change in US Occupation policy towards repatriates that began at around the same time as repatriation from the Soviet zone started. The previous section examined how SCAP’s interpretation of repatriates defined a set of characteristics that they were supposed to have in common – the most important of which were having personally profited from their involvement in colonialism and having a home in Japan to which they could return. From 1947 until the end of the Occupation, repatriation became an issue of the highest importance to SCAP. This shift provided opportunities and constraints for repatriates. For Karafuto repatriates, the situation was more complex still.

Popular representations of repatriates from the Soviet zone had little space for subtleties. Karafuto repatriates, therefore, had to come to terms with their association

with the Soviet Union of the labour camp and communist re-education as portrayed in the media of the late-1940s.

G-2 – constraint

The section of SCAP known as its “intelligence arm” was G-2 Section. Along with G-3, officers from this section were heavily involved in repatriation because they were responsible for the vital task of military demobilization. Since the end of the Occupation, G-2 has received a certain level of notoriety largely because of the reputation of the man who led the section – General Charles Willoughby. Reported to have been described by MacArthur as “my lovable fascist”, Willoughby was implacable in his determination to stop the “communist threat” in Japan.⁵⁴ The start of repatriation from the Soviet zone was perceived by Willoughby as one of the most serious threats.

During the first 18 months, the day-to-day process of demobilizing the army was carried-out by Japanese staff working for the First Demobilisation Bureau. This

⁵⁴ Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, 161-162.

organisation was formed out of the War Ministry. The demobilisation bureaucracy extended across Japan as Local Assistance Bureaux were started from the old prefectural regimental headquarters.⁵⁵ The work of these bureaux was to aid ex-soldiers to find jobs and adapt to civilian life. Officers from G-2 oversaw the running of this demobilisation machinery and provided regular reports updating progress to date.⁵⁶

Equally important to G-2 was intelligence gathering. Japanese soldiers returning from various theatres of war were regarded as a valuable source of intelligence. From the beginning of the Occupation, questions of interest for intelligence officers were wide-ranging and not restricted to gathering information about war crimes. Officers

⁵⁵ Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, 106-108.

⁵⁶ Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *Reports of General MacArthur: MacArthur in Japan: The Occupation: Military Phase Volume 1 Supplement* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1966 [1950]), 118.

attached to G-2 were a regular presence at the repatriation centres opened around Japan.⁵⁷ Often working in small teams of four to five, intelligence officers interrogated not only military men but also civilian repatriates. Japanese who had been on the Chinese mainland, particularly in the northeast, were questioned about what they had seen of Soviet troop movements and potential support for communism.⁵⁸ Others, who returned to Japan outside of the official channels for repatriation (such as people who

⁵⁷ Allen H Meyer, "Repatriation at the Grass Roots Level," in *The Occupation of Japan: The Grass Roots*, ed. Nimmo (Virginia: General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, 1992), 103-104.

⁵⁸ Department of Defense. Department of the Army. Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff G-2 Intelligence, *Interrogation of Japanese Repatriates from Hakodate*, October 1946, Record Group 319, "P" file, Entry NM382, box 2038, National Archives (NA), Washington, DC.

escaped by small boat from Sakhalin), were sometimes picked-up by the Japanese police and taken for questioning by G-2.⁵⁹

G-2, therefore, was an important participant in repatriation. Although its officers were primarily concerned with demobilisation, the requirements of intelligence gathering meant that the distinction between military and civilian status was often blurred. Anyone thought likely to have useful information was of interest to G-2. From November 1946 onwards, G-2 increased its workload by beginning, what it termed, “counter intelligence coverage of the field”.⁶⁰ As the number of ex-soldiers awaiting demobilisation grew smaller, G-2 authored the “Final Report on the Progress of Demobilization of the Japanese Armed Forces”.⁶¹ The author pointed to G-2 success in overseeing

⁵⁹ Meyer, “The Grass Roots Level,” 114.

⁶⁰ Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *Reports of General MacArthur*, 258.

⁶¹ MacArthur Memorial Archives Vol. 1 box 104 folder 6, MMA 3 R96, Final Progress of Demobilization of the Japanese Armed Forces (31 December 1946).

demobilization without any significant incidents. He also indicated that the work of G-2 was not yet complete because of the “possibilities for subversive influence of the repatriates”.⁶² One important implication of G-2’s 1946 report is that it shows anxiety about repatriates’ potential communist sympathies existed within SCAP almost two and a half years before stories about ‘Red Repatriates’ made newspaper headlines. As Willoughby and G-2’s influence within SCAP grew, so did the surveillance of repatriates. The extent of G-2’s surveillance operation was unknown to Japanese at the time of the Occupation. However, many people were aware that the Occupation officials sometimes showed a close interest in those who had returned from the former empire. Details necessarily remained murky, but the sight of someone receiving a visit at home from members of the Occupation was clear to many living in towns and villages throughout Japan. If the person being called upon were a new arrival to the neighbourhood then rumours would inevitably quickly spread.

⁶² Final Progress of Demobilization.

Officers for G-2 revealed much about the Occupation's system for the surveillance of repatriates in a document outlining the work of G-2's Counter-Intelligence Corps (hereafter 'CIC'). As part of 'counter-intelligence', a 'Special Projects Section' (hereafter 'SPS') was established within CIC. From November 1946 onwards, all involved were "working under a codename, its [the SPS] mission was to counter Soviet intelligence activities".⁶³ The SPS consisted of four 'desks': Communist Party, Foreign, Labour and Repatriation. By the end of 1947, all CIC units across Japan included officers working in SPS. It was the task of the Repatriation Desk to "handle screening and cataloguing of material connected with prisoners of war returned to Japan from Soviet areas".⁶⁴ From the perspective of G-2, after returnees passed through a repatriation centre, they scattered throughout Japan and this made having a central desk to oversee the responses of the regional CIC units indispensable.

⁶³ Records of the Adjutant General's Office World War II Operations Reports, box 691, WOR 2950, Chapter VIII CIC OPERATIONS UNDER G-2, 96.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Of crucial importance to CIC surveillance was the card that each repatriate was required to fill out whilst on board the repatriation ship en route to Japan. The card contained a repatriate's personal details as well as extensive information about time spent in Soviet controlled areas. The card served two purposes. Firstly, it was used to classify repatriates according to their potential as intelligence sources. Interrogations were conducted with most repatriates but those deemed to have more important intelligence were sent for questioning by more highly qualified officers. Secondly, all cards were sent to CIC regional headquarters and then further classified according to regional CIC unit. Therefore, each regional CIC unit had at its disposal a list of repatriates thought to be in the area. G-2 was aware that a repatriate might not go to the place he had written on his card. In order to crosscheck which repatriates went where, G-2 worked with the Japanese police and local authorities. The latter in particular had valuable information: each repatriate was given a ration allowance at the repatriation centre. When this token

was handed over to the local authorities to claim the allowance of rice and soy, the repatriate's whereabouts also became knowable to G-2.⁶⁵

G-2 surveillance meant, "the bulk of repatriates ... were given periodic checks".⁶⁶ For some, however, the procedure was that, "after [the] repatriate settled, he was called in for interrogation if it was believed that he might develop into an informant or could divulge additional information."⁶⁷ The kind of information sought by G-2 was "Communist indoctrination" and "subversive plans of repatriates".⁶⁸ Particularly important were 'leads' gained by questioning returnees about people who had yet to

⁶⁵ CIC OPERATIONS UNDER G-2, 101.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

return but were suspected of being 'communists'.⁶⁹ With such information at hand, G-2 officers were able to scrutinize repatriates more closely and to select "targets" for interrogation with more confidence.⁷⁰ Throughout 1947 and 1948, officers attached to G-2 investigated thousands of repatriates suspected as being either a security threat or an intelligence opportunity for the Occupation.⁷¹

Willoughby clarified his views on the potential threat from repatriates in a memo written in August 1947 to the Chief of Staff. Titled "Communist Indoctrination of Demobilized and Repatriated Personnel", the memo was sent at a time when SCAP was being

⁶⁹ Meyer, "The Grass Roots Level", 114.

⁷⁰ CIC OPERATIONS UNDER G-2, 103.

⁷¹ Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, *Reports of General MacArthur*, 260.

criticised for its use of ex-Imperial Army officers to carry out demobilization.⁷² The memo highlighted that “94% of all personnel remaining to be repatriated will come from communist controlled areas”.⁷³ According to Willoughby, this meant there was a “danger that the demobilized soldier may ‘go underground’ or fall under an undesirable political philosophy: Communism”.⁷⁴ From Willoughby’s perspective, there were “Soviet trained and inspired agitators” active in Japanese society.⁷⁵ His fear was that

⁷² GHQ/SCAP Records, box 383, GIII 00141, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff APO 500 SUBJECT: Communist Indoctrination of Demobilized and Repatriated Personnel (5 August 1947).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

“Repatriation from Soviet areas aggravates this situation”.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Willoughby argued, there was a risk that military trained men could be easily organised into a force that would far outnumber the soldiers available to the Occupation. Willoughby argued for continuing the work of local assistance bureaux and, in particular, the use of ex-Imperial Army officers. The existing system was desirable because it enabled the Occupation “to influence, in indirect and unpublicized manner, the thoughts, philosophy and actions of former members of Japanese forces and cause them to be directed into democratic channels”.⁷⁷

In a memo written between the end of 1948 and early 1949, G-2 urged the following:

Use of all available administrative publicity agencies and media down to village level to stress the duty of citizenry to participate in social, economic and psychological rehabilitation of repatriates; direct attentions of ‘assistance’ agencies to repatriates’

⁷⁶ SUBJECT: Communist Indoctrination.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

*problems; obliterate public prejudice against and indifference to ex-military personnel.*⁷⁸

Many repatriates, and in particular Siberian detainees, remarked at the time and in subsequent remembering that the sentiments of the memo's final clause found little expression in post-war society. G-2's pursuit of many repatriates as potential sympathizers of communism and as a source of intelligence contributed to that prejudice and sharply constrained the post-war lives of many who repatriated.

G-3 – Opportunity

Whilst G-2 was expanding its surveillance of repatriates from 1947 onwards, officers from G-3 Section worked to burnish the image of SCAP by closely associating the actions of the Occupation with the return of Japanese from overseas. In early 1947, G-3

⁷⁸ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 383, GIII 00141, SUBJECT: Jap Repatriates from Soviet

Territory: Communist Indoctrination.

officials completed work on "Report on Mass Repatriation in the Western Pacific".⁷⁹

This was supposed to be predominantly an account of how G-3 had successfully managed and speedily concluded the movement of repatriates from US, Republican Chinese and British controlled areas. However, as other sections, such as G-2, were also involved in repatriation, the authors circulated an early draft for comments. A G-3 internal memo reveals that G-2 raised several objections to the report, principally because officers from the latter section felt that their role in demobilization was not given enough credit.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 382, GIII 00102, Report on Mass Repatriation in the Western Pacific (1 April 1947), Foreword.

⁸⁰ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 384C, GIII 00304, G-3 Repatriation (4 June 1947), MEMORANDUM FOR: G3, SUBJECT: G-2 Comments on Report on Mass Repatriation, 2.

G-3 acknowledged the G-2 comments with the reminder that “it is highly desirable to prevent this entire subject from deteriorating into an inter-SCAP-staff-section controversy”.⁸¹ There was a broader point to the report that G-3 felt G-2 was missing. There was no need to provide detailed references to demobilisation statistics as requested by G-2 because “This is the story of repatriation, not a documented military report”.⁸² Furthermore, it was the author’s intention that, “The whole tenor of the text is to portray the accomplishment by SCAP of an important mission”.⁸³ The nature of that ‘important mission’ was revealed in the foreword prepared for MacArthur to sign.

In the transition from war to peace, the Japanese people, facing many complex problems were understandably worried over the fate of their loved ones overseas. Vast numbers were scattered over the former empire, many in remote areas, all without communication with the homeland. The prospect for early re-union seemed hopeless. Thousands of petitions

⁸¹ MEMORANDUM FOR: G3.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

from organisations and individuals bore elegant testimony of the depth of their feelings.

Possibly more than any other accomplishment, the prompt repatriation of their people has convinced the Japanese nation of the sincerity of the Allied Nations in their championship of the dignity of the individual and of his rights under democratic ideals.⁸⁴

The G3 report, written in early 1947, shows how its officials were coming to view repatriation as a narrative that could win over Japanese public opinion. The main role of repatriates, when spun by G-3 as a story about “re-union”, “the dignity of individuals” and “democratic ideals” was to appear grateful to SCAP for securing their return and to look pleased at being “home” in Japan.

SCAP’s stronger line on the public portrayal of repatriation was accompanied by tougher rhetoric in the ACJ and even closer monitoring of media reports. In October 1947, the subject of repatriation came up for discussion and led to a fierce argument

⁸⁴ Report on Mass Repatriation.

between the SCAP and the Soviet representatives.⁸⁵ William J Sebald, the SCAP representative, criticised the USSR for spreading false information about why delays were occurring in the repatriation of Japanese from Soviet controlled areas.⁸⁶ Sebald highlighted the Soviet side's failure to maintain repatriation at the agreed rate of 50,000 people per month. To speed up the rate of return, Sebald offered to provide enough shipping to enable a monthly figure of 360,000 to be met. All the Soviet government had to do was agree.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Yokote describes this meeting as having “a tremendous resonance among the Japanese and placed the problem of Soviet detention fully in the Cold War context.” “Soviet Repatriation Policy”, 47.

⁸⁶ Sebald had replaced Acheson as the Chairman of the ACJ after the latter died in a plane crash in August 1947.

⁸⁷ GHQ/SCAP Records (RG331) Allied Council for Japan, ACJ 1 R1-1150, Verbatim Minutes of the 44th Meeting (29 October 1947), 8.

The Soviet representative, Major General Kislenko, hit back by accusing SCAP of raising the issue of the rate of repatriation to deflect attention from the domestic situation facing repatriates.⁸⁸ He then quoted from three newspaper reports to show how repatriates were faring in Japan.⁸⁹ Kislenko then went on to lambast SCAP for censoring the Japanese press so that news coverage was predominantly hostile to the USSR.⁹⁰ Finally, he accused SCAP of being behind many of the meetings organised in several parts of Japan, which called for repatriates to be returned more quickly.⁹¹ Sebald rebutted each point in turn: repatriates would not be singled out for special

⁸⁸ ACJ 1 R1-1172, Verbatim Minutes 44th Meeting, 13.

⁸⁹ ACJ 1 R1-1173, Verbatim Minutes 44th Meeting, 14.

⁹⁰ ACJ 1 R1-1175, Verbatim Minutes 44th Meeting, 16.

⁹¹ Ibid.

provision; isolated examples from a few newspapers were not representative of the overall situation for repatriates; and the demonstrations were spontaneous.⁹²

SCAP also kept the media under increasingly close observation for any reporting about repatriation and repatriates that it deemed to be unfair. A confidential memo originating from G3 and dated December 1947 was written in response to two articles that had appeared in the JCP newspaper Akahata. The articles had alleged that repatriation was being delayed because of a lack of shipping which was SCAP's responsibility and not that of the USSR. The memo highlighted that "it is customary for CCD [Civil Censorship Detachment] to query G-3 Repat as to the veracity of articles on repat. This was not done in this case, leading to the supposition that the articles were not properly cleared at all."⁹³ Concern with stringently checking the Japanese press for inaccurate articles

⁹² ACJ 1 R1-1178, Verbatim Minutes 44th Meeting, 19.

⁹³ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 383, GIII 00132, MEMO for RECORD: (16 December 1947).

was accompanied by involvement in disseminating news that was favourable to the Occupation. Japan's north, a region where large numbers of repatriates were, was a particular cause for concern. In Tohoku and Hokkaido, a regional conference organised by SCAP's Public Health and Welfare Section provided Occupation officials with the troubling information that "Northern prefectures report that the Communist Party is stirring up trouble in connection with repatriates".⁹⁴ The proposed response was "a general news story on repatriation outlining accomplishments to date".⁹⁵ Soviet propaganda was based on "the so-called dire food and housing shortages in Japan" and "[it] has met with a certain amount of success, particularly in the critical northern prefectures".⁹⁶

⁹⁴ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 383, GIII 00133, MEMO for RECORD: (15 April 1948).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

The effect of SCAP's increasing concern not to appear at fault regarding repatriation was to make the Occupation officials more attuned to the circumstances for repatriates, not only in the major urban areas where many congregated in search of work and accommodation, but also in the regions and more rural parts of the country. The organisation of the Occupation, with its dual structure consisting of the General Headquarters based in Tokyo and Military Government Teams situated in every prefecture, was partly responsible for the Occupation's ability to keep tabs on the repatriates' situation.

Official repatriation from Karafuto

The significance of Occupation's dual structure was that it provided different "points of access" for repatriates (more specifically, for repatriate groups) to the political system. In Hokkaido, whilst the war was still in progress, Hokkaido-chō had been handed an important role by the Japanese government in re-settling evacuees from urban areas onto small plots of land. As shown in the previous chapter, Hokkaido-chō had also had a hand in planning for the evacuation of people from Karafuto in the event of fighting. As events transpired, these plans had to be put into action in August 1945. Evacuees were

largely dependent on Hokkaido-chō for relief although in the confusion of the immediate post-war period the response was often patchy and local officials were unsure about what was to be provided and to whom.

SCAP expectations regarding Hokkaido-chō and repatriates in Hokkaido had been expressed to officials by late-1946 as the start of repatriation from Soviet-controlled areas approached. The Japanese government was informed that officials should be made available to assist SCAP in “a survey of repatriates” at several ports including Hakodate.⁹⁷ An elaborate set of questions was designed for use in interrogations with Karafuto repatriates to establish whether or not they held ‘communist sympathies’.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Hokkaido-chō (Chōkan kanbō hisho ka), *Chōkan jimu hikitsuzukisho sono ichi*, 1947, Hokkaido Monjokan, A7-1/3633, A7-1 Hokkaido-chō Hon-chō.

⁹⁸ Yano Makio, "Karafuto kara no hikiage - okutta gawa, mukaeta gawa no kiroku kara," *Suzuya*, October 2002, 89-93.

At the same time as SCAP issued instructions about procedures at Hakodate, Hokkaido-chō prepared an internal report outlining the preparations that had been made to cope with the arrival of repatriates. This report showed that, for repatriates from Karafuto the bureaucratic category of “repatriate without connections” (無縁故者) was expected to be especially important.⁹⁹ This category was for those deemed to have no family relations in Japan. The report explained that of repatriates from Karafuto who wanted to settle in Hokkaido, “repatriates without connections are predicted to be between 20% to 30%”.¹⁰⁰ Temporary accommodation in converted buildings such as former military barracks and warehouses was being readied and the cooperation of city, town and village heads being negotiated.¹⁰¹ Without family to rely on, repatriates who were *muenkosha* would be dependent on Hokkaido-chō for relief.

⁹⁹ Hokkaido-chō Minseibu Shakaika (hen), *Gaichi hikiagesha engo gaijo*, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Depending on the financial backing offered by the central government, however, providing for a large number of repatriates without any other means of support could become a significant burden on Hokkaido-chō. The Hokkaido-chō official in-charge of relief for repatriates tried to dissuade people from developing a sense of entitlement to support from local officials and downplayed the idea that repatriates from Karafuto would be accorded any special treatment. In his contributions to *Hoppō Tsūshin* (the repatriate group newspaper referred to in Chapter 2), the former Karafuto-chō official Oka Takeo emphasised, “repatriates are just one section of Japanese nationals, repatriates in Hokkaido number 50,000 but this is no more than the population of a single war damaged city”.¹⁰² He also reminded repatriates that, “to rebuild their standard of living they should reflect deeply and rather than demanding their rights and relying on others for assistance, they should resolve to rebuild their lives using their own resourcefulness”.¹⁰³

¹⁰² "Shihyō - Shokana osamushi," *Hoppō Tsūshin*, 15th June 1947.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

The reluctance of this official to get embroiled in openly supporting the claims of Karafuto repatriates was, however, qualified by the need for him to explain the response of Hokkaido-chō to members of the Hokkaido Military Government Team (hereafter 'MGT') in mid-1947. The previous section has shown how, by this time, the issue of repatriation as a matter for Cold War politics had heightened SCAP officials' sensitivity to the subject.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Banno Akihito quotes a document from the Japanese Foreign Ministry archive that shows that in an interview in May 1947 between the newly-elected Governor of Hokkaido and the Commander of the Eighth Army, General Robert Eichelberger questioned Tanaka Toshifumi about the loyalties of repatriates to Japan. *Hokkaido Kaihatsukyoku to wa nani ka* (Sapporo: Jurōsha, 2003), 54.

In 1947, over 160,000 repatriates from Karafuto passed through the Hakodate repatriation centre.¹⁰⁵ Including returnees from other areas, over 14% of repatriates were classified as 'without connections'.¹⁰⁶ The MGT conducted inspections of repatriate accommodation in most of Hokkaido's cities. The MGT's monthly reports indicated that the quality of accommodation for repatriates varied according to the city. In Kushiro, the city authorities' provision of housing for repatriates was praised as "work that should attract attention" with "comfortable, large rooms and separate kitchens". In contrast, an MGT visit to the nearby Abashiri had found "the exact opposite conditions".

¹⁰⁵ Hakodate hikiage engo kyoku, *Hakodate hikiage engo kyoku shi* (Tokyo: Hakodate hikiage engo kyoku hen, 1950), 167-168.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 171-172.

The “military barrack type buildings lacked windows (...) the repatriates were living under the worst circumstances”.¹⁰⁷

In their role of local-level surveillance and reporting, officers from the MGT held discussions with Hokkaido-chō officials about the shortage of housing for repatriates. According to one MGT report, Japanese officials explained that they had been “slow” to implement a housing policy to deal with the increase in repatriates and that extra funds were being requested from the government in Tokyo. The Hokkaido-chō official who met with the MGT officers was named in the report as “Oka, the Chief of the Prefecture Aid Section”.¹⁰⁸ Another MGT report the following September identified a particular problem with how Hokkaido-chō had organised repatriate reintegration: “the assignment of repatriates to various areas in Hokkaido has been very loose and there has been no

¹⁰⁷ Nishikawa Hiroshi, *Nihon senryo to gunsei katsudō - Senryogun wa Hokkaido de nani o shita ka* (Tokyo: Gendai shiryō shuppan, 2007), 284-285.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 284.

follow-up by Hokkaido Prefectural Office officials after repatriates arrive in their new locations. This has left the problem largely up to local authorities in cities, towns and villages and they have a tendency to regard the repatriates as outsiders and to pay as little attention to them as possible. (...) two members of Hokkaido Prefectural Office Welfare Section have gone to Tokyo to petition the National Ministry for special consideration for Hokkaido.”¹⁰⁹ These problems resulted in the Japanese government announcing that some repatriates arriving at Hakodate would be settled in Tohoku as well as Hokkaido from mid-1947 onwards.

In 1948, over 100,000 more repatriates arrived from Karafuto at Hakodate (of the overall number of repatriates, almost 27% were classified as ‘without connections’).¹¹⁰ At the end of the same year, a meeting was held amongst SCAP officials from various sections to discuss increasing the budget allocated for building repatriates’ housing. Although the

¹⁰⁹ Nishikawa, *Nihon senryo to gunsei*, 287.

¹¹⁰ Hakodate hikiage engo kyoku, *Hakodate hikiage engo kyoku*, 167-168, 171-172.

meeting was called to discuss repatriate housing in general, the main issue was “reconsideration of notification of lack of (...) funds for the completion of housing for repatriates from Kurafuto (sic)”.¹¹¹ The report stated, “[As of 1948] There remain 14, 214 persons from Kurafuto who are living under extremely difficult conditions in housing originally provided only for use as temporary housing prior to permanent placement”.¹¹² The PHW officials’ reasoning as to why the budget should be increased included two main points. One was about the dangers of communism in northern Japan. Information from G2 “Intelligence Sources” suggested that by not improving the housing conditions for repatriates, SCAP risked confirming “the Communist propaganda line to the

¹¹¹ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 7692, ESS(E) 08415, Economic and Scientific Section, Finance Division, MEMORANDUM FOR FILE (3 January 1949), SUBJECT: Repatriates’ Housing.

¹¹² Ibid.

Japanese”, which included misinformation about “the unfavourable living conditions in Japan under the American Occupation.”¹¹³

The second argument was new for SCAP. The PHW report stated:

*Repatriates from Kurafuto (sic) differ from others, in that they are composed of entire families who, in many cases, have neither friends nor relatives in Japan. Most of them have never lived in Japan proper. The movement is considered as a re-location project rather than one of repatriation. The average family arrives with less than 300 yen and with little or no clothing or household goods. Re-location is limited to the six northern prefectures and Hokkaido where climate, living conditions and economic conditions are similar to those in Kurafuto.*¹¹⁴

The report therefore distinguished between repatriates as a whole and repatriates from Karafuto. The basis for that distinction was the category of ‘without connections’ which was reported to include a disproportionate number of Karafuto repatriates. The use of the wording ‘re-location project’ was important. It implied that the different

¹¹³ Repatriates’ Housing.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

circumstances of Karafuto repatriates justified allocating monies that would otherwise not be made available to 'normal' repatriates. Being a relocation rather than a repatriation meant having neither a family nor experience of living in mainland Japan. For the PHW officials who wrote the report, circumstances in Hokkaido challenged previous SCAP assumptions about repatriates having homes to go to and company jobs to return to after repatriating to Japan. The description of the financial situation for the 'average family' from Karafuto also suggested that PHW officials questioned the usefulness of regarding Karafuto repatriates as part of a group that needed to be publically rebuked for gaining personal riches at the expense of the colonised. The tone of the report implied that Karafuto repatriates be regarded less as a group being sent back to their own country and more as one moving to a new place where, with suitable financial support, they would establish homes and businesses.

At the time of the request for the extra funds the Japanese economy was stagnant and inflation was a serious problem. The Economic and Scientific Section turned the proposal down but a memo noted that "the repatriates housing program was

important".¹¹⁵ The significance of the PHW's proposal was that it showed officials from SCAP following a similar line of reasoning to the leaders of repatriate groups about the 'unique' background of repatriates from Karafuto. The available documentation does not provide a definite answer to the question of how the PHW officials became advocates for greater support for Karafuto repatriates. The Section's involvement with Japanese *minseiin* would have probably alerted officers to more local problems that were missed by those based in Tokyo. The actions of Japanese officials from Hokkaido-chō would also have probably been interpreted as relevant to a better understanding of circumstances in Hokkaido. That officials such as the section chief of the Social Welfare Section explained the repatriate problem as being caused by the specific circumstances of Karafuto repatriates probably contributed to SCAP officials gaining a more nuanced impression of the situation in Hokkaido.

¹¹⁵ Repatriates' Housing.

The media in Hokkaido and Karafuto repatriates

The majority of repatriates from Karafuto returned under the official repatriation during 1947 and 1948. In 1949, the last few thousands of repatriates from Karafuto arrived at Hakodate. Since the previous year, the Japanese media had given greater coverage to the return of repatriates who had been detained in Siberia. Therefore, although the numbers arriving from Karafuto were smaller than during the previous two years, there was still a high level of media interest.

By 1949, the SCAP officials working at the Hakodate Repatriation Reception Centre were more aware of the importance of how repatriates were received in local society and not just the scale of the central government's initial response. In a report for June 1949, a SCAP official wrote "Although the central government is responsible for informational activities until the repatriates reach their final destination, from then on they become a local problem. Therefore the prefectural government, with the help of various MG sections, has made plans to supplement the central government's

efforts...”¹¹⁶ An insight into what plans were made can be gleaned from a report entitled “The Repatriation Program in Hokkaido” which was authored by an officer for the Hokkaido Civil Affairs District in July 1949.¹¹⁷ The report showed that in mid-1949 joint efforts were made by Hokkaido-chō and Occupation officials to ensure that the local press produced coverage that was sympathetic towards repatriates: “To stimulate public interest in the homecoming the newspapers were encouraged to publish news stories, editorials, interviews, articles and photographs”.¹¹⁸ Also involved were repatriate groups: “A repatriates’ assistance group issued a special newspaper containing the

¹¹⁶ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 2529, CAS(D) 02595, The Repatriation Program in Hokkaido (28 July 1949), 2

¹¹⁷ Civil Affairs District replaced the Military Government Team structure in late-1948 after SCAP re-organised the local structure of the Occupation.

Ibid, 1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 2.

Governor's welcome, a helpful guide to the home-comer, lists of employment, welfare, vocational guidance, and other centers of assistance in Hokkaido, and many helpful hints for the strangers".¹¹⁹ The special newspaper was produced by the *Dōhō engo kai Hokkaido Shibu* (同胞援護会北海道支部) which was a nationally-organised group backed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare.¹²⁰ The group's special newsletter – called "New Hope" (希望あらたなに) – listed the various repatriate groups in Hokkaido that existed to assist repatriates. Included was the Rengōkai and the name of its leader who, since mid-1948, had been Sugawara Michitarō. The officer's report had an upbeat conclusion, noting that "...this district has announced extensive plans for new public works and work relief projects" and "As a result of the careful planning done by the prefectural authorities and the detailed follow-up work being accomplished by local

¹¹⁹ Repatriation Program in Hokkaido, 2.

¹²⁰ A copy of the newsletter was appended to the report.

agencies, there is a general feeling that the repatriation problem in Hokkaido will continue to be a smooth and uneventful procedure".¹²¹

Shortly after this report was written, Hokkaido's main newspaper – the Hokkaido Shimbun – published two articles about Sugawara Michitarō. These articles were some of the first coverage in the mainstream press in Hokkaido written from the perspective of “a repatriate” (rather than being a factual report of repatriation). In one article, Sugawara described his impressions of what life was like for Japanese living under Soviet rule in southern Sakhalin.¹²² In the second he introduced his new book about his experiences as a prisoner in the Soviet Union.¹²³ The publicity given to Sugawara as a repatriate indicated the increasing acceptance amongst regional officials and regional SCAP officers of the legitimacy of the Rengōkai to represent Karafuto repatriates.

¹²¹ Repatriation Program in Hokkaido, 3.

¹²² "Tomo hoppō yori kaeru," *Hokkaido Shimbun (Sapporo ban)*, 26th June 1949.

¹²³ "'Akai rōkoku' hajime no shakuhōsha " *Hokkaido Shimbun*, 3rd July 1949.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that between late-1945 and the end of official repatriation in mid-1949, the idea of the Karafuto repatriate held by repatriate groups became more widely accepted amongst regional officials and some SCAP officers. This sense of who a Karafuto repatriate was enabled regional officials to explain the apparent discrepancy between SCAP's expectations for the smooth reintegration of repatriates and what officers 'on the ground' and in discussions with local Japanese officials learnt about the circumstances of repatriates in Hokkaido. Crucial to that acceptance was the bureaucratic category of 'repatriate without connections'. This enabled regional officials to neatly define the problem for SCAP officers and propose suitable solutions. In turn, the existence of this separate category assisted repatriate groups in promoting their ideas about the 'special' characteristics of Karafuto repatriates and gaining a more sympathetic hearing from regional officials.

The implications of this study of repatriates in Hokkaido complicate the existing understanding of how the figure of the repatriate was co-produced. Previous research has emphasised the key roles played by the Japanese government and repatriates.

However, assumptions held by SCAP about repatriates were an important reason why the idea of the Karafuto repatriate gained validity in post-war Hokkaido. In SCAP's view, being a repatriate meant returning to Japan and to one's original home. There were sufficient numbers of Karafuto repatriates for whom this was not possible to enable a different conception of what it meant to be a repatriate emerge. This posited that Karafuto repatriates were relocating rather than repatriating to Japan. The fundamental difference between these two terms was that a 'home' would have to be created in the new destination.

Pinpointing the specific origins of this relocation discourse and its use to construct a figure of the Karafuto repatriate is difficult but I have suggested that repatriate groups (in Chapter 2) and regional officials played an important role. Hokkaido-chō officials, with many years of pre-war and wartime experience, were aware of the previous association between Hokkaido and Karafuto as having been part of one northern region. This local knowledge meant that they were also aware of the particular circumstances that were likely to exist for many repatriates from Karafuto. However, the public representation of Karafuto repatriates was fleshed out primarily by repatriate groups. Statistics collected

by Hokkaido-chō (and analysed in detail in the following chapter) showed that large numbers of repatriates in Hokkaido lived in urban areas and worked in mining and day labouring. Despite this, the public representation of Karafuto repatriates emphasised the role of communal villages and agricultural settlement. With this public representation came a further layer of discourse which portrayed Karafuto repatriates as focused on the 'loss of Karafuto' and 'rebuilding a second home in Hokkaido'.

Examining who was behind this public representation is especially important for a more complex understanding of the co-production of the figure of the repatriate. Previous research has only searched as far as the category of repatriate. The implication is that post-war society was characterised by a divide between repatriates and officials.

However, a detailed analysis of repatriates shows the presence of a group that existed in-between repatriates and officials. Many in this middle group had been part of the local elite in Karafuto. In the post-war they acted as a channel between repatriates and officials through which the end of empire was negotiated.

The role of this middle group was crucial to forming the term 'Karafuto repatriate'. Ideas from the pre-war and wartime period were brought from Karafuto to be used by Karafuto

repatriates in post-war Hokkaido. Far from something to be forgotten or hidden, empire in the form of 'Karafuto' was something to be held on to in the post-war by these repatriates. Through this middle group's connections with officials in Hokkaido-chō the post-war state also played a role in managing the memory of Karafuto. However, the view of Karafuto put forward by elites was controversial as the next chapter will show.

Chapter 4 – Interpretations of Karafuto

The previous chapter showed how the idea of the “Karafuto repatriate” was formed by repatriate groups and was accepted by local policy-makers in Hokkaido-chō. Men such as Sugawara Michitarō, in his role as the head of the Rengōkai became the public face of repatriates in Hokkaido. However, his pre-war and wartime experience meant he was anything but the “typical” repatriate who had returned to Japan with “only the clothes on his back”. As a top-ranking official, Sugawara had been arrested by the Soviet authorities on Sakhalin and incarcerated on the mainland. This experience was shared by other members of the wartime elite on Karafuto. However, it was far from representative of what most people who remained in Sakhalin under Soviet rule went through. This chapter will closely examine the writing of a man who spent almost two years living in Sakhalin when, in the words of one historian, “Japan became Russia”.¹ Ōhashi Kazuyoshi was a journalist who worked for the Karafuto Shimbun during the war. After August 1945 he found himself writing for the Soviet authorities’

¹ Sevela, “Respect Such an Enemy,” 174.

Japanese-language newspaper called *Shinseimei* ('New Life'). In his job a reporter he was able to travel around Sakhalin and this enabled him to gain insights into how society was being transformed as Karafuto was turned into Sakhalin. After he was repatriated in May 1947 he once more got a job as a reporter for the Hokkai Taimusu newspaper for which he wrote a serialized account of his time in Sakhalin.²

Ōhashi's writing is important because it came from the pen of a man who was not a member of the colonial elite such as Sugawara. It was published at a time when recollections about life during the Siberian internment were beginning to appear. There were also accounts by civilians who had been in Manchuria which had gained widespread attention. The Siberian internment and repatriation from Manchuria were events where the USSR featured prominently. Life in Sakhalin was also a narrative that could not be told without explaining what it meant to live under Soviet rule. How Ōhashi chose to portray his two years in Sakhalin, therefore, provides an insight into the difficulties of positioning Karafuto repatriates in the discourses of the day.

² These serialized articles were later published in their entirety as a book.

Repatriates in Hokkaido

The Hokkai Taimusu publication of Ōhashi's account was the first of many features that it ran about Karafuto repatriates in the late-1950s and 1960s. Unlike its rival, the Hokkaido Shimbun, the editors of the Hokkai Taimusu seemed to sense that there was a market for news about Karafuto and the Japanese who had lived there prior to 1945. If the newspaper was looking to tap into a source of potential readers, the large number of Karafuto repatriates living in Hokkaido was one such possibility.

The 1950 National Census, which was the first to be conducted after group repatriation had ended, included statistics on repatriates. The data from the census showed that there were 262,000 repatriates in Hokkaido classified as “permanent residents”.³

There were also estimated to be another 100,000 repatriates who were “non-permanent” residents. In terms of the settlement of repatriates across the different prefectures and metropolitan areas, Hokkaido was the number one destination in Japan. Other statistics collected in the 1950 *Hokkaido Nenkan* put the total number of repatriates in Hokkaido

³ Sōrifutōkeikyokuhen, *Kokusei chōsa hōkoku (8)* (Tokyo: Sōrifutōkeikyoku, 1955), 138.

(as of April 1949) at the higher figure of 461,000 (12% of Hokkaido's overall population).⁴ The same publication also provided a breakdown of where on Hokkaido repatriates had settled.

Table 1: Settlement of repatriates in cities (支部引揚者) in Hokkaido

City	% of repatriates settled in cities
Sapporo	26
Otaru	13
Hakodate	13
Asahikawa	10

Source:⁵

Table 1 shows that Sapporo had the largest number of repatriates resident out of all of the cities of Hokkaido.

⁴ Hokkaido Shinbunsha, *Hokkaido Nenkan (1951 nenpan)* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shimbunsha, 1950), 112, 124.

⁵ Ibid., 124.

Table 2: Settlement of repatriates in sub-districts (支庁) in Hokkaido

Sub-district	% of repatriates settled in sub-districts
Sorachi	24
Kamikawa	11
Abashiri	10
Ishikawa	9

Source: ⁶

Table 2 indicates that the coal mining sub-district of Sorachi had the largest number of repatriates. Of the overall number of repatriates, approximately one-third settled in a “city” and two-thirds were in “sub-districts”.

In 1950, Hokkaido-chō collected statistics for employment before and after repatriation.

⁶ Hokkaido Shinbunsha, *Hokkaido Nenkan (1951 nenpan)*, 124.

Table 3: Employment of repatriates in Hokkaido before and after repatriation

	Before repatriation		After repatriation		Still to find work		
	No. employed	%	No. employed	%	No. looking for work	%	Not looking for work
Farming	28,660	19.5	23,661	17.6	1517	15.2	
Fishing/fish production	13,256	9	10,995	8.2	556	5.6	
Mining	16,776	11.4	16,779	12.5	638	6.4	
Construction	10,763	7.3	10,148	7.5	812	8.1	
Commerce	12,782	8.7	12,844	9.6	1394	14	
Forestry	6034	4.1	4457	3.3	355	3.6	
Transportation	9131	6.2	6283	4.7	521	5.2	
Public servant	17,558	12	13,587	10.1	1419	14.2	
Other	31,643	21.6	35,695	26.5	2770	27.7	
Total	146,603	100	134,449	100	9982	100	3541
Overall total			147,972				

Source: ⁷

⁷ Takeno, "Karafuto hikiage to Hokkaido," 9.

Table 3 shows that farming and mining were the most important sources of post-war employment for repatriates in Hokkaido by 1950.

The statistics collected in the National Census survey, the Hokkaido Nenkan and by Hokkaido-chō referred only to repatriates as a whole and did not include information on which part of the former empire a person had come from. However, the number of repatriates from Karafuto who were settled in Hokkaido by the end of 1949 is put at 248,867 out of a total of 371,479 (67%) repatriates by the important source *Karafuto Shūsenshi*.⁸

After 1950, statistics for repatriates no longer appeared in the National Census. Neither were they included in the Hokkaido Nenkan. With the end of the Occupation in 1952 and the Japanese economy's shift into the phase that became known as the "period of high growth", bureaucracies became less concerned with separating repatriates from non-repatriates. In Hokkaido, where from 1950 onwards, large-scale public works

⁸ Karafuto shūsenshi kankōkai, *Karafuto shūsenshi* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, 1973), 596.

projects became increasingly important as part of the work of the Hokkaido Development Agency, repatriates seemingly merged in to local society. During the early to mid-1950s, there was minimal coverage in the regional press specifically about repatriates.

Cultural production about repatriates in the 1950s

The 1950s was a decade when many people tried to interpret and reflect on the war years. Such reflection not only took the form of strong anti-war sentiments but also covered feelings of nostalgia for the sense of “community action” of the wartime and pride in how Japanese soldiers had fought. With the ending of the Occupation in 1952 and the lifting of censorship restrictions, there was greater freedom in newspapers and magazines, books and on film to discuss the war and the difficult years that had followed. On film, which was one of the most common sources of entertainment at a time when television was just beginning to become popular, some of the most important movies were about military men. Some films depicted the suffering caused by war (*Kike Wadatsumi no Koe* and *Biruma no tategoto*) but there were others that portrayed

Japanese soldiers as heroic figures (*Taiheiyō no Washi*).⁹ In addition to film, by the early-1950s, several books were published by authors who had been in Manchuria when the war ended. Several of these would go on to achieve seminal status in the canon of post-war literature.

The image of the women and child surviving a horrific ordeal as they tried to escape the Soviet military and survive the long journey back to Japan became known in post-war society chiefly through the work of Fujiwara Tei in “The Shooting Stars are Alive” (*Nagareru hoshi wa ikiteiru*). Published in 1949, Fujiwara’s account of her return from Manchuria became one of the bestsellers of the post-war period and, according to the historian Andrew Barshay, her work can be summed up as “this is what it means to be a repatriate and a mother”.¹⁰

⁹ Sandra Wilson, “Film and Soldier: Japanese War Movies in the 1950s,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 3 (2013): 538-540.

¹⁰ Barshay, *The Gods Left First*, 169.

As suggested in the previous chapter, the most vivid image of men who were in Manchuria became the “Red Repatriate” returning from internment in Siberia. In 1950, one of the most important pieces of writing by a former Japanese soldier about life in the gulag was published. “In the Shadow of the Northern Lights” (*Kyokkō no kage ni*) was written by Takasugi Ichirō and within a year had already been reprinted 23 times.¹¹ Inevitably, amidst the tensions of the Cold War and the divisions in domestic politics in Japan, Takasugi’s memoir received a mixed reaction. Critics from the political left accused the author of maligning Stalin. Elsewhere, American and German publishing houses withdrew support because the book was felt to be too supportive of the USSR. This early controversy did not stop the book from becoming, in the words of one historian, “the gold standard of internment accounts”.¹²

¹¹ Barshay, *The Gods Left First*, 97.

¹² *Ibid.*, 81.

Both books centred on the fate of Japanese who were in Manchuria as the empire collapsed. The authors engaged with the aftermath of the empire's collapse and how Japanese society as they had known it broke apart. What they experienced in the months and years that followed before they were repatriated meant that post-war society, with its emphasis on Japanese ethnic solidarity, was an awkward place to live. The international situation, where Japan was included in another "unequal treaty" with the US and supposed to be a bastion of anti-communism directed at the USSR, also failed to jibe with the impressions Takasugi had made during his time in the gulag.

By contrast, relatively little had appeared on the subject of repatriation from Karafuto by the mid-1950s. Sugawara Michitarō had written about his incarceration in Siberia along with some of the other most senior figures of the Karafuto colonial government. His book *Akai Rokoku* (1949) has been described as an example of a "Japanese nationalist response to the USSR".¹³ Another book released by the Kawazaki Shoten publishing house was Kimura Keiichi's *Mosukuwa-Nihon-Habarofusuku* (1949) which was an

¹³ Narita, "'Hikiage' to 'Yokuryū'," 194.

account of his time as an announcer for the Soviet radio broadcasts to Sakhalin and Japan.¹⁴ In 1952, a former Karafuto-chō official, Izumi Tomosaburō, had a book published about his time working for the Soviet authorities.¹⁵ However, this book came from a minor publishing house and had a relatively small readership.

Sugawara Michitarō's book is undoubtedly the most well-known of the early books published about Karafuto at the end of the war. In part, this is because he was a well-known figure who headed the Rengōkai in Hokkaido. He was also involved in the first years of Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (hereafter "Kabaren") which was founded in late-1948. Based in Tokyo, Kabaren became the main organisation representing Karafuto repatriates. However, in the late-1940s and early-1950s it was a group based in the capital which maintained loose connections to Hokkaido.

¹⁴ Kimura Keiichi, *Mosukuwa Nihon Habarofusuku* (Sapporo: Kawasaki Shoten, 1949).

¹⁵ Izumi Tomosaburō, *Soren Minami Karafuto: Soren kanri ni natta Nihonjin no kiroku* (Tokyo: Myōgi, 1952).

Of the research relevant to repatriates and Karafuto, the perspective of Kabaren has usually been accepted as representative. Mariya Sevela, in her valuable account of the reasons why people's experiences in Karafuto have been missing from Japanese memories of the war vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, based her comments partly on interviews with and surveys of Kabaren members in the 1990s. She argued that the memories of Japanese who were in Karafuto, which were often positive about life alongside the Russian population, could find little room for expression in a society dominated by negative images of a 'Soviet enemy'.¹⁶ John Stephan, perhaps the most well-known writer in the English language on Sakhalin, wrote in the early 1970s that repatriates were mainly private individuals and members of organizations that were largely interested in making irredentist demands for the 'return' of Karafuto to Japanese control. As he pithily wrote, "former residents naturally phrase their arguments like men who have been driven from their homes."¹⁷ This perspective was continued almost 30

¹⁶ Sevela, "Respect Such an Enemy".

¹⁷ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 173.

years later in the other major English-language study of Karafuto by Tessa Morris-Suzuki. She maintained that many Karafuto repatriates' views were closely entwined with the aims of the organisation set-up to represent them Kabaren. According to Morris-Suzuki, this organization fostered a sense of "colonial nostalgia" primarily because of its involvement in Cold War politics.¹⁸ Sevela's findings and the work of Stephan and Morris-Suzuki all approached the subject of Karafuto from the perspective of Kabaren.

Researchers writing in Japanese have also followed a similar line of investigation into the post-imperial history of Karafuto repatriates by focusing on Kabaren. Nakayama Taishō described how the organisation formed a "post-war Karafuto identity" that, in part, tapped into wider narratives in post-war society about Japanese victimhood.¹⁹ This was

¹⁸ Morris-Suzuki, "Northern Lights," 667.

¹⁹ Nakayama Taishō, "Karafuto imin shakai no kaitai to henyō - sengo Saharin o meguru idō to undō kara," *Imin kenkyū nenpō* 18, (March 2012): 112.

certainly an important part of memory-making about Karafuto and the figure of the repatriate (which will be further examined in the following chapter). However, we do not know the process by which this occurred. One crucial step was the emergence of an 'official history' researched and drafted largely by Kabaren officials in the mid to late 1960s. Known as Karafuto Shūsenshi ('Karafuto and the end of the War'; hereafter 'Shūsenshi') this became the 'go-to' text, not only for historians, but also for repatriates researching the history of Karafuto. Such activity was often manifested in the writing of 'self-histories' (*jibunshi*) of which hundreds were produced from the 1980s onwards. Tamura Masato went as far as dismissing these books and pamphlets as "basically all the same" meaning a formulaic narrative of Soviet takeover, Japanese expulsion and longing in later life for a lost homeland.²⁰ Tamura's criticism may be a touch strong; however, there can be less doubt about the importance many writers have placed on

²⁰ Masato Tamura, "Kan Okhotsk kaiiki no kyōkai hendō to soko de kurashitekita hitobito," *Gendai shisō* 40, (2012): 229.

the Kabaren-researched Shūsenshi as a reference to add historical credibility to a jibunshi-narrative.

The current emphasis on work by Sugawara and the focus on Kabaren, therefore, make finding an alternative viewpoint on Karafuto at the end of the war important. Ōhashi's articles which were published in 1955 represent one of the earliest extended pieces of writing on the subject. Furthermore, at a time when television was just beginning to become popular, the articles appeared in the Hokkai Taimusu which was one of the most widely read newspapers in Hokkaido.

Ōhashi's account in the context of post-war Japan

Ōhashi's writing should be read not only as one man's account of "what happened" in Karafuto but also within the relevant political contexts. At the time Ōhashi wrote, one such context was the emergence of a narrative about the end of the empire in Manchuria and the fate of Japanese in its aftermath. A second was memories of the war in Hokkaido. A third, which provided impetus for widespread reflection on the last weeks

of fighting in August 1945 was the start of negotiations over a peace treaty between Japan and the USSR.

Manchuria

By the end of the 1950s, two literary works about repatriation from Manchuria were on the way to becoming *the* accounts of the repatriate experience. One, as already discussed, was Fujiwara Tei's book published in 1949. The second was the novel *Ningen no jōken* (The Human Condition) by Gomikawa Junpei. This was also made into a three part film which is widely regarded as a classic of post-war Japanese cinema. In addition to these two important works were accounts by men who had been taken to Siberia. Although by the end of the 1950s there were still only a handful of such writings, a book such as that by Takasugi Ichirō contained writing that was powerful enough to ensure that the experiences described became well-known in post-war society.

According to Barshay, the trope of much of the writing about repatriation from Manchuria and internment in Siberia is "return". He argues that repatriates had no other way to make sense of the world after the imperial project in Manchuria had come to an

end and, with it, the “imagined future of [...] life in a new land”.²¹ The Soviet invasion obliterated the colonial society the Japanese had been building in Manchuria. This violent denouement ultimately led to the literature of remembrance which, today, is made-up of works of literature, film, art as well as thousands of self-published memoirs and samizdat manuscripts.

Manchuria was supposed to be a “Total Empire” where a million Japanese could be settled. State planning would harness the natural resources and co-operation amongst the “Five Races” would create a new kind of society that was, in theory, totally different from the colonial structures imposed for so long on Asians by the Western Powers.

People on Karafuto were caught-up in the same Soviet military operation which smashed Japanese rule in Northeast Asia. In comparison to the colonial society being built in Manchuria, Karafuto could appear insignificant. It could be quickly forgotten in post-war society or it could be imagined as another area where the Soviet Union under

²¹ Barshay, *The Gods Left First*, 184.

Stalin had acted swiftly to take advantage of Japan's weakened position at the end of the war.

This was the context created by the Manchuria narrative within which Ōhashi had to find his voice. One problem he faced was that how the details of the Soviet invasion unfolded on Karafuto were very different from Manchuria. In Manchuria, most of the top military and civilian officials fled shortly before, or as the Soviet forces attacked. On Karafuto, the Governor had remained as had senior officials such as Sugawara. Such men, after being used by the Soviets to help re-start the local economy, were arrested and sent to prisons on the mainland. The view that Japanese on Karafuto had been "abandoned" by senior officials was not one that could be advanced in the same way as that of the "thrown away" people (棄民) was done for Manchuria.

During the advance of the Red Army into Karafuto civilians were caught in the fighting. Once a ceasefire was reached however, the Soviet authorities differing intentions for the two areas came into operation. Karafuto was to be turned into Sakhalin and to become a permanent part of the USSR. Manchuria was to be occupied for a few months (until March 1946) before being handed over to Republican China. Ōhashi's experience

under Soviet rule where the authorities wanted to re-start economic production and needed the Japanese to help them do so was in direct contrast to Manchuria where Japanese were unwelcome and expected to leave. His time in Sakhalin was also unlike that of the majority of Japanese men captured and taken to work in camps throughout the USSR. In the gulag, “re-education” as part of the “democratic movement” became an important part of camp life. There was no similar re-education work attempted for Japanese in Sakhalin.

Instead, Ōhashi was witness to a relatively slow and gradual change. The Japanese leaders remained in place and could be seen co-operating with the Soviet authorities. Getting the Sakhalin’s economy moving again was not part of some grand Stalinist project to “exact a special price from Japan for its history of aggression” in the way that the detention and re-education of military men in Siberia was. The economic imperatives were more local and were held by local Soviet officials who had an interest in providing for the arriving Russian settlers as well as boosting their own reputations for being competent administrators.

Hokkaido

If Ōhashi had to write within the context established by narratives of Manchurian repatriation, he also had to contend with the circumstances of post-war Hokkaido. Apart from the last months of the war, there had been no air raids conducted on urban areas on Hokkaido. In rural areas people did not experience the bombing which caused such devastation to other parts of Japan. There was a gap, therefore, between the wartime experiences of many people who had spent the duration of the war on Hokkaido and other Japanese. Such a contrast would have been particularly obvious with people who had been living in urban areas of Honshu where 40% of the infrastructure of the 66 largest cities was completely destroyed.²² However, it would also have applied to people who had been in Karafuto and who had settled in Hokkaido in the post-war. Ōhashi was one such person who had witnessed the evacuation and Soviet invasion of Karafuto. He had then followed his time in Sakhalin and the exposure it had given him to a socialist society with the experience of Occupied Japan. On arrival at the Hakodate

²² Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 45.

Repatriation Centre he had his first encounter with American soldiers and, over the next few years, he was able to compare life under the Soviets with that under the Americans in Hokkaido.

Japanese-Soviet negotiations in the mid-1950s and Karafuto

In 1955, negotiations for the normalization of relations between Japan and the USSR began. Hatoyama Ichirō, replacing Yoshida Shigeru as Prime Minister in December of the previous year, came to office with strong public backing for his proposal to improve relations with other countries. Negotiations lasted from June 1955 until October 1956. Ultimately, no peace treaty was concluded but a Joint Declaration was issued which officially ended the state of war and re-established diplomatic relations between Japan and the USSR. Of relevance here is that in 1955 Japanese diplomats included 'Karafuto' as territory with an undecided status and, therefore, as part of their bargaining position. This has subsequently been dismissed as little more than a tactic to strengthen the

Japanese negotiating position.²³ The Soviet negotiators ignored any attempts to raise the subject.

Discussion of Karafuto was closed down in diplomatic manoeuvrings but opened up within domestic politics in Japan. Kabaren held a meeting in Tokyo in March 1955 from which the Minami Karafuto Henkan Kisei Dōmei ('Alliance for the realization of the return of Southern Karafuto') was launched. The meeting was attended by several prominent politicians including Machimura Kingo who later become the Governor of Hokkaido. As well as issuing a statement calling for the return of Karafuto to Japanese control, a petition was started and 200,000 signatures were collected from across Japan.²⁴ Separate from Kabaren, within regional politics in Hokkaido the negotiations were observed with great interest. In addition to questions about territory, reaching

²³ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 168.

²⁴ Karafuto shūsenshi kankō kai, *Karafuto shūsenshi*, 638-640.

agreement on access to fishing grounds was an issue of consequence to local businesses and communities alike.

Although the mid-1950s marked a moment when the USSR was the focus of attention for much of the domestic media, public interest in Japan's northern neighbour was nothing new. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa has argued for the importance of the collective memory of the Soviet-Japanese War in the summer of 1945 in shaping perceptions.²⁵ He suggests that for many Japanese, the image of the USSR was overwhelmingly a negative one based on numerous grievances from the war and early post-war years. Repatriates formed a key part of such images. However, the hold of such collective memories on society is a problem that must be treated with caution, particularly in Hokkaido. One young Fulbright scholar who went on to become a highly regarded expert on Japanese-Russian relations drew on his own experience of everyday life in Hokkaido to question assumptions about overwhelming hostility public towards the

²⁵ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, "Japanese Perception of the Soviet Union and Russia," in *Japan and Russia*, ed. Rozman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

USSR. In 1954 George Lensen wrote, “There is relatively little admiration or support of Communism in Japan, but there is much sympathy for the Russian people” and, quoting as anecdotal evidence from a recent newspaper report, “the Russian skaters who ran away with the [...] 1954 world speed skating championship were [...] extremely popular in Sapporo”.²⁶

Ōhashi Kazuyoshi and the transition of Karafuto into Sakhalin

In 1947 Ōhashi Kazuyoshi became one more of the 6.9 million Japanese who repatriated after the fall of the empire. Unlike many others, Ōhashi was fortunate enough to have his reintegration into society smoothed by an acquaintance putting in a good word for him at a job interview. As Ōhashi’s wife told the story almost 50 years later, when her husband went for a post as a reporter at the Hokkai Taimusu he scored zero on the general knowledge exam. However, pointing to Ōhashi’s previous experience as a journalist for the Karafuto Shimbun, a way was found to take on the

²⁶ George Lensen, *Report from Hokkaido: The Remains of Russian Culture in Northern Japan* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973), 184-185.

recent repatriate.²⁷ A few years after being hired, the Hokkai Taimusu published a series of articles by Ōhashi with the title *Ushinawareta Karafuto* ('The Karafuto that was Lost'). As Ōhashi explained, his account of life in Soviet-ruled Southern Sakhalin was perhaps only the second or third to be published and was probably the first to be serialized in a daily newspaper.

Why then should we return to Ōhashi's newspaper articles? An obvious reason is that Ōhashi had a somewhat unusual vantage point from which to view Southern Sakhalin. His work as a journalist provided him with numerous opportunities to compare and contrast life under Japanese and Soviet rule. However, there are limitations to using Ōhashi's writings as a source in this way – not least the time that elapsed between the when the events happened and when he wrote his account. The source is of greater interest for what it reveals about the kinds of views and opinions that were circulating amongst Karafuto repatriates at a moment in the mid-1950s. By examining some of the problems raised by Ōhashi we gain a different perspective on how Karafuto, repatriation

²⁷ Ōhashi Kazuyoshi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto* (Sapporo: Ōhashi Eiko, 1995), 211.

and the war were being talked about and the ways this discourse may have shifted over time. This is important because Ōhashi's narrative has significant differences of interpretation and emphasis from the version of events later set out in the Shūsenshi (which became the benchmark historical text – analysed in Chapter 6). Ōhashi's account therefore enables us to step back from the standard portrayal of Karafuto at the war's end and the unstated assumption that 'this was what all Karafuto repatriates thought' to explore whether any alternative narratives might have existed and how these complicate our current understanding.

Ōhashi Kazuyoshi and 'The Karafuto that was lost'

Ōhashi's articles were, therefore, partly a response to the interest generated by the Japanese-Soviet negotiations. In 1955, from February until May, the Hokkai Taimusu published Ushinawareta Karafuto as a series of 58 articles. Written entirely by Ōhashi, the period he covered lasted from 9th August 1945 when the USSR entered the war against Japan until December 1947 when he arrived in Japan on a repatriation boat. For most of this time, Ōhashi was working as a journalist. At first, this was for the Karafuto Shimbun which from 1942 became the main newspaper for Karafuto. In August 1945,

Ōhashi was dispatched to the frontline in Karafuto to cover the start of the fighting. On

29th August, Soviet military orders meant the Karafuto Shimbun ceased publication.

However, this was not the end of Ōhashi's time as a journalist because he found himself

writing for Shinseimei ('New Life'). This newspaper, controlled by the Soviet authorities

but published in Chinese characters, was written for the Japanese who remained in

Southern Sakhalin. Ōhashi's press credentials enabled him to move around Southern

Sakhalin relatively freely – something that was not possible for most other Japanese at

the time.

Ōhashi wrote from memory and without the aid of notes or a diary about events that had

happened almost 10 years ago. Because of this, he seems to have anticipated that

some people might find this reason enough to doubt the veracity of his account. Ōhashi

stated that he had only included those details of which he was most certain; any

memories that were hazy he had left out.²⁸ There is no way of knowing for certain how

factually accurate Ōhashi's account is. Unlike a diary, his articles were written in the

²⁸ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 207.

knowledge that they would be read. Therefore, it is likely that he modified the content of his account and his portrayal of events to meet the expectations of his audience. Rather than read Ōhashi's words to find out 'what happened' in Karafuto at the end of the war, of greater importance are the topics that he chose to raise for discussion. These are suggestive of what kinds of discourse were circulating amongst Karafuto repatriates in post-war society.

Possibly, because of his training and experience as a journalist, Ōhashi chose to structure his story primarily around the people he saw in Karafuto. Through his description of their everyday lives in the last weeks of fighting and then for a two year period following the Soviet takeover, Ōhashi commented on politics and 'Karafuto' as a place. He focussed on people from the perspective of nationality – the Karafuto he saw contained 'Japanese', 'Koreans' (Chōsen-jin), and 'Russians' (Soren-jin). 'Americans' also featured but as a faceless and unknown presence in post-war Japan.

Ōhashi's portrayal of Russian soldiers, settlers and 'the Soviet system'

In many accounts by Japanese who were in areas occupied by Soviet soldiers immediately after Japan's surrender one of the main themes is the danger of violence, including rape, and robbery. Ōhashi's description of Southern Sakhalin in the weeks and months after the Soviet takeover does not mention any specific incidents against Japanese civilians. Instead, he refers to "bad elements" amongst the soldiers who he alleges were responsible for most of the acts of violence and theft. In the same article, he appears to contradict himself by stating that such soldiers were untypical of "the general situation" but by concluding that, even still, there were "too many bad elements".²⁹ Ōhashi does state that once Soviet administrative control became established, laws were enforced and theft and violence towards Japanese civilians

²⁹ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 84.

decreased.³⁰ This point is supported by American intelligence reports from the late-1940s.³¹

Ōhashi interpreted his encounters with the Russian civilian population in a more positive light. Beginning shortly after the end of hostilities, people began to move from the Russian mainland to settle in Southern Sakhalin. By the autumn of 1946 approximately 70,000 Soviet citizens had arrived. By 1949 this figure had reached 450,000.³² Because of the shortage of housing, many of the new settlers shared accommodation with

³⁰ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 84.

³¹ GHQ/SCAP Records, box 384C, GIII 00290, MEMORANDUM FOR: Col HOWELL
SUBJECT: Report on Japanese from and in North Korea, Sakhalin and the Kurile
Islands (No date), 4.

³² Nakayama Taishō, "Futatsu no teikoku, yottsu no sokoku - Karafuto/Saharin to Chishima/Kuriru," in *Teikoku hōkai to hito no saiidō*, ed. Araragi Shinzō (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2011), 208.

Japanese families. Ōhashi wrote about how this provided opportunities for Japanese and Russians to get along with each other. He also explained that cohabitation was a tactic Japanese used to protect themselves from break-ins and to obtain extra supplies of food and daily essentials.³³ Accounts other than Ōhashi's also often comment warmly on time spent living alongside Russian families.³⁴

Ōhashi's gaze over the Soviet society in Southern Sakhalin was not restricted to people but also included politics. He separated the Soviet organisation of society from what had existed before through his notion of 'the workers' country' (*rōdōsha no kun*). Ōhashi never clearly expressed what he meant by this term but he used it to explain various 'differences' that he noticed with his idea of Japan. As a journalist for Shinseimei his job required him to travel around various locations in Southern Sakhalin to write copy for the newspaper. The stories he was told to write were usually about the 'efforts' of Japanese

³³ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 131.

³⁴ Sevela, "Respect Such an Enemy," 189.

workers and the 'munificence' of the Soviet labour system. However, as Ōhashi recalled in his articles, many of the supposedly most attractive features of the system often failed to be implemented. Japanese workers in coalmines frequently found themselves having to work longer than the mandated 8-hours to ensure that Soviet supervisors met production targets.³⁵ Free healthcare was good in theory but in practice there were seldom enough medical supplies for people to receive adequate treatment.³⁶

Where Ōhashi expressed his greatest admiration for the Soviet society he encountered was what he perceived as a lack of discrimination towards a defeated people. He wrote about his experience on a train when a fellow passenger spoke-up for him after an army officer demanded that Ōhashi, being Japanese, give up his seat. The passenger rebuked the officer with the words that "Japanese and Russians were free to work alongside each other in Southern Sakhalin" and that "the [Japanese] people should not

³⁵ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 107.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

be confused with the crimes of their leaders”.³⁷ Ōhashi contrasted society in Southern Sakhalin with not only what had existed prior to 1945 but also what he had found in Japan after repatriation. On several occasions he invoked an image of Occupied Japan and the ‘Americans’ as the opposite of his experience in Southern Sakhalin. Commenting on a Russian man working to polish shoes he stated that he could not picture the same scene in Sapporo (the administrative capital of Hokkaido) where the “victors would shine the shoes of the losers”.³⁸ Writing about shared housing Ōhashi sardonically exclaimed that he could not imagine “if it was Americans, [that they] would want to live in battered old Japanese houses”.³⁹

³⁷ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 187.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

Thousands of Japanese detained in Southern Sakhalin tried to escape across the Soya Straits to Hokkaido rather than wait for the start of official repatriation.⁴⁰ There are no statistics for those who died trying to do so. Evidently, many felt there was enough hardship and uncertainty to risk attempting the perilous crossing. Therefore, Ōhashi's positive comments about living under Soviet rule should be viewed within this context. In particular, there is evidence that discrimination towards Koreans, which was an everyday feature of Japanese rule in Karafuto, did not end with emergence of Soviet society.⁴¹ Ōhashi's view of the Soviet system and 'the workers' country' was, in places, a romanticised image. However, why did Ōhashi feel it was appropriate to describe the transition of Karafuto into Sakhalin in this way? There is no definite answer. Rather, important factors seem to have been the way he was trying to come to terms with the impact of the war and how he understood his own role as an individual in Karafuto's history.

⁴⁰ Katō, "Soren gunsei shita," 14.

⁴¹ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 162.

Ōhashi's 'Karafuto' and the Japanese

Ōhashi saw Russian settlers arriving in their thousands. The towns and villages he had known since childhood were given Russian names. Former Japanese houses were modified to meet Russian standards for keeping out the cold. In areas badly damaged during the fighting Russian designed buildings were erected. Russian style markets, restaurants and entertainment venues all appeared during the two years Ōhashi lived in Southern Sakhalin. In his description of these changes and his portrayal of living alongside Russian settlers Ōhashi refrained from expressing outright anger and hostility towards those who were now living in what he referred to as his 'home place' (*kokyō*). Despite this, other research emphasises widespread public antipathy towards the USSR and Karafuto repatriates' arguments as being based on an irredentist agenda and having been 'expelled'.

One reason for Ōhashi's restraint was possibly the political context at the time he was writing the articles. In 1955, as the Japanese government was preparing to open negotiations for a peace treaty with the USSR, highly critical accounts of the war would most likely have been unwelcome. In Hokkaido, a region where the stakes in securing

good relations were greater, newspaper editors were probably aware (or made aware) of this point. Nevertheless, Ōhashi's treatment of the behaviour of the Soviet military suggests that he was not afraid to make his more controversial opinions known.

However, another important reason, alluded to by Ōhashi himself, was the short duration of the hostilities between Japan and the USSR in August 1945. Ōhashi argued that because, "there was not the horrific killing of the fighting between Russians and Germans" this explained, "the vast difference [in Russians] feelings towards Japanese [as compared] to Germans".⁴² Such comments would have been of little comfort to those people who lost family and friends during the fighting or whilst awaiting repatriation. Ōhashi's point, however, is important for comprehending the way he depicted the end of Karafuto. He could have processed the loss of his home place by focussing on a phrase that was to become almost ubiquitous in Japan in popular portrayals of USSR: as a 'thief who robs you when your house is on fire' (kajidorobō).

This term referred to the widespread sense of anger in Japanese public opinion that the

⁴² Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 199-200.

Soviet leaders had taken advantage of Japan's weakened position at the end of the Asia-Pacific War to make territorial gains. Ōhashi did use this language but qualified it by acknowledging in the following sentence "the Soviet side's perspective" that Southern Sakhalin had already been returned as part of the secret clauses of the Yalta Agreement.⁴³

Nevertheless, although the fighting in Karafuto was relatively brief compared to other theatres of the war, Ōhashi still struggled to come to terms with the violence he had witnessed. That the fighting between the Japanese and Soviet sides framed Ōhashi's recollections of Karafuto is obvious from the date at which he started his account – the 9th August 1945 when the USSR declared war on Japan. Ten years later, many unanswered questions confronted Ōhashi as he tried to sum-up his wartime experience. This is shown by Ōhashi's attempt to analyse one of the most traumatic moments in his life: the bombing of the train station in Toyohara. Ōhashi was in the town on the 22nd August, saw the bombs being dropped and witnessed the horrific aftermath. A decade

⁴³ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 72.

later he was still grappling with the ‘reason’ for the bombing. What made this a particularly vexing problem was Ōhashi’s belief that Toyohara was under “a white flag” at the time of the attack.⁴⁴

An obvious target for Ōhashi to blame was the Soviet side. As he declared, “that the surrender had no meaning was hard for the townspeople [of Toyohara] to accept”.⁴⁵

However, as with his earlier moderating of the term ‘kajidorobō’, Ōhashi doubted whether blame could be fixed so unambiguously. According to Ōhashi, “The Japanese military’s resistance was still continuing”. He reported others as saying “that the USSR had issued orders to halt evacuation which the Japanese side had not adhered to”.⁴⁶

Ōhashi widened his discussion to include another incident that became seared into collective memories about the war in Karafuto – the fighting that engulfed the town of

⁴⁴ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 65.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Maoka. In this case, approximately 500 civilians are thought to have died after being caught-up in the crossfire between Japanese and Soviet soldiers.⁴⁷ Although he was not a direct witness, Ōhashi methodically listed the better-known incidents when civilians were killed. Once again he intimated the difficulty of establishing blame.⁴⁸

Ōhashi tried to balance his answers regarding questions about blame. That he was making these arguments in the mid-1950s shows that no clear-cut narrative of Karafuto repatriates as ‘victims’ of the USSR yet existed. The Hokkai Taimusu was not a newspaper known for taking an extreme stance. By running the articles, the editors indicated that they thought Ōhashi’s views would resonate with at least some of the newspaper’s readers. Why did Ōhashi pull back from holding the Soviet military as solely responsible for the fate that befell Karafuto?

⁴⁷ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 65.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Shortly after Japan's surrender, the 'betrayal' of the 'ordinary Japanese' by the wartime 'leaders' became one of main themes of public discourse. Historians have found ample scope in this phenomenon of Japan's post-war history for interpretation. One of the main points is that by apportioning blame to a small coterie of wartime leaders (whilst excluding Emperor Hirohito) Japanese people have been able to overlook their own wartime responsibility. The separation of 'guilty' leaders from 'innocent' masses was, therefore, a useful device in the post-war for coming to terms with war and defeat.

Ōhashi too told his story by using the dichotomy of leaders (*shidōsha*) and ordinary people (*minkanjin/shomin*). As a newspaper journalist he would have been familiar with such rhetoric. However, to assume that Ōhashi was simply either using the cliché of the time or subtly trying to avoid personal responsibility is to overlook a different problem: how people in Karafuto regarded the local elites who ruled over them. Local society in Karafuto was a rumbustious place. Tensions inevitably existed amongst migrant workers, settlers, local village and town notables, and the colonial government of Karafuto-chō. The afterlife of such tensions can be clearly seen in Ōhashi's work.

If Ōhashi's position on who to blame for civilian deaths was ambiguous, it was less so on another event that was to become crucial to later collective memories - the conduct of the emergency evacuation. Between the 13th to the 23rd August 1945 evacuation boats ferried approximately 88,000 people to Hokkaido.⁴⁹ The evacuation, limited to women, children and the elderly, was planned by officials in Karafuto and Hokkaido in conjunction with the military. Ōhashi's anger was directed towards Karafuto officials and the military leaders who he believed had ensured that their families were placed on the first evacuation boats to leave. Ōhashi wanted to know why they had been given priority over "ordinary people".⁵⁰ He questioned the feasibility of evacuating such a large number of people and offered the opinion that a way should have been found to bring a halt to the fighting rather than planning for an evacuation. He even suspected that the "self-interest of some of the leaders" in wanting to ensure that their families were safely evacuated had delayed the ceasefire. Ōhashi was adamant that "it could not be helped

⁴⁹ Katō, *'Dai Nippon Teikoku' hōkai*, 212.

⁵⁰ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 48.

if the evacuation of women and children was interpreted as consolidation for a final battle”.⁵¹

Ōhashi saw the handling of the evacuation as one of several examples of how the Japanese ‘leaders’ of Karafuto had discredited themselves and, in doing so, badly let down the ‘ordinary people’. His greatest anger was directed towards the former governor of Karafuto: Ōtsu Toshio. As well as prioritising the evacuation of his own family, Ōhashi alleged that Ōtsu had sent a subordinate official to meet Soviet military commanders rather than risk going himself.⁵² Describing the character of the former governor, Ōhashi was dismissive of how Ōtsu had a “smell of colonialism” about him.⁵³ In another example of the ordinary people being deceived, Ōhashi recalled talking to a farmer who had been ordered to leave his home by the Japanese military. Soldiers then

⁵¹ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 65.

⁵² Ibid., 80.

⁵³ Ibid., 78.

poured gasoline over the buildings and set them alight. For Ōhashi, this was a clear sign that “of course, Karafuto had been no more than a colony [after all]”.⁵⁴ Ōhashi used the term ‘colonial’ as a derogatory phrase to criticise both the manner of the governor and the actions of the Japanese military towards Karafuto.

The last article in the series was published on 2nd May 1955. So far in his writing, Ōhashi had refrained from discussing the subject of how to understand the way Japan had acquired the southern half of Sakhalin Island in 1905. As he drew his thoughts together, he wrote a revealing sentence: “The Soviet Union retook territory seized by the Japanese imperialists – amongst progressive Japanese too those who believe this are [many].⁵⁵ Ōhashi did not explicitly state what his ‘politics’ were. However, his strong criticism of the elites of Karafuto and the affinity he expressed towards many of the Russian people he encountered suggest that he might have called himself a

⁵⁴ Ōhashi, *Ushinawareta Karafuto*, 54-55.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

'progressive Japanese'. How to understand contemporary history, therefore, placed him in a bind – he struggled to reconcile the tension between the view that Karafuto was a product of imperialism and the commonplace belief that a person should have a deep sense of affection for the place they were born and raised. His idea of 'the colonial' was useful for dissipating some of this tension. The colonial was what he now saw as negative about Karafuto's history: the self-interested actions of the official elite and Japanese military. The positive aspects that he chose to remember were the opposite of the colonial – the efforts of 'ordinary people' to settle and the 'longing for home place' of those born in Karafuto. 'Colonial' was a word that helped him to avert his gaze from Karafuto's problematic history and his own place within it.

Conclusion

Pre-war society in Karafuto was riven with conflict and competition amongst a variety of actors. The fact that unelected bureaucrats were the primary power-holders added to these tensions. The start of the war with the United States and Britain in 1941 led to a reconsolidation of wartime society in Karafuto. The slide towards 'total war' required a ramping-up of the rhetoric about officials and civilians in Karafuto acting as one. In two

weeks in August 1945 the Soviet military overturned 40 years of Japanese rule of Karafuto. In defeat and then during the following period when 'Japan became Russia', pre-war tensions reappeared and were reinterpreted. Repatriate newspapers written in the first years of the post-war reveal the antagonism some repatriates felt towards the official elite of Karafuto.⁵⁶ Ōhashi, prompted to put his thoughts on paper by the onset of diplomatic negotiations and the ten-year anniversary of the end of the war, continued the narrative of repatriates and their sense of anger towards officialdom and the military.

Ōhashi wrote an account that pointed to the difficulty he was having coming to terms with his wartime experience. Comprehending the death of civilians in war, something that he had witnessed, was one of the hardest challenges he faced. Ōhashi sensed that someone should be held responsible but his writings showed that attributing blame was no simple task. His description also contained, what for Ōhashi was, an irresolvable conundrum. His political sympathies lay on the side of those who now revoked the

⁵⁶ See Chapter 2 for examples of this criticism.

history of Karafuto as one more chapter in the story of Japanese imperialism. Yet he also wanted to hold on to 'Karafuto' as the place he called home.

Ōhashi Kazuyoshi died in 1974, less than two decades after *Ushinawareta Karafuto* was printed. The articles seem to have been Ōhashi's only extended piece of writing on Karafuto. The year before he passed away, a book now regarded as the 'official history' of the war in Karafuto - *Karafuto Shūsenshi* - was published. The book made use of Ōhashi's articles in several sections including those about Shinseimei and, in particular, on the bombing of Toyohara.⁵⁷ However, the extracts were used in such a way as to omit Ōhashi's nuanced appraisal of life under Soviet rule and his excoriation of official and military actions. There is no way of knowing if Ōhashi was aware his work was being ransacked in this way, or if with the passing of time he might have actually modified his views and come to agree with the later description. But neither is this the point. Ōhashi's articles are evidence of a moment in the mid-1950s when memory making about repatriates and Karafuto was still complicated and in a state of flux.

⁵⁷ *Karafuto shūsenshi kankōkai, Karafuto Shūsenshi*, 377-378, 530-531.

During the 1960s, as monuments about Karafuto and repatriates began to be erected and government-backed histories began to be written, memory-making about the Japanese empire took on a more 'official' and less convoluted form. These later 'texts' have been seized upon as evidence for how Karafuto repatriates came to terms with their past. Ōhashi's writings help us to remember that the history of repatriates and Japanese society's post-imperial transformation was perhaps more tortuous than we have until now considered to be the case.

Chapter 5 – Monuments of Karafuto

Contemporary society in Japan is often said to exist in a state of denial or ignorance about the history of the Japanese Empire. According to this view, after Japan's surrender in August 1945 the empire was quickly dismantled via third parties who sought to remove all Japanese from colonial spaces and to return them to Japan. In Occupied Japan, the US overlords worked with Japanese conservative elites to frame the nation's recent war as 'The Pacific War' and thereby write out the conflict in China and the story of empire from the emerging official narrative. As Post-war Japan became part of the Cold War World, such a narrative was kept largely intact. The end of the Cold War and the growing importance of other Asian countries encouraged the beginnings of a reassessment of Japan's relations with its neighbours. This trend was supported by the passing away of the Showa Emperor which, for many Japanese, became a moment for reflection regarding their place in broad sweep of Japan's modern history. At this time, attention was drawn to the criticisms by other Asian peoples who regarded the Japanese as having forgotten colonialism and empire building from the nation's story.

The theoretical underpinning of such an historical analysis begins with an understanding of Japanese society as organised into 'the state' and 'civil society'. By focusing on the state's management of 'official memory' as constructed through commemorative events, the building of museums and monuments and the writing of history textbooks, the story of Japan's failed empire was largely silenced and avoided. However, as recent research has shown, "remnants of empire" existed in several forms, including that of former Japanese settlers made to return to Japan after the collapse of the empire. Repatriates are said to have responded to their secondary status in post-war society by forming self-help groups through which they lobbied governments of the day for recognition and support. Although not explicitly stated as such, these groups are assumed to have been another part of Japan's civil society.

This chapter is an attempt to contribute to the growing body of work on the reintegration of repatriates in post-war society. My focus is on how the public representation of repatriates was constructed and, in particular, the important question of whose memories were being articulated in public. One shortcoming of the existing literature is that it relies on an overly simple categorisation of the state and civil society as applied to

repatriates. This deficiency has to be addressed by examining the pre-war and wartime as well as the post-war periods. For although the word 'repatriate' belongs to the post-war, the histories of the people that it refers to are trans-war. Recent research has highlighted, in the case of Colonial Korea, the fluidity of the relationship between officials (*kan*) and civilians (*min*). In this chapter, I will argue that the background of those repatriates who came to speak for 'repatriates' must be viewed within the context of a pre-1945 history where the "line separating the state and settler society continually shifted and blurred".¹

Turning to history post-1945, there has been a tendency to view the relationship between repatriates (more accurately repatriate groups) and the state through a basic state-civil society dichotomy. However, Sheldon Garon has warned against regarding state-civil society relations in the Japanese context as embodying a sharp distinction between the two actors. He argues that researchers need to be sensitive to how "assertive individuals or groups might cooperate with the state on some issues, while

¹ Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*, 6.

criticizing it on others".² Such advice, whilst relevant to a 'national' level of analysis, is especially valuable when examining the 'local'. The reintegration of repatriates (or the lack thereof) was an issue for national debate after 1945. However, for repatriates, reintegration was first and foremost about finding somewhere to live and a way to earn a living. Reintegration was in terms of the local. Therefore, the connections between repatriates and the local state actors have to be brought into the analysis.

The concern of this chapter is with how repatriates who came from Karafuto and settled in Wakkanai City in northern Hokkaido had managed to build two monuments by 1963. Theory on historical memory posits that the public representation of war memory and commemoration can be thought of as containing 'official' and 'sectional' narrative. The former is managed by the state while the latter is the domain of interest-groups in civil society. The monuments in Wakkanai, when unveiled in 1963, might be regarded as

² Sheldon Garon, "From Meiji to Heisei: The State and Civil Society in Japan," in *The State and Civil Society in Japan*, eds. Frank J. Schwarz and Susan Pharr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44.

representing the sectional narrative of interest-groups for Karafuto repatriates before being incorporated into the official narrative when the Showa Emperor inspected the monuments on his tour of Hokkaido in 1968. This chronology is largely in keeping with existing research which highlights the passing of a 1967 law as enabling repatriates to become part of official narrative. Such an understanding, however, tells us too little too vaguely.

Another key component of the theory on historical memory is the concept of the 'template'. Also defined as 'pre-memories', this refers to the "cultural narratives, myths and tropes [which in the study of war memory] are the frames through which later conflicts are understood".³ In the case of the monuments in Wakkanai (and for the

³ TG. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, "The politics of war memory and commemoration: contexts, structures and dynamics," in *Commemorating War: the politics of memory*, Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (London: Routledge, 2000), 34.

public representation of repatriates more broadly), from what sources were such pre-memories drawn and who most strongly felt the need to use them?

A further crucial part of the theory of historical memory is the notion of ‘arenas’ and ‘agencies of articulation’. Arenas of articulation refer to the “socio-political spaces within which social actors advance claims for recognition”⁴, while agencies of articulation means “those institutions through which social actors seek to promote and secure recognition”.⁵ This chapter will use the insights from this theory as a lens to examine repatriates in Wakkanai.

Finally, what can such an approach add to our understanding of repatriates in post-war Japan? Firstly, I argue that we need to rethink our understanding of how relations between repatriates and the state played out, especially during the period from the time of surrender up to the mid-1970s. By focusing on the role of the state vis-a-vis official

⁴ Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, “Politics of War Memory,” 17.

⁵ Ibid., 17.

commemoration with its emphasis on the domestic victims of the war, the existing literature implies that repatriates were both silent in public and largely left to cope on their own with their memories of repatriation and empire. This perspective, however, fails to engage with either the sources of the early public representations of repatriates or the agents behind that articulation.

Secondly, one area in need of further research is how the politics of memory among former colonists are implicated in the way the Japanese remember (or forget) their colonial past. Without really understanding how empire came to be publically represented in post-war society, much of the current research jumps to the conclusion that repatriates inevitably looked back on their former lives with a strong sense of nostalgia. From this perspective, a link is then made to many repatriates lack of post-colonial awareness. However, before this judgement can be made, questions need to be asked about what remembering actually took place and how. In the remainder of this chapter, I aim to make a small step in this direction by showing how a public articulation of repatriates emerged in one city in northern Hokkaido in the early 1960s.

A brief history of Karafuto and Wakkanai at the end of the Asia-Pacific War

As the Japanese Empire developed, the flows of people, capital and goods between Karafuto and Hokkaido expanded. These increasing connections had a significant impact on the settlement of Wakkanai at the northern tip of Hokkaido. With the completion of a railway line in the early 1920s, Wakkanai developed into the main ferry port for passengers crossing the Soya Straits to Karafuto. The prosperity of the town became heavily dependent on its role as the gateway to Japan's northern-most colony.

In August 1945, once the evacuation of Karafuto began, the immediate destination for evacuees and escapees from Karafuto was Wakkanai and other settlements along the Okhotsk Sea coastline. Nearly 80% of the people who left Karafuto in August 1945 landed in Wakkanai. Unsurprisingly, the local authorities in the town were overwhelmed by the scale of the relief effort that was required. Within a few days after the evacuation had begun, the town's population of approximately 20,000 had increased by the arrival of over 65,000 people from Karafuto. Local officials tasked with helping evacuees later recalled scenes of great confusion as lines of people stretched from the train station all

the way to the pier where the evacuation boats docked.⁶ The majority of the evacuees had passed through the town by September 1945. However, as the closest point to Karafuto, Wakkanai and the surrounding villages along the coastline saw small numbers of people continue to arrive in small fishing boats for the next 15 months until the official repatriation began in December 1946. Some people also came to Wakkanai in the hope of finding someone with a boat who could smuggle them back into Karafuto. The main reasons were usually to find family and salvage property.⁷

Repatriates in Wakkanai

As shown above, since the 1920s Wakkanai's history had become enmeshed with that of Karafuto. However, the disintegration of Japanese control over Karafuto did not end

⁶ See *Karafuto Shūsenshi* for the recollections of one of the officials involved. Karafuto Shūsenshi Kankō Kai, 331.

⁷ Yano Makio, "Karafuto no sengo, dasshutsu to senyū," *Suzuya* 19 (October 2002): 178.

the relationship but caused a dramatic change. Located in the sparsely populated Soya District of Hokkaido, Wakkanai's population steadily increased after the end of the war, in part, because repatriates arrived to settle the land and find work in the fishing industry. By 1949 there were between 5000 and 6000 repatriates living in the town and the surrounding areas. As of the following year, the total population of Wakkanai reached almost 35,000 and repatriates formed a sizeable section of the local society. Of these repatriates, the overwhelming majority had come from Karafuto.⁸

As in other parts of Japan, many repatriates who came to Wakkanai experienced a cold reception from local people. Local newspapers from the time reveal that the latter half of the 1940s was a particularly difficult period for many repatriates in Wakkanai. At the same time, because of instructions from the Occupation that news coverage about repatriates should be more upbeat, articles also appeared which emphasised the contribution being made by the newcomers. An article from 1949 showed that repatriates living in Wakkanai were working in most sectors of the economy. A survey in

⁸ Wakkanai shi, *Wakkanai shi shi (Dai ni kan)* (Sapporo: Wakkanai shi, 1999), 209.

the same year listed their main source of employment as 'office work' (28%). This was followed by 'fishing industry' (25%), 'farming' (13%), 'day labouring' (12%) and 'commerce and small business' (8%). The percentage classified as 'unemployed and other' was 12%.⁹

Although these statistics suggest that many repatriates had found work, much of the local media discourse surrounding 'Karafuto repatriates' indicates that many were both economically and socially marginalized. For example, in March 1949 the same newspaper revealed that in the Soya District 500 repatriates households (1717 individuals) were being temporarily housed in school buildings and temples. For many repatriates in this situation, one of the main policies implemented by the local authorities

⁹ "Mezamashii hikiagesha no katsudōryoku," *Nikkan Sōya*, 20th September 1949, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Microfilm, Purange bunko (Shimbun) (Maikuro shiryō) 589 (Za-20). All *Nikkan Sōya* newspaper references between the dates 1st September to 14th October 1949 can be found on this microfilm at the Hokkaido Prefectural Library.

was encouraging settlement on uncultivated land.¹⁰ However, in practice the policy was often highly unsatisfactory. In November 1948, 270 Karafuto repatriates were sent to planned settlements near Wakkanai but found on arrival that the local authorities had made virtually no preparations.¹¹

Repatriates' existence on the periphery of Wakkanai society is discernible from the *Nikkan Soya* newspaper. Most articles were about the distribution of daily necessities and the provision of housing. When an event was organised to raise repatriate morale, the organizer reflected on the low attendance with the comment, "This [event's purpose] was not to make repatriates feel as though they were being treated as poor but was

¹⁰ "Jiin ni roppyaku junana mei," *Nikkan Sōya*, 4th March 1949, Hokkaido Prefectural Library, Microfilm, Purange bunko (Shimbun) (Maikuro shiryō) 588 (Za-19). All *Nikkan Sōya* newspaper references between the dates 19th November 1948 to 31st August 1949 can be found on this microfilm at the Hokkaido Prefectural Library.

¹¹ "Mayō nyūshokusha nihyakunanaju mei," *Nikkan Sōya*, 12th November 1948.

organised out of heartfelt concern [for repatriates]. We hope next time more people will take part.”¹² The perception of repatriates as a distinct group in local society was revealed in a ‘day in the life of’ type article about the work of the mayor: “Karafuto repatriates, owners of small businesses, war-bereaved families all come [to see the mayor] in an office that is always crowded with visitors.”¹³

Few repatriates living in Wakkanai in 1949 could have expected that 14 years later, there would be two monuments in the city about Karafuto. Five years after the monuments ‘Hyōsetsu no mon’ (The Gate of Ice and Snow) and ‘Kunin no otome no hi’ (Monument to the Nine Maidens) were built, the Showa Emperor came to Wakkanai. The centrepiece of his visit was a ceremony in front of the two monuments, with the city’s mayor explaining what they represented. The remainder of this chapter will explore how a public representation of Karafuto repatriates had emerged by 1963, and

¹² "Hikiagesha o ian," *Nikkan Sōya*, 13th November 1948.

¹³ "Wakkanai no 24 jikan (4)," *Nikkan Sōya*, 10th December 1948.

suggest that we need to re-examine our understanding of the state's role in that articulation.

Repatriates in influential places –Tōmine Motoji and Yonekura Hachirōta

Tōmine Motoji (1914-1997) and Yonekura Hachirōta (1896-1984) were two repatriates who came to Wakkanai from Karafuto. They were also men who had been influential in pre-war and wartime society in Karafuto and in the post-war would, once again, become prominent local figures. Men such as these were vital to the process of forming repatriate groups, sharing common memories and constructing a sectional narrative about Karafuto repatriates. Existing research has avoided the kind of detailed analysis of local history that might shed light on these important repatriates. As a result, the connection between the leadership of repatriate groups and the pre-war and wartime state has been missed. Yet the ideas and values of such men were shaped during their wartime careers as some of the leading local representatives of the state.

Although local press coverage suggested repatriates were one single group on the margins of local life, already by 1949 some had moved into important positions. These

'men of influence' were vital to the monuments being built. Tōmine and Yonekura were two of the most influential Karafuto repatriates and both came from the same place in Karafuto – Odomari – a town with strong connections to Wakkanai. Acquaintances made and trusts earned during the imperial period would have been useful in the post-war for helping to smooth the integration of these men of influence into Wakkanai society.

In 1947, Nishida Sakan (1896-1964) became the first elected mayor in Wakkanai. By 1950, possibly in recognition of the numerical importance of repatriates, Tōmine had become Nishida's deputy (joyaku). As shown in the Nikkan Soya series '24 hours in Wakkanai', the mayor's office was at the centre of most local political decisions. Tōmine – a Karafuto repatriate – was, therefore, at the heart of Wakkanai's politics. Born in Karafuto, Tōmine worked in various local government positions before becoming the Deputy-Leader of Odomari in 1944 and then the Leader immediately after the war

ended. In office during the last few months of the war and then kept in post by the Soviet Military Government, Tōmine became well-known to many repatriates.¹⁴

By the mid-1950s, Tōmine was described thus: “as his [the mayor’s] right-hand man, he does his best to implement the mayor’s plans”. During this decade, Tōmine was closely involved in Mayor Nishida’s ambitious development projects for Wakkanai. These included boosting tourism through the construction of Wakkanai Park. In 1958 Tōmine was responsible for erecting one of the park’s first monuments – a statue of Mamiya Rinzō, the 19th century explorer of Sakhalin Island and historical figure representing the ‘beginning’ of Japanese claims to Karafuto. As Nishida’s anointed successor Tōmine stood for election as mayor in 1959 but was comprehensively defeated.¹⁵

¹⁴ Takatsu Nobuyuki, *Hyōjō (Dai 1 kan) - Wakkanai no hitotachi* (Wakkanai: Zasshi Souya 1956), 16.

¹⁵ Hokkaido Shinbun sha, *Jinmyaku Hokkaido - Shi chō son hen* (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shinbun, 1973), 242.

Tōmine is one example of the many ex-Karafuto officials who later found post-war positions in local and regional government in Hokkaido. The second repatriate to take on important roles in post-war Wakkanai political life was from a semi-official background. In 1949, as official repatriation was drawing to a close, the main organisation for repatriates in Wakkanai (Wakkanai Repatriate and War Victims Alliance; hereafter 'Alliance') was reorganised with sections for fishing, farming, small business and general relief. The reorganisation reflected the growing number of repatriate businesses engaged in these sectors of the economy. By 1949 the head of the Alliance was Yonekura Hachirōta.¹⁶

Yonekura was born in 1896 in Iwate Prefecture and moved to Karafuto in 1914. He settled in the town of Odomari where his fishing business became successful enough for him to acquire the moniker "Yonekura of Odomari".¹⁷ His importance was shown by

¹⁶ "Wakkanai Hikiage sensai dōmei - Honnen ippai de kaisan ka," *Nikkan Sōya*, 20th September 1949.

¹⁷ Takatsu, *Wakkanai no hitotachi*, 47.

his appointment to the Odomari Town Council. After the Soviet takeover of Karafuto, he successfully escaped by boat in November 1945 and settled in Wakkanai where he was described as already “having many business connections”.¹⁸ The owner of two fishing vessels, he re-established himself in the industry by starting “Yonekura Marine Products” as a limited company in 1948. By 1955, a local author was describing Yonekura as: “A Karafuto repatriate, that is to say, he has been a Wakkanai-person for only 10 years. But now, his standing and his record of achievements mean he is no different from someone born and bred in Wakkanai”.¹⁹

In addition to being the president of his fishing company and the head of the Alliance he was also the head of a fishing co-operative, director of the central market, the head of the volunteer fire brigade and the vice-chairman of the Chamber of Commerce (hereafter ‘Chamber’). As fundraiser-in-chief for the volunteer fire-fighters, Yonekura

¹⁸ Takatsu, *Wakkanai no hitotachi*, 47.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

became a widely-known local figure for non-repatriates in the city. As vice-chairman of the Chamber he was part of an organisation indispensable for making connections and influencing local affairs. One of Yonekura's strengths appears to have been his ability to represent repatriates without alienating the non-repatriate majority. "[Yonekura] has not retreated into his shell as a repatriate [and] represents the repatriate viewpoint [...] He, along with Tōmine, does this without taking repatriate complaints too far", was one comment made about this important local figure."²⁰

The backgrounds of both Tōmine and Yonekura show that to classify them simply as 'repatriates' is insufficient to analyse their role in post-war society. Tōmine had been the Mayor of Odomari, the second largest town in Karafuto. He appears to have been one of the last Japanese to leave Karafuto as part of the official repatriation conducted between 1946 and 1949. After repatriation he then held the post of Vice-Mayor of Wakkanai. He was a prominent member of the local elite in Wakkanai. Yonekura was a town councillor in Odomari and then deputy of the Wakkanai Chamber of Commerce.

²⁰ Takatsu, *Wakkanai no hitotachi*, 47.

Although not a local government official in the same way as Tōmine, his position in pre-war and wartime society can be described as 'semi-official' because of his role in these parastatal institutions.

The connections that Tōmine and Yonekura had in local society meant that for 'ordinary' repatriates these men represented an opportunity for influence. The status of such individuals gave them the authority to act as Wakkanai repatriates' main representatives.

The words and thoughts of such men became the public voice of repatriates. During the 1950s the voice grew stronger but this alone would not have been enough to articulate the narrative of Karafuto repatriates. There also had to be someone who was listening.

That person was the main representative of the state in local society – the mayor of Wakkanai.

Wakkanai and repatriates

During the late 1940s and the 1950s relations between repatriates and non-repatriates in Wakkanai were often tense. The local media were sensitive to any signs that repatriate groups were lobbying too vigorously on behalf of their members. Yet

Wakkanai's fortunes were strongly influenced by the arrival of repatriates from Karafuto. In September 1946, the cinema newsreel 'Japan News' featured a short piece on Wakkanai, calling it "the town on the border". Accompanying footage of the disused pier where the ferry to Karafuto used to dock, the voiceover announced "since the end of the war, when Karafuto became Soviet territory, Wakkanai has finally become a border town". The short clip also showed abandoned artillery pieces, concluding that these represented the now distant memory of the last days of the war and the sense of panic at a possible Soviet invasion. The impression given by Japan News was of an isolated settlement at the remote northern extremity of Japan and only a short distance away from the Soviet enemy.²¹

²¹ NHK Dejitaru Aakaibusu Sensō Shōgen Aakaibusu, "Nihon nyūsu Sengohen Dai 36 go," NHK Dejitaru Aakaibusu, http://cgi2.nhk.or.jp/shogenarchives/jpnews/movie.cgi?das_id=D0001310036_00000&seg_number=005 (accessed 16th December 2013).

The 'loss' of Karafuto in August 1945 caused great anxiety about what would now happen to the local economy of Wakkanai. A short newspaper history of Wakkanai was clear that "with the acquisition of southern Karafuto [in 1905], the northern region became economically important".²² The author vaguely hoped that "the loss of Karafuto need not mean the end of [the north of Hokkaido's economic] importance since the reopening of the [Wakkanai's] port in 1947".²³ However, another article a few days later showed that even in other areas of Hokkaido, the outlook for Wakkanai was regarded as bleak. This author wrote about a conversation he had had in a mining town in Hokkaido where he sensed, "[Wakkanai] is treated as though it were a different world" and he was asked, "Now Karafuto has gone Wakkanai's had it too don't you think?"²⁴

²² "Wakkanai no sōkaku," *Nikkan Sōya*, 2nd March 1949.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Wakkanai ni yoru," *Nikkan Sōya*, 15th March 1949.

In early 1949, many in Wakkanai, including the owner of the *Nikkan Soya* newspaper, believed that acquiring 'city' status could revive the local economy. As Mayor Nishida explained, the main reason why Wakkanai became a city was because of the arrival of repatriates. However, in the commentaries that appeared in the newspaper in the run-up to the decision to confer city status, the existence of repatriates in Wakkanai was hardly mentioned. One notable exception was a description of "welfare provision for repatriates" as a major problem that would have to be tackled by the local authorities whether Wakkanai became a city or not.²⁵

In the local media, repatriates were primarily portrayed as a group of people in need of support from the local authorities. Tensions from the late 1940s continued well into the next decade. In 1955, Mayor Nishida announced his plan to build more homes for the city's repatriates. This led one local newspaper to print the following rebuke, "[The economy of] Japan has returned to its pre-war state. Repatriate relief has finished. Now

²⁵ "Shisei mondai ni tsuite," *Nikkan Sōya*, 18th March 1949.

we want to see assistance for those who are not repatriates".²⁶ The same editorial blamed repatriate groups in the city for having too much political influence. Most strikingly, the editorial argued "repatriate groups that discuss memories are fine; it is other [political] objectives for which there is no longer any need".²⁷

However, for another local writer, even hearing repatriates' talk about their memories of Karafuto was too much. He excoriated those who compared Wakkanai's current development as being at the same level as Odomari was ten years ago. The writer continued:

Those who lived in Karafuto appear to have all been Daimyō and I have yet to hear of anyone having been poor or in difficulties. Also, it seems there was no need for cleaning and no one worked as a casual labourer. Although everyone speaking seems to have been a lord (oyagata) it can't be the case that no one

²⁶ "Hikiagesha jūtaku keikaku," *Wakkanai Puresu*, January 14th 1955.

²⁷ Ibid.

was a servant (kogata) [...] Those [Karafuto repatriates] who speak badly of Wakkanai are basically spitting in their own faces.²⁸

Friction clearly existed between repatriates and non-repatriates in Wakkanai. Ironically, the defeat of Tōmine in the mayoral election of 1959 brought the man who was to become most closely associated with the public representation of Karafuto repatriates to office. Hamamori Tatsuo was mayor of Wakkanai from 1959 until 1991. Although not a Karafuto repatriate himself, his role in memory-making about them is difficult to overstate.

The campaign to build Hyōsetsu no mon (The Gate of Ice and Snow)

Hamamori had been born in Wakkanai before entering Waseda University in 1937. After leaving the university he worked in the mining industry in Manchuria. He is said to have returned to Japan in December 1945 which was before large-scale repatriation of Japanese from the north-east of China began.²⁹ The head of a large fishing company,

²⁸ "Sōya hōki - Karafuto hikiagesha," *Nikkan Sōya*, 9th July 1955.

²⁹ Takatsu, *Wakanai no hitotachi*, 30.

after becoming mayor, Hamamori gained his credentials in 1962 by negotiating a deal with the US military for a substantial contribution to the cost of a new mains water supply for the city.³⁰ The following year he had another success by securing the financial means to erect two monuments in the city.

Hamamori's backing was crucial to Hyōsetsu (and Kunin) being built in Wakkanai. The gravitas of the mayor's office helped to secure the funding needed to realise the ambitious plans which became public in mid-1962. The local press reported that moves were underway to build a monument to Karafuto repatriates. A repatriate from Odomari called Sasai Yasuichi had approached an old acquaintance from his former hometown – Fujita Fumiaki – another Karafuto repatriate who had become a senior figure in the Wakkanai Chamber of Commerce and also the head of the local tourist board. Involved in Odomari's lively shipping industry, after repatriation Sasai had rebuilt his business in Aomori. He now wanted to build a monument to "console the spirits of the first

³⁰ Hokkaido Shinbun sha, *Jinmyaku Hokkaido*, 243.

[Japanese] pioneers of Karafuto”.³¹ Fujita introduced Sasai to Hamamori and the mayor indicated his support by offering to provide a prime location in the city’s park. The following year the ‘Karafuto ireihi konryū kisei kai’ (Association to build a Karafuto monument; hereafter ‘Kisei Kai’) was organised. The aim was to raise 600 million yen to erect a monument designed by one of Japan’s leading sculptors – Hongo Shin. The Kisei Kai was fronted by Yonekura Hachirōta who poured his energies into raising the necessary support. The name of the monument came from the sculptor: it was to be called ‘Hyōsetsu no mon’ (The Gate of Ice and Snow; hereafter ‘Hyōsetsu’).

Yonekura worked closely with Hamamori whose backing for the monument added considerable weight to Kisei Kai activity. For Hamamori, there were obvious benefits such as consolidating his support amongst the repatriate section of the local electorate. Building Hyōsetsu was also said to have advantages for non-repatriates by raising the city’s profile and boosting tourism. The local press had urged the Wakkanai’s leaders to find ways of attracting tourists. In particular, an editorial suggested “Tourism [...]

³¹ "Karafuto no senkusha no rei o itamu," *Nikkan Sōya*, 26th August 1962.

requires the investment of capital and a strategy to generate media interest".³²

Hamamori was able to realise both of these objectives. After the proposal to build Hyōsetsu was revealed, the same newspaper enthusiastically reported "Tens of thousands of repatriates to come to Mount Ura [in Wakkanai]" and plans to draw the media attention to the city ("Hyōsetsu no mon posters are to be handed out across the country").³³

Raising money was a skill Yonekura had honed through his unstinting efforts for Wakkanai's fire service. In February 1963, Yonekura toured Hokkaido meeting Karafuto repatriate groups and appealing for financial support. He reportedly received an enthusiastic welcome. As the head of the Wakkanai branch of Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (Karafuto Alliance; hereafter 'Kabaren'), Yonekura also had access to a nationwide network of repatriate groups. National press coverage suggested that

³² "Kankō chakusō," *Nikkan Sōya*, 6th June 1962.

³³ "Dōhō sūman nin ga urayama ni," *Nikkan Sōya*, 21st March 1963.

Hyōsetsu was supported by “donations from Karafuto repatriates scattered across the country”.³⁴ However, the reality was Hyōsetsu’s construction depended on one extremely wealthy donor to cover half of the costs. In April 1963, Kabaren’s newsletter announced that Kihara Toyojirō had agreed to donate 300 million yen.³⁵ Kihara, who also had connections with Odomari, had made his fortune in Karafuto’s highly lucrative timber industry. A close acquaintance of Sasai, the two men met with Hamamori and agreed to make a contribution. The mayor’s name appeared below the announcement and he took the credit for having brought capital into the city for tourism.

Hongo Shin travelled from his home in Tokyo to visit Wakkanai Park to get an idea of the location for the monument he was being asked to create. He wrote about being taken aback by the beauty of the site and how he realised that his sculpture would have

³⁴ "Karafuto o shinobu hi," *Asahi Shinbun*, 2nd March 1963.

³⁵ "Kokoro no yasuragi o eyō," *Kabaren Jōhō*, April 1963.

to be big enough not to appear dwarfed by its surroundings.³⁶ He also met with some of the members of the Kisei Kai to learn about what they envisaged the monument as representing. According to the Kisei Kai, the monument would be dedicated to “our ancestors who settled Karafuto and who are now buried there” and “all those Japanese who lost their lives in the fighting or trying to escape across the Soya Straits”.³⁷ The Kisei Kai’s words reflected a theme in rhetoric about Karafuto that was examined by Tessa Morris-Suzuki. Examining the production of a 1941 film backed by Karafuto local government, she identified a “Karafuto identity” based on the idea of the Japanese settler to Karafuto as a pioneer opening new lands for development.³⁸ The film, and much of the accompanying rhetoric that appeared in *The Karafuto* magazine were

³⁶ "Nihon Saihokutan no ireihi," *Tokyo Shimbun (Evening edition)*, 26th August 1963.

³⁷ "Heiwa no negai o komete," *Hokkaido Shimbun (Sōya/Rumoi version) (Morning edition)*, 16th August 1963.

³⁸ See Chapter 1 for a fuller discussion of Morris-Suzuki’s analysis.

closely associated with the elite of local society. Hyōsetsu represented the afterlife of this elite-centred discourse about the 'meaning' of Karafuto and the 'achievements' of Japanese settlers.

The campaign to build Hyōsetsu revolved around two actors: the small group of Karafuto repatriates active in the Wakkanai Chamber of Commerce, and local government in the form of the mayor and the deputy mayor. Without the political connections of men like Tōmine and Yonekura the monument would probably not have been built. Furthermore, the narrative about Karafuto repatriates articulated through the Kisei Kai's campaign and Hyōsetsu was shaped by men such as Tōmine and Yonekura. Referring to such individuals as 'repatriates' obscures their pre-war and wartime roles in society as agents of the state. The 'loss' of empire in 1945 did not bring an end to the ways of talking about Karafuto that these men had grown familiar with. Hyōsetsu's construction meant the reconstruction of a particular discourse about Karafuto that had emerged in the late-1930s and early-1940s. This was a discourse largely promoted by the official elites of Karafuto – in short, a discourse backed by the state.

The public representation of Karafuto repatriates would not have been possible without the support of the key local state actor: Hamamori Tatsuo. If he had not lent his support, securing land and capital for Hyōsetsu would have been difficult. Hamamori's position helped to legitimise the message of the Kisei Kai. As shown by the attitude of the local press in the mid-1950s, there had been strong opposition towards repatriates in Wakkanai. The mayor's office was crucial as an institution through which Tōmine and Yonekura could articulate a public representation of Karafuto repatriates. Media at the local, regional and national levels were then quick to take-up the claims of Hamamori and the Kisei Kai that "all 400,000 Karafuto repatriates" were united in wanting to see such a monument being built.

Conclusion

In 1962 when the campaign to build monuments in Wakkanai was gathering pace, one of Hokkaido's two main newspapers – the Hokkai Taimusu – assembled a small group of repatriates for a discussion. Published under the heading 'A Roundtable to remember Karafuto' (Karafuto o shinobu zadankai), five men described by the newspaper as "representatives of Karafuto repatriates" were invited to share their memories of their

former home.³⁹ One of those asked to participate was Tōmine Motoji who, since failing in his bid to become the mayor of Wakkanai, had become a senior figure in a construction firm. The four others had all been town councillors or businessmen in the days of empire. During the introductions, one of the men modestly glossed his personal history as “starting in the pulp industry, moving into the building materials trade and later returning with nothing in November 1945”. Tōmine, speaking up for the reputation of the man, jokingly intervened “at the end of the war (...) you were on the Toyohara Council (...) you were one of the *genrō*”.⁴⁰

This quotation gets to the heart of what I have tried to show in this chapter. When a public representation of Karafuto repatriates began to be articulated in the early 1960s, the voices being heard were, more often than not, those of what one historian has termed ‘men of influence’ from the days of empire. Such men, by dint of having been

³⁹ "Karafuto o shinobu," *Hokkai Taimusu*, 27 October 1962.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

well-connected and powerful figures in pre-war and wartime society were often able to move into influential positions in the post-war. One vehicle through which they made the transition was as 'representatives' of repatriates through repatriate groups such as Karafuto Renmei and the organisation's local branches in places like Wakkanai. The public telling of the 'story' of repatriates and Karafuto through monuments like Hyōsetsu, was a narrative constructed overwhelmingly from the memories and experiences of these men of influence. Furthermore, these men were able to build monuments in a city where tensions between repatriates and non-repatriates had run high because they were able to secure the backing of local politicians.

Overall, what this case study points towards is a need to reassess our understanding of post-war Japanese society as being characterised by the 'silence' of the state on the question of the lost empire. Such a view depends on a conception of the state that is too narrow. Influential repatriates – the key figures behind the public representation of repatriates – were more often than not agents of the state during the war. After 1945 many became officials and semi-officials in local politics. The importance of building bridges with existing local elites also shows that the local representatives of the state

were deeply engaged with repatriates. Therefore, to assume that the state left repatriates to form their own memories and interpretations of the fallen empire is dangerously misleading.

Chapter 6 – Histories of Karafuto

Some of the men who had been behind the campaign in Wakkanai to build the two monuments were well-known faces at the Tokyo office of the National Karafuto Alliance (Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei; hereafter 'Kabaren'). Yonekura Hachirōta, in particular, would usually call in at the office whenever he went to Tokyo. From 1966, visitors to the Kabaren office became more frequent as the organisation started a burst of document gathering, interviews and roundtable discussions that would culminate in the writing of the book *Karafuto Shūsenshi* ("Karafuto at the war's end"; hereafter 'Shūsenshi').

Finally published in 1973 under Kabaren's name, the book was edited by a committee called the *Karafuto shūsenshi kankōkai*. The book's contents mainly covered the period from 1941 when Japan declared war on the US and the British Empire up to the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. This marked the moment when Japan officially renounced any claims to its former colonies, including what had been Karafuto. However, as the authors of the *Shūsenshi* emphasised, territorial claims to the southern

half of Sakhalin awaited determination at an international conference.¹ The book, therefore, covered the period when Japanese society moved from fighting a “Total War” to embracing defeat under the Occupation. On Karafuto, Japanese rule was ended by the Soviet-Japanese War fought in August 1945. Incorporation of the lower half of Sakhalin Island into the USSR followed along with the arrival of Russian settlers and the departure of most of the Japanese.

As shown by the foreword written by the Chairman of Kabaren, post-war politics in the form of Japan’s territorial dispute with the USSR featured prominently in the book. The *Shūsenshi*, as a historical source about Karafuto, is usually treated with strong scepticism over the viewpoint that its authors presented. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki suggested, during Japanese rule representations of Karafuto by the colonial government almost completely ignored the role of Koreans and Chinese in the colony and exoticized that of the indigenous population. That the *Shūsenshi* also contains almost no information about the post-war fates of the island’s “non-Japanese”

¹ Karafuto Shūsenshi Kankōkai, *Karafuto Shūsenshi*, Kankō no kotoba.

population means Morris-Suzuki's argument that there has been "amnesia about the colonial past in postwar Japan" is an easy one to make. The Shūsenshi appears as a good example of repatriates' highly selective remembering of the past.

The criticism of such "selective" remembering increases once the post-war history of repatriates is placed in the context of discussions about Japanese "victim consciousness" (被害者意識) and "historical awareness" (歴史認識). The main way former Japanese settlers are said to have remembered their past is as "repatriates". This meant portraying themselves as "victims" for the purpose of obtaining compensation from the Japanese government for lost overseas assets. The historian James Orr's thesis that the "national ideology" of Japanese post-war society was the "victim as hero" is, in part, based on evidence from the movement for compensation conducted by repatriates in the 1950s and 1960s. Orr argued that in a society where almost everyone could claim to have been a victim of the war in some way, repatriates sought to present themselves as having gone overseas in the service of the state and as having lost more than other Japanese when the empire later collapsed and repatriation followed. Their success in using the "mythology of victimhood" led to the

government making compensation payments in 1957 and 1967. Following the latter date, according to Orr, repatriates now took their place alongside other victims of the war.²

Orr's argument about the relations between "repatriates" and the Japanese government suggest that, in the post-war, there was a complex interaction between the two that shaped how Japanese colonial returnees came to remember their past. There has, however, been almost no research into that relationship. What exists instead is a conceptual framework that explains repatriates and the State as two separate actors. Furthermore, the State is usually considered as having had little to do with post-war discourses in Japanese society about the former empire. Repatriates are viewed as a self-contained group largely left to come to terms with the end of the empire on their own. This meant either lobbying the government for compensation as victim as a "repatriate activist", or it involved forming individual "subaltern" narratives in opposition to the State's "official history" of repatriation.

² Orr, *The Victim as Hero*, 156-169.

The remainder of this chapter will use the Shūsenshi to suggest that much of the above interpretation in the existing literature is problematic. That the historical viewpoint put forward in Shūsenshi was a highly selective interpretation of Karafuto is an obvious, but important point. The most common explanation given for this is that the book was written by “the former Japanese elite of Karafuto”. However, this leads to the question of exactly who the former elite were and, more importantly, why did their version of Karafuto history become so entrenched? This chapter argues that their capability to be heard depended on their position vis-à-vis the institutions of the State and on the appeal of the narrative they told.

Repatriate activists

During Yonekura’s visit, he met two of the most important officers for the organisation: Shimode Shigeo (1899-1989) and Kaneko Toshinobu (1891-1974). Shimode was the Chairman of Kabaren from 1968-1973 whilst Kaneko, after 15 years as an executive officer, had become a senior advisor to the organisation in 1966. These two men, along with a younger official called Kimura Makoto (1912-1984), were appointed to the “Karafuto History Editorial Committee” (樺太史編集委員会; hereafter “Committee”) set-up

inside Kabaren in 1964.³ However, as the “Editorial summary” at the back of the Shūsenshi makes clear, the published book was more than the product of these three individuals alone. In May 1969, the Committee presented a 35 chapter manuscript to the Governor of Hokkaido (no copy of this exists in the prefectural archives). What does remain is the first draft of the book prepared by a local journalist called Kaneko Toshio. In 1965, he had written a newspaper series called “The story of the end of the war” (*Shūsen monogatari*) for the Hokkai Taimusu. Appearing as 170 newspaper articles, the series introduced the stories of Japanese soldiers and civilians who had been on Karafuto when the Soviet-Japanese War began. Aside from these interviews, the journalist’s other connection with Karafuto was that he had been born there in 1929. He was asked to prepare polished prose from the Committee’s manuscript to make a readable and engaging publication. Another important figure who saw the Committee’s manuscript was the renowned anthropologist Takakura Shinichirō. He is said to have “supervised” the “main sections” of the manuscript whilst Shimode and another Kabaren

³ Karafuto Shūsenshi Kankōkai, *Karafuto Shūsenshi*, 59-60 Henshū no gaiyō.

official later added the last two chapters that addressed the “problem of the campaign for the return of territory”.⁴

The Shūsenshi cannot, therefore, be labelled simply as the work of “repatriate activists”.

The Hokkaido Prefectural Government (hereafter “Hokkaido-chō”), a prominent local journalist and several highly regarded academics were all involved in its publication.

The Committee also made much of the fact that Kabaren, in co-operation with Hokkaido-chō, had conducted a “survey of Karafuto repatriates” as a result of which “almost 500 memos (手記) were gathered from across the country”.⁵ Following the summary is a list of the sources on which the book was based. Rather than alphabetical order, the arrangement of the list implies the significance of the sources to the narrative being presented. Because the book lacks full references there is no way of knowing which source goes with what quotation and, therefore, from where the bulk of the

⁴ Karafuto Shūsenshi Kankōkai, *Karafuto Shūsenshi*, 59-60 Henshū no gaiyō.

⁵ Ibid.

material was drawn. Rather, it seems the Committee hoped to draw the reader's attention to the importance of the first entries which include a 7-volume "Karafuto Shūsenshi shiryō" authored by Kabaren and Kaneko Toshio's newspaper series "Karafuto Shūsen no mongatari". The Committee's explanation about the survey it conducted and the use of Kaneko's articles, which were widely acclaimed for reporting on "ordinary people", indicate that the Shūsenshi was intended to be read as a book based on evidence that was representative of Karafuto repatriates.

The above description suggests that classifying the Shūsenshi is difficult. As will be explained below, research for the book was made possible by financial support from Hokkaido-chō. This complicates the existing understanding of the role of the State in the post-war commemoration of the former empire. It was primarily written by a small group of repatriates but, as an analysis of their backgrounds will show, they were far from being "ordinary" Japanese. During the war, they all worked for various sections of the government. After the war, they portrayed themselves as repatriates but they retained many of the connections that had given them influence in their pre-war and wartime roles. They also involved ostensibly "ordinary" repatriates in the creation of the

Shūsenshi. The book was, in part, a product of oral history interviews and the written reflections of repatriates. This was before the “boom” in self-published repatriate writings which occurred from the mid-1970s, gathered pace in the 1980s and peaked in the 1990s. Importantly, many of the later self-histories refer to the Shūsenshi to provide factual support for the author’s individual reflections. This suggests that the Shūsenshi has achieved a certain significance in the remembering process.

Researching the history of Karafuto at the war’s end

The decision to start the research that led to the Shūsenshi appears to have been taken within Kabaren in the early-1960s. However, there had been discussion about producing an account of the end of the war in the pages of the organization’s newsletter (called “Kabaren Jōhō”) since the late-1940s. Shortly after Kabaren was established in 1948, one writer for its newsletter had urged the creating of a record of “the 20 to 30 years of our home-place”.⁶ This should “not just be about officials and old people but also include women, the young, farmers, *geisha*, fishermen etcetera, that is the nation

⁶ "Kiroku ga hoshii," *Chūō Jōhō*, September 1949.

(国民) and the people (人民)".⁷ Kabaren had also been making sporadic attempts to locate the scattered documents pertaining to Karafuto that remained in libraries and archives across Japan.

During the 1950s, various articles were published in Kabaren Jōhō about aspects of Karafuto's history. However, the Committee's formation in 1964 came with the explanation that completing a fuller historical account of Karafuto was a task that was long overdue. The Committee initially envisaged the publication of a "40-year history of Karafuto".⁸ In 1936, Karafuto-chō had published a tome on the administrative history of the colony which ran to just under 1800 pages.⁹ The Committee wanted to complete this administrative record up to the end of Japanese rule in 1945. However, that record

⁷ "Kiroku ga hoshii," *Chūō Jōhō*.

⁸ Shimode Shigeo, "Karafuto shiryō no henshū," *Kabaren Jōhō*, January 1965.

⁹ Karafuto-chō, *Karafuto-chō shisei 30 nen shi* (Karafuto: Karafuto-chō, 1936).

was one that could not be told without including an account of how the administration met its end in August 1945.

For the Committee, one of the most serious problems they faced was a lack of the kind of documents that upon which historical accounts were usually based such as government reports and officials' private papers. As explained in the "Index of Karafuto-related materials", the publication of which took place in conjunction with the Shūsenshi - wartime restrictions, the burning of classified documents and stringent checks at the time of repatriation meant that "nowadays the remaining documents are very few".¹⁰ For the Committee, the only way to overcome this problem was to listen to those who were assumed to know best about "what had happened" on Karafuto – Karafuto repatriates.

A precedent for the type of narrative that could be produced from the recollections of "ordinary people" had been set by the reporting of Kaneko Toshio in his "Shusen monogatari" series. Widely acclaimed at the time of publication in 1965, the articles

¹⁰ Hokkaido, *Karafuto kankei bunken sō mokuroku* (Sapporo: Hokkaido, 1970), 122.

were later re-published as the book “Karafuto and the summer of 1945” (樺太 1945 年夏) by the Kodansha publishing house in 1972.¹¹ The book’s title became that of the infamous film produced the following year with Kaneko acting as a consultant to the production company. Kaneko Toshio’s involvement in the Shūsenshi was announced in 1965.

The Committee

The Committee behind the Shūsenshi was made-up of three men. Each of them brought different insights to the project based on their pre-war and wartime pasts. In one sense, they can be labelled as “repatriate activists” engaged in a campaign for political change. However, this description is inadequate to capture the role they played in creating the Shūsenshi. Their backgrounds tied them closely to the wartime government. Two of the men – Kaneko Toshimune and Shimode Shigeo – were at the very top of the social hierarchy of colonial Karafuto. They were not representative of the “typical”

¹¹ Kaneko Toshio, *Karafuto 1945 nen natsu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1972),

Karafuto repatriate but, despite this, the narrative they constructed through the Shūsenshi is one that has endured.

Involved in the earliest versions of a Kabaren-backed history was Kimura Makoto. A newspaper man, Kimura had moved to Karafuto in 1932 to start work on the Karafuto Mainichi Shimbun.¹² In 1941, as part of the increasing wartime restrictions on the press, several local newspapers on Karafuto were merged.¹³ Kimura moved to Tokyo where he was employed on a part-time basis by the Ministry of Colonization (拓務省) and later the Ministry of Greater East Asia to write newsletters about agricultural settlement in Manchuria. Kimura was in Tokyo in August 1945 when news of the Soviet attack on Karafuto reached him. At the time, he was also working at the Karafuto-chō office in the capital. Amidst the confusion of the last months of 1945 as the Japanese government struggled to react to what was happening in the former colonies and occupied territories,

¹² Kimura Makoto, "Karafuto no saigo no shimbunjin," *Kabaren Jōhō*, February 1980.

¹³ Kimura, "Saigo no shimbunjin".

Kimura was one of the few people connected with Karafuto who was able to raise awareness about the thousands of evacuees who had landed in Hokkaido. He took part in two inspection trips to Hokkaido as part of a group from the Karafuto Association.¹⁴ The group visited temples in the Sapporo-area where many evacuees were being sheltered and went to the Karafuto-chō Hokkaido Office (this had been set-up in the Hokkaido government offices) to make a financial contribution from the Karafuto Association for relief activities for evacuees. In early 1946, Kimura, along with representatives for Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria, made an appeal on NHK radio for greater public understanding of repatriates.

Kimura used the information that he gathered from his trips to Hokkaido when he wrote some of the earliest accounts of repatriation from Karafuto. These were published in the newsletter of Kabaren which was formed in 1948. Kimura worked as reporter and editor of Chuo Jōhō which had a print run of 2000 copies. According to Kimura, the early editions of the newsletter mainly contained “straight” articles about relief activities being

¹⁴ Kimura Makoto, "'Kabaren jōhō' no kamiyo jidai," *Kabaren Jōhō*, April 1975.

directed towards repatriates. This was shown by the title of the series which was described as a "Record of the end of the war" (戦後の記録). The subjects Kimura wrote about included "The situation for repatriates without family in Japan"¹⁵, "Relief organisations connected with Karafuto"¹⁶ and the "Campaign by women and children for speeding-up repatriation".¹⁷ Kimura's involvement in fact-finding and reporting about these topics in the late-1940s was important when the *Shūsenshi* came to be written 20 years later.

¹⁵ Kimura Makoto, "Shūsen kiroku (naichi hen) Hikiage dōhō (4) Muenkosha no shochi," *Chūō Jōhō*, August 1949.

¹⁶ Kimura Makoto, "Shūsen kiroku (naichi hen) Hikiage dōhō (2) Engo dantai to Karafuto no baai," *Chūō Jōhō*, September 1949.

¹⁷ Kimura Makoto, "Shūsen kiroku (naichi hen) Hikiage dōhō (5) Fujoshi no hikiage sokushin undō," *Chūō Jōhō*, November 1949.

In the late-1940s, Kimura intended his reports to be one half of Kabaren's coverage of Karafuto. He would cover the situation in Japan for Karafuto repatriates whilst another writer would describe what life was like for those who had remained behind under Soviet control. In July 1949, as one of the main stories in the Japanese press was the arrival of "Red Repatriates" from detention in Siberia, Chuo Jōhō carried an advertisement for the forthcoming release of "Red Karafuto".¹⁸ The accompanying information exclaimed that this was "The definitive book on the [Karafuto] problem" and a "Record of blood in the northern region".¹⁹ Possibly because of the sensationalist tone of the promised book at a time when political relations with the USSR were highly sensitive, the August newsletter announced that the book's publication was being delayed because "corrections to the contents needed to be made".²⁰ The book does not appear to have

¹⁸ "Akai iro Minami Karafuto," *Chūō Jōhō*, July 1949.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Owabi," *Chūō Jōhō*, August 1949.

ever been published. However, the first half, which included information about the fighting on Karafuto, the evacuation and Soviet government did go into print as a “Special appendix” to Kabaren’s first publication – the “Directory of Karafuto people” (樺太人名鑑, 1949).²¹ The subtitle of the appendix became “Karafuto: Place of Fear” and the latter half of the original book, which was to include the chapter “Prisoners and Slaves” was not included.

The difficulties that faced Kimura and some of the other writers for the Kabaren newsletter in the late-1940s included not only the strained politics of the day but also their credentials to write about Karafuto. Kimura had been living in Tokyo since the early-1940s. Prior to this, as a journalist on one of the many local newspapers (in 1935 there were 40 newspaper companies operating on Karafuto²²), Kimura’s position in the hierarchy of colonial society was relatively low. He had also not been present when the

²¹ *Karafutojin meikan* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei Jōhōbu, 1949).

²² Karafuto Shūsenshi Kankōkai, *Karafuto Shūsenshi*, 33.

Soviet invasion occurred and neither had he experienced life as a detainee in the Siberian Internment. During the post-war, Kimura combined his work as the editor of Kabaren Jōhō with other work such as editing the in-house journal of the Department of Defence (防衛庁). Over the first two decades of the newsletter's existence, he shared much of the editing and organising with a man who had been much higher on the social scale and who had spent two and a half years as in prison camps on the Russian mainland – Kaneko Toshinobu.

After working for 15 years as an official for Kabaren, Kaneko retired but remained involved in the organisation to complete the work for the Shūsenshi. Kaneko had moved to Karafuto in 1918 to work at an elementary school. Over the next three decades he advanced in his career as a head-teacher to an appointed-government official to one of the most senior positions in Karafuto-chō. His work took him around the colony. He also became an important figure on the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. In December

1945 he was arrested by the USSR and detained on the Soviet mainland before being repatriated in August 1948. He started work for Kabaren in 1951.²³

This background in education and local administration meant that Kaneko was particularly well-connected and informed about the intricacies of the upper-echelons of colonial society on Karafuto. This was invaluable for carrying-out the research for the Shūsenshi. Because many important documents had been destroyed in the last days of the war and repatriates had been strictly checked to make sure they were not taking any papers with them, the researchers for the Shūsenshi recognised that the bulk of their information would have to come from interviews and memos. Kaneko's contacts and reputation meant that he acted as an interface for gathering materials from many of those deemed to be essential to piecing together a convincing narrative of Karafuto at the war's end.

Kaneko's influence on the Shūsenshi went further than persuading people to talk. He had been close to the Director-General in the last months of Japanese rule and the first

²³ "Kaneko Toshinobu shi no sōgi," *Kabaren Jōhō*, July 1974.

months of the Soviet regime. He could, therefore, claim to have an insight into decision-making at the highest levels of the colonial government. During the post-war, some of these decisions would be identified by many people as moments that had changed the course of their lives. One example was the instruction issued by the Director-General to begin the evacuation of women, children and the elderly in mid-August 1945 which culminated in the attack by an unidentified submarine on 22nd August on three evacuation boats off the Hokkaido coast with the loss of 1700 lives. Shortly after the *Shūsenshi* was published in 1973 and just before he died the following year, Kaneko wrote a series of articles called "Secret talk from the end of the war" (終戦私話).²⁴ Recalling the final fraught days in Karafuto-chō as the Director-Governor ordered his officials to issue directives and send information further up the government's chain of command, Kaneko reflected on whether one of the directives he had drafted

²⁴ Kaneko Toshinobu, "Shūsenshiwa," *Kabaren Jōhō*, September 1972. This was a series of seven articles, the last of which was printed in April 1973.

had included the evacuation order which included the three boats that were later torpedoed.²⁵

Kaneko's thoughts, written down almost three decades later, also included the deaths of the nine telephone operators at Maoka. Kaneko wrote, "...literally, at the time everything was being turned upside-down, around the island white flags were showing..."²⁶

Accounts from several histories of the fighting on Karafuto emphasise that the orders given to the Japanese forces were contradictory and resistance was still continuing in parts of the colony.²⁷ Kaneko's words hint at how high-ranking officials may have later tried to rationalize their roles in wartime events. By arguing that at the time of crucial

²⁵ Kaneko Toshinobu, "Shūsen shiwa - (1) Kazoku no taitō," *Kabaren Jōhō*, September 1973.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Stephan, *Sakhalin*, 153; Katō, 'Dai Nippon Teikoku' *hōkai*, 208.

decisions that affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of people that Karafuto was in a state of surrender criticism could be deflected and consciences cleared.

The seven articles written by Kaneko were almost a microcosm of the Shūsenshi. He began his account with the start of the Soviet attack on 9th August. His arrest and trial by the Soviet authorities, followed by his detention on the mainland formed the bulk the information he provided. In the penultimate article, he recalled how Ōtsu Toshio – the last Director-Governor of Karafuto – and another senior Karafuto-chō official, after their repatriation from Siberia, had called on him to “...help us in our future work for repatriates...” and with these words he began a hectic period working for Kabaren.²⁸

Detention in Siberia, therefore, appeared as a time when relationships with other senior officials from Karafuto were strengthened. The years after repatriation became a time when many of the same officials worked towards resolving various “issues” that emerged in the aftermath of the collapse of empire. The fifteen years spent working for

²⁸ Kaneko Toshinobu, "Shūsen shiwa (6) Maizuru ni jōriku shite," *Kabaren Jōhō*,

February 1973.

Kabaren, followed by the last years of his life as a contributor towards the Shūsenshi became his main work in the post-war. The structure of the Shūsenshi, where two-thirds of the total content addressed the organisation of Karafuto administration on the eve of the Japan-Soviet War, the fighting and then the establishment of the Soviet government reflected Kaneko's own focus on the battle followed by his encounter with the Soviet Union.

Kaneko was repatriated from the USSR nearly six months before most of the other senior officials of Karafuto-chō. During those six months, he paid visits to the families of several of those senior figures. One such family was the relatives of Shimode Shigeo.²⁹

Shimode was the third individual from Kabaren who had a significant input into the making of the Shūsenshi. Unlike Kimura and Kaneko Toshimune, Shimode had undertaken the first years of his schooling on Karafuto. When the first Junior High School on Karafuto was opened in the town of Odomari in 1912, Shimode was amongst

²⁹ Kaneko, "Shūsen shiwa (6)".

the first intake of pupils.³⁰ However, a few years later, he left Karafuto to attend High School in Sendai before entering Tokyo University. After graduating, he worked for the Oriental Development Company (東洋拓殖株式会社; hereafter “ODC”) and the Nanyō Takushoku Company (南洋拓殖株式会社), before moving back to Karafuto to work as a senior official at the Karafuto Development Company (樺太開発株式会社). Set-up in 1941, the company was jointly financed by Oji Seishi, the Oriental Development Company, Mitsui and Mitsubishi. Shimode was to be the ODC representative for the company.³¹ Shortly following the end of the war, Shimode was arrested by the USSR and sent to the Russian mainland before being repatriated in 1949 when the press coverage of the “Red Repatriate” was at its height. The September he arrived, Shimode attended a discussion at the Kabaren headquarters in Tokyo to talk about his experiences in detention. Speaking about repatriation, he referred to himself as

³⁰ "'Gekidō no jidai' o ayumareta senkusha e no tamashizume to inori - Shimode Shigeo san o itamu," *Kabaren Jōhō*, February 1989.

³¹ "Shimode Shigeo dai senpai no shi o itamu," *Kabaren Jōhō*, March 1989.

“returning with nothing as part of the lumpen proletariat and reliant on the support of old acquaintances”.³² One of these acquaintances invited Shimode to work for his film company which he did before becoming the Vice-Chairman of Kabaren in 1957 and then the Chairman in 1968.³³

Although Shimode’s reference to himself as “lumpen proletariat” was most likely no more than a casual remark, it actually revealed an important facet to how he was often portrayed. Because of his early background attending school on Karafuto, Shimode became known as the “representative of the Karafuto Second Generation”.³⁴ This was not only a description used many years after the end of Japanese rule on Karafuto; in the late-1930s and early-1940s local elites were involved in a dialogue about finding

³² "Kazoku no kurō ni kangeki Shimode shi, Shiberiya kara kaeru," *Chūō Jōhō*, September 1949.

³³ "Karafuto nise - Shimode Shigeo," *Kabaren Jōhō*, September 1959.

³⁴ "Karafuto nise no daihyō Shimode o itamu," *Kabaren Jōhō*, February 1989.

ways to encourage Japanese born and raised in Karafuto to return to the colony for work rather than live elsewhere in the empire. Shimode, as a man who had gone to school in the colony and then returned to work for the Karafuto Development Company, could be depicted as an example for emulation.

Shimode himself seems to have also accepted the role of second generation representative. In the 1950s he wrote about “the Karafuto repatriate, expelled from the land he developed with his own hands and where his relatives’ bones are buried” and referred to people he knew from Karafuto as “distinguished pioneers”.³⁵ He also wrote about the history of Karafuto as a place that that became “Japanese” as part of the “northern advance of the Japanese race”. Such rhetoric was an important part of wartime propaganda advanced by the Japanese government and the colonial authorities on Karafuto to reinforce people’s identification with the territory. Those who

³⁵ Shimode Shigeo, "Hitori ichidai," *Chūō Jōhō*, April 1952.

knew Shimode well, writing many years later and reflecting on the man's past, chose to describe him as a "*Kaitaku* man".³⁶

Such description of Shimode was suitable not only for his pre-war and wartime career path but also the political circles in which he moved in the post-war. At around the time that Shimode became the Vice-Chairman of Kabaren an old school and university friend announced his intention to run for the position of Governor of Hokkaido. In 1959, Machimura Kingo of the Liberal Democratic Party proved successful in his attempt to win the governorship by defeating the candidate from the Japan Socialist Party. For several years, Machimura had been a consultant (顧問) to Kabaren.³⁷ Shortly after announcing his bid to stand, a "Karafuto-related Machimura election committee" (樺太関係町村後援会) was formed.³⁸ At this time, Shimode was said to have "enthusiastically

³⁶ "Karafuto nise no daihyō".

³⁷ "Hitori ichidai"

³⁸ "Karafuto nise - Shimode Shigeo".

gone about his work, travelling back and forth [from Tokyo] to Hokkaido”.³⁹ For Machimura, the large number of Karafuto repatriates living in Hokkaido made them a valuable constituency to win over to his campaign. After the election victory, Shimode became a consultant to a Dai Showa Seishi (大昭和製紙) and following this, the new governor gave the go-ahead for the company to build a new factory on Hokkaido.⁴⁰

Hokkaido, in the first two decades of the post-war was often described as Japan’s most important site for “development” after the loss of the empire. Shimode spoke highly of Machimura, praising him as “a man of talent in the bureaucratic world” and his family as “pioneers of northern development”.⁴¹ Open expression of admiration in this way went beyond Shimode making simple platitudes to urge Karafuto repatriates to support

³⁹ “Karafuto nise - Shimode Shigeo”.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “Hitori ichidai”.

Machimura. It also encouraged Shimode to see an opportunity to write Karafuto into a major new history project.

The “New Hokkaido History” and the Shūsenshi

The 100 Year Anniversary of the “opening” of Hokkaido by the Meiji Government was due to be held in 1968. In preparation, Machimura had put Hokkaido-chō funding behind a group of prominent local academics to write the “New Hokkaido History” (新北海道史).

For Shimode, the history of “northern development” could not be told by referring to Hokkaido alone, but also had to include Karafuto and the Chishima archipelago of islands. As a man who had dabbled in writing such a history, Shimode also knew the importance of gathering documents to support any such narrative. Since the organisation’s foundation, Kabaren had made several attempts to locate and record documents related to Karafuto but lacked the manpower and resources to compile a comprehensive index from all of the potential locations where useful sources might be held.

In addition to the work on the New Hokkaido History, since the beginning of the 1960s a department within Hokkaido-chō had already begun to put together just such an index. In response to a petition containing over 3000 signatures by a local businessman who was also a repatriate from Karafuto, Hokkaido-chō had researched and written a pamphlet titled “A Record of Karafuto before the war” (戦前における樺太の概況).⁴² This small publication followed on from work began in the mid-1950s with the establishment of “Headquarters for Countermeasures Related to Reversion of Territory and Fisheries” (北海道総務部領土復帰北方漁業対策本部; hereafter “Taisaku Honbu”). This department had been established in Hokkaido-chō’s General Affairs Division in 1956 in the wake of the peace treaty negotiations between Japan and the USSR. Although nowadays often overlooked in discussions of the Northern Territories/Kurile Islands dispute, ambiguities (from the Japanese perspective) about the territorial status of the southern half of Sakhalin Island meant that the Taisaku Honbu became involved in research on Karafuto

⁴² Hokkaido Sōmubu Ryōdo Fukki Hoppō Gyogyō Taisaku Honbu, *Senzen ni okeru*

Karafuto no gaikyō, 1962, Hokkaido Monjokan.

in the 1950s and 1960s. By 1965, officials working for the department had collected and published three indexes of documents relating to Karafuto.

Machimura's Hokkaido history project and the research capabilities of the Taisaku Honbu meant that Hokkaido-chō was in a position to work with the Kabaren Committee on the Shūsenshi. In July 1965, Kabaren released the news that an agreement had been reached with Hokkaido-chō to begin work on a "History of Karafuto".⁴³ According to Shimode, the project had two main tasks in terms of writing a historical narrative. Firstly, there was a need to write the history of the ten-year period that came after the administrative history published by Karafuto-chō in 1936. Secondly, "the end of the war on Karafuto and the Japanese repatriation needed a correct record". Referring to the books "The end of the war in Manchuria and Mongolia" (満蒙終戦史) by the Man-Mō Dōhō Engokai published in 1962, and "Record of the end of the war in Korea" (朝鮮終戦の記録) by the prominent repatriate activist Morita Yoshio (1965), Shimode drew

⁴³ "Shūsen zengo no shiryō nado Karafuto shi hen san ni kyōryoku kitai," *Kabaren Jōhō*, July 1965.

attention to the fact that no similar work existed for Karafuto.⁴⁴ Further details revealed that the prominent academic Takakura Shinichirō, who was leading the project to prepare the New Hokkaido History, was to oversee the work. He would chair the “Karafuto kankei shiryō henshū kyōgi kai” (樺太関係資料編集協議会) which was to be set-up within Hokkaido-chō. This arrangement had arisen after negotiations between Shimode and Kaneko Toshimune and the Taisaku Honbu. The most important aspect of the tie-up with Hokkaido-chō was the provision of three years of funding within the Taisaku Honbu’ budget for the “a survey to collect documents relating to Karafuto”.⁴⁵ Shimode’s connection with Machimura had proved to be a valuable one for Kabaren’s goal of writing the definitive history of the end of the war on Karafuto.

⁴⁴ Manmō Dōhō Engokai, *Manmō Shūsenshi* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobōshinsha, 1962);

Morita Yoshio, *Chōsen shūsen no kiroku* (Tokyo: Gannando, 1964).

⁴⁵ "Karafuto shi henshū iinkai hōkoku," *Kabaren Jōhō*, July 1966.

Researching and writing the Shūsenshi

As Kaneko and Shimode knew especially well, one of the biggest problems confronting anyone about to research Karafuto in the 1940s and repatriation was a lack of documents. As the Soviet military was crossing the 50th parallel to attack Japanese forces, Karafuto-chō officials were being ordered to destroy as much documentation as possible and Kaneko later reflected on how he spent most of the period from 9th August 1945 until the 22nd - when the Red Army entered Toyohara - making sure any official paperwork that might be useful to the enemy was burned.

The upshot was that the Committee made numerous requests through the pages of Kabaren Jōhō for people to provide them with any materials that they might still have. This included remaining copies of the Karafuto-chō newsletter and the Karafuto Nichi Nichi and Karafuto Jihō newspapers. The Committee also knew that the bulk of their sources for the Shūsenshi would have to come from what people could remember of events almost two decades before. The researchers, therefore, asked people to write about what they remembered and to send the memos (手記) to Kabaren. However, whilst the Committee's appeal was made to anyone who might have useful information,

there was a distinct hierarchy in terms of whose recollections were assumed to be most useful to the Shūsenshi.

At the start of the three-year research period, the Committee issued a request for “former city-town-village heads” to provide a list of names showing who had headed the various local organisations under their jurisdiction. The organisations included consultative committees, chambers of commerce, military-auxiliaries (義勇隊), education boards and important businesses. This information, the Committee explained, was necessary “as one document showing the situation at the end of the war”.⁴⁶ The Committee went beyond requesting a list of names by outlining the kind of information that was expected in a written submission. The questions were as follows:

- 1) What was the situation like in the city-town-village at the time of the Soviet invasion?*
- 2) What was the situation like for people’s daily lives (confusion or relatively peaceful?)*
- 3) What happened at the time of the emergency evacuation (regarding documentation, for example)?*
- 4) What was the situation like when the Soviet military occupied the*

⁴⁶ Shimode Shigeo, "Karafuto henshū dayori," *Kabaren Jōhō*, August 1965.

city-town-village?

5) At that time, what happened to the military auxiliary groups?

6) What demands were made by the Soviet military?

7) What was the situation like for the local bureaucracy, city-town-village, businesses and other groups?

8) How was housing and property requisitioned?

9) What happened regarding taxation?

10) What happened regarding food supplies and other daily essentials?

11) What was the situation like for those employed by the Soviets?⁴⁷

For the initial three-year research period from April 1965 to May 1968 that was agreed by Kabaren and the Taisaku Honbu, an index of the documents was written and deposited in the Hokkaido-chō archives.⁴⁸ The first section listed “memos” received according to one of the four administrative districts that comprised Karafuto in 1945. For the Shisuka District there were 15 memos, for Toyohara there were 50, for Esutoru there were 21 and for Maoka there were 22. This made a total of 108 memos. The list also provided details about the former occupation of the author.

⁴⁷ “Shūsen zengo no shiryō”.

⁴⁸ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, *Karafuto shi shūshū shiryō mokuroku* 1968.

Table 1: Former employment of those making written submissions to Karafuto Renemi

between April 1965 and May 1968

	Shisuka	Toyohara	Esutoru	Maoka	TOTAL
Karafuto-chō employee (樺太庁員)	0	2	0	1	3
City/Town/Village					
Mayor (市町村長)	3	4	0	5	12
Deputy (助役)	2	2	1	1	6
Treasurer (収入役)	0	1	0	0	1
Representative (市議)	0	1	1	0	2
Other	0	3	4	0	7
Police					
Chief (警察署長)	2	2	2	1	7
Officer (警察署員)	1	1	1	1	4
Education					
Principal	4	21	7	8	40
Vice-principal	0	1	0	0	1
Teacher	1	1	0	0	2
PostOffice (郵便局長)	0	1	1	0	2
Railway (駅長)	0	0	0	1	1
Commerce (商業)	1	0	0	0	1
Farming	0	2	0	0	2
Fishing	0	1	0	0	1
Mine – Chief 炭鉱長)	0	1	0	0	1
Other	1	6	4	4	15
TOTAL	15	50	21	22	108

The above table shows that the memos gathered by Kabaren over the course of the research for the Shūsenshi came overwhelmingly from people who had been in positions of authority on Karafuto.⁴⁹ The request made in Kabaren Jōhō for information from such figures was reflected in the memos assembled by the Committee and from which they prepared a draft manuscript. Possibly, those who wrote memos also constructed their account using the prompts by the Committee as a guide.

Roundtable discussions

As well as asking for people to send in written memos, Shimode, Kaneko Toshimune and Kimura also conducted a series of roundtable discussions to gather information. These were held at the Kabaren office in Tokyo or at other venues in the city and took place between October 1965 and March 1968. According to the “Index of Collected Documents for the History of Karafuto”, 12 roundtables were held. The subjects for the roundtables were as follows:

⁴⁹ Table compiled from: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, *Karafuto shi shūshū shiryō*.

- 1) *Circumstances related to Karafuto-chō*
- 2) *Esutoru District*
- 3) *Shisuka District*
- 4) *Maoka District*
- 5) *Odomari*
- 6) *Toyohara*
- 7) *Toyohara and the surrounding area*
- 8) *The chronology of the end of the war*
- 9) *The Soviet occupation and the circumstances of the civilian administration*
- 10) *The emergency evacuation and the circumstances of repatriate groups*
- 11) *Settlement on Hokkaido and associated activities*
- 12) *Southern Karafuto and the forestry industry*⁵⁰

Missing from the above list, but mentioned in a summary of progress to date in Kabaren

Jōhō, were details of a roundtable held between the first and second roundtables.

According to the newsletter, the theme had been the “Rumoi Shipping Disaster”.⁵¹

Although two decades had passed since the attack which had claimed over 1700 lives,

this was still a highly controversial subject. For whatever reason, no mention was made

of this roundtable in the index deposited in the Hokkaido-chō archives.

⁵⁰ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, *Karafuto shi shūshū shiryō*, 1.

⁵¹ “Henshū iinkai hōkoku”.

As well as the date and the theme, the index showed the number of pages of notes taken at each roundtable. In terms of the number of pages of notes made (250), by far the most productive roundtable was the first about Karafuto-chō. The second roundtable, which covered the Esutoru District where some of the fiercest fighting had taken place, was next with 97 pages. The number of pages of notes taken decreased as the roundtable discussions continued. This possibly reflected the Committee becoming more familiar with the kind of recollections they were being told and feeling less need to make such comprehensive records. An exception was the tenth roundtable about the emergency evacuation and the early repatriate groups which led to 90 pages of notes. The evacuation was another contentious topic which might be expected to lead to a much discussion.

Aside from the topic of discussion, there was a further reason why some of the roundtables apparently generated more material than others: the people who were invited to attend and their relationship with the members of the Committee. Lists of who was invited to attend are not available for all of the roundtables. For the discussions about the situation at the end of the war in the four districts of Karafuto, most of the

participants were not those in the top few positions of authority in local society. For example, at the roundtable held for Esutoru District six people attended. The former employment of five of the people was listed as a school-teacher, the owner of a clothes shop, an employee also from the same clothing business, a dentist and an employee of a transportation firm. The sixth person appears to have been the only woman asked to participate in the series of roundtables. She was described as having been resident in an Oji Seishi company dormitory. The other roundtables for Maoka, Odomari and Toyohara had either five or six discussants that came from similar backgrounds. None had the kind of authority figures who had authored the majority of written submissions. The discussants for the roundtables on some of the most controversial themes such as the activities of Karafuto-chō, the establishment of the Soviet civilian administration, the emergency evacuation process and resettlement on Hokkaido however, were drawn from a different section of former colonial society. Present at the Karafuto-chō roundtable was Sugawara Michitarō and several other former senior officials. For the discussion about the Soviet takeover only one person was involved. Satō Kaoru who had been “Joint-Head of the Economic Section” (経済第二部課長). The roundtables on

the emergency evacuation and resettlement on Hokkaido both included Orito Sōichi and others who had been senior figures in Karafuto-chō.

The roundtable with Orito was particularly productive for the Committee because the information that he provided could be incorporated into a discussion about the origins of Kabaren. Orito had been involved in organising the first repatriate groups to form on Hokkaido into an overall group. The details of the discussion were left out of the Shūsenshi but included in Kabaren Jōhō. As a member of the Committee explained:

Karafuto Renmei is a reflection of “Karafuto”; it is a reflection of Karafuto-chō and it is a reflection of 40 years of development of the actual society of Karafuto. Karafuto Renmei came from Karafuto-chō. When the Karafuto-chō offices in Tokyo were closed in 1952, part of the building went to the central government for the Foreign Ministry and the other part was passed to Karafuto Renmei ⁵²

For the Committee, the Shūsenshi was not only about “the history of Karafuto at the war’s end” but also the creation of the organization through which they had tried to rebuild their own personal fortunes in post-war Japan: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. The

⁵² "Karafuto Renmei shi rensai," *Kabaren Jōhō*, February 1968.

way they wanted their organization to be viewed shaped the historical account that they crafted of Karafuto.

Conclusion

The Shūsenshi was finally published in 1973, almost 8 years after the project had begun. During the research process, Shimode had complained that eliciting recollections from repatriates was difficult because of the vagaries of people's memories. He argued that one way to resolve this problem would be to "build a monument".⁵³ In the same year as the book was published, the "Monument to the Development of Karafuto" (樺太開拓記念碑) was unveiled in the grounds of Hokkaido Shrine. The book and this monument can, therefore, be seen as a pair. However, in terms of influencing subsequent remembering about Karafuto, the book has had the greater influence. As a letter to the editors of Kabaren Jōhō mentioned shortly after the Shūsenshi was published: "This is the

⁵³ "Henshū iinkai hōkoku".

definitive book about Karafuto”.⁵⁴ Although the emphasis in the historical account presented in the Shūsenshi has been questioned and is rightly regarded with a high degree of skepticism, it is still the “go to” source for researchers, journalists and repatriates for “factual information” about Karafuto at the war’s end.

The creation of the Shūsenshi shows how the existing understanding which portrays repatriates and the State as two separate actors with the latter leaving the former to reach an accommodation with the Japan’s colonial past is highly problematic. The Committee behind the Shūsenshi were men with personal histories that tied them closely to the institutions of both the pre-war and post-war State. When they began to research and write the Shūsenshi they used the connections they had acquired to gain support from Hokkaido-chō. Their position in the social hierarchy of Karafuto also meant that they were able to organize the project by drawing together various figures of authority from colonial society. This included town and village heads, school principals, police chiefs and company presidents.

⁵⁴ "Shūsenshi o yonde - Karafuto ni kan suru kettei ban," *Kabaren Jōhō*, April 1973.

They also brought more “ordinary” repatriates into the project through a small number of roundtable discussions and the assistance of a young journalist. Whilst pointing to the inclusion of repatriates in the project to add a “popular” dimension to their work, the Committee ensured that the bulk of the material came from the top of the colonial hierarchy. This approach, however, was given validity by the Committee members’ own backgrounds which enabled them to portray themselves as sharing the same concerns as all Karafuto repatriates.

Conclusion

A well-received study of Colonial Korea concluded with the call for future research into “the legacies of empire [...] in the culture of silence and denial in Japan”.¹ The underlying purpose of this dissertation has been to question the assumption of “silence and denial”.² Put simply, examining the case of Karafuto repatriates in post-war Hokkaido shows that a significant amount of “memory-making” about colonial society has taken place on Japan’s northern-most island. Some of the most obvious signs are the monuments that stand in several prominent locations. Some of the more powerful tools are perhaps the books and museums that have been written and curated. Therefore, rather than start from the assumption that people have somehow misremembered or even avoided thinking about Japan’s colonial past, we should

¹ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire - Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 2011), 402.

² Ibid.

approach the subject by trying to understand what people have remembered, how they have come to remember it in the ways that they have and why. Almost inevitably, as scholars examining post-war Germany have shown, what people remember and what scholars would like them to remember are two very different things.³

This dissertation has focused on Japan's transition from empire to nation-state or, in other words, the process of decolonization (or de-imperialization) of a former colonizing society. This is a growing body of research which mainly includes work on the end of the European empires but has recently come to include the previously little examined case of Japan (despite Japan, by 1942, having had one of the largest empires in world history). One theme that has emerged in the existing literature is the common experience that many former colonial settlers had on their return to the metropole of discrimination and stigmatization. In Japan, the term *hikiagesha* was coined shortly after the end of the war and many Japanese who had settled in the empire and occupied

³ Robert G Moeller, *War stories: the search for a usable past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Introduction.

territories (as well as many soldiers who were not settled overseas but ended their time in the military there) found that, they too, were treated as second-class citizens in post-war society.

On one level, historians can take the category of repatriate and use it to track people's post-war lives. From this perspective, most repatriates do appear as second-class citizens who at first engaged in claims for compensation and later came to hold nostalgic views of their lives in the colonies. Depending on the historian's perspective, a more sympathetic portrayal of repatriates would then highlight hardships endured and losses suffered. A more critical depiction would cite an overemphasis on Japanese suffering at the expense of the "real" victims who were the colonized. Most existing research is closer to the second approach.

The main problem with this kind of analysis has been mentioned in the existing literature without ever being fully addressed: the point that repatriates' experiences showed considerable variation depending on where in the empire they stood, not only geographically but also socially, come August 1945. The persistent use of the term repatriate in official, popular and academic discourse was part of *sengo shori* (post-war

settlement) in Japan. By bracketing people as repatriates their viewpoints became understandable in post-war society. However, leaving the analysis at the level of repatriate means beginning from the official, media and “non-repatriate” perspective. It also means considering repatriates as merely one more “group” that made up post-war society and spent the post-war in varying degrees of conflict and consensus with other actors.

Of this history of conflict and consensus over the course of Japan’s *sengo*, the relationship that is most often cited in regard to repatriates is that between them and the Japanese State. This dynamic is most evident in narratives about the Japanese who were in Manchuria whether as soldiers or civilians. As the usual narrative goes: the Japanese State (meaning the Tokyo government and bureaucracy) continued to send Japanese to Manchuria as “agricultural pioneers” right up to May 1945 and then left them to their fate when the Soviet military attacked. The Japanese State also showed little interest in what happened to its soldiers who were taken prisoner by the Red Army until it was too late and they were being transported to labour camps in the USSR. In the post-war, repatriates then tried to reconcile their feelings towards the State considering

how lightly it had treated their lives in the pre-war and wartime with how heavily in the post-war it emphasised its munificence in ensuring that Japanese ethnic solidarity had prevailed and all who wanted to had been returned to their “home-place” of Japan.

From this gap between the “official history” (as told in the words of MHW officials) and “repatriates’ history” (as recounted in “unmediated” sources by repatriates such as works of literature and self-published histories and “mediated” sources by journalists, film and documentary makers about repatriates) came the position that repatriates were victims.

Missing from such a depiction is how certain repatriates interacted with the State. This interaction refers not only to the time after they became repatriates, but also to their pre-war and wartime lives. A key point of this dissertation is that this pre-war and wartime period should be connected to the post-war time when people were transformed into repatriates. Only once this connection is made can repatriates be understood on their own terms in post-war society rather than primarily from an interpretation promoted by officials, the media and metropolitan majority.

This dissertation has avoided making the obvious point about repatriates seeing themselves victims. At a superficial level this seems to be the case. However, the same could also be said about people bombed out of their houses, survivors of the A-bombs, wounded veterans and war widows to mention only a few of the groups which endured particularly difficult post-war histories. If repatriates did come to see themselves as victims then it was a position that had to be formulated. This required people to act, to organise, to network and to negotiate. It is in this context that repatriates should be analysed. It is this formulation for repatriates from Karafuto that I have tried to trace in this dissertation.

Doing so required breaking down the amorphous category of repatriate. One insight from the focus on Karafuto repatriates is that many overseas Japanese identified with the part of the empire in which they lived. That identification remained strong after August 1945. It did not simply metamorphose into “repatriate” despite official and Japanese media sources suggesting otherwise. Ways of identifying with Karafuto obviously varied across class, occupation, age and gender and over time as Japan went from the ruins of defeat in August 1945 to being the third largest economy in the world

by 1973. There was, however, a “core” element to the discourse about Karafuto repatriates that emerged in the post-war. In Chapter 1 I attempted to identify the source of this discourse and some of the main themes that were promoted. I argued that a small group of writers, as well as local men of influence, were particularly active in the late-1930s and early 1940s in promoting a certain vision of the kind of place they thought Karafuto was. One of the most important themes that recurred in their writings was that of the “divide” between the first and second generation of Japanese settlers living on Karafuto. Individuals whose backgrounds meant they defined themselves as being in the first generation wrote of their anxiety that younger people were turning their backs on Karafuto. In turn, other writers who called themselves part of the second generation explored how a greater sense of attachment to Karafuto could be instilled in people of a similar age. Such writing in the context of a colonial settler society was not unique to Karafuto. Similar discursive trends can also be seen in contemporary newspapers and magazines from settler society in Colonial Korea. Instead, the point of Chapter 1 was to highlight how this pre-war and wartime discourse provided an

important template for people when they returned to the idea of Karafuto in the post-war.

Chapter 2 follows by showing the “passage through” of certain key figures from pre-war and wartime society. In nearly all of the previous research, little or no attempt has been made to connect the pre-war and post-war lives of those who became “repatriates” after August 1945. Importantly, I argued that in the case of Karafuto, there was a vital period of almost 16 months between when the war ended and prior to the start of the official repatriation from the Soviet zone in December 1946. During this time almost one-quarter of the pre-war Japanese population of Karafuto left for Japan either as evacuees or escapees. Although usually incorporated into the term repatriate, both of these groups had a significant impact on how the figure of the Karafuto repatriate formed. Firstly, several men of influence such as Orito Sōichi escaped from Karafuto to Hokkaido where they became the leaders of the main repatriate group – the Rengōkai. Secondly, before the end of 1946, the rationale for the work of his group was to differentiate evacuees from Karafuto from the tens of thousands of other people in

Hokkaido who the local authorities classified as “war victims”. In seeking to make this distinction clear to officials, the work of repatriate groups began.

Chapter 2 then follows how the Rengōkai and other repatriate groups such as the Otaru Renmei went about the task of insinuating their officials into local political networks.

Pre-war and wartime social capital such as experience in Karafuto colonial government circles and in local town administration was a necessary qualification that most of those involved in repatriate groups at this time held. Officials who went directly from positions in Karafuto-chō to Hokkaido-chō were seen as particularly important contacts to maintain and, if possible, manipulate.

The passage through of men of influence from pre-war and wartime into the post-war also meant the continuation of ideas from the earlier periods. The long-standing vision of people working as self-sufficient farmers was brought from Karafuto to Hokkaido. So too was the idea that the “Karafuto second generation” constituted a group that was at risk if some kind of structure based on “Karafuto” was not provided for them. This resurgence of anxiety about younger repatriates combined with a post-war Japanese society in flux as Occupation reforms enabled various political ideas from the left to be

expressed more openly. The appeal of socialism to some writers in repatriate newspapers is clearly evident and so to the response that the “Karafuto youth” were in danger of being led astray.

Importantly, even those repatriate writers who claimed to be in favour of socialism and who often expressed sharp criticism of the men of influence in charge of the Rengōkai should be viewed within a trans-war context. They predominantly came from a self-styled “Karafuto literary group” who, during the 1930s had occasionally been critical of the colonial authorities, but who by the early-1940s had largely been co-opted into support for the war effort and wrote accordingly as propaganda hacks. Their return to writing in the post-war and their post-war accounts of Karafuto were shaped by this trans-war history rather than being primarily the result of a “repatriate community” embracing post-war democracy.

The third chapter shifts the analysis to the period after official repatriation had begun and onto a different set of actors from the repatriate groups. Previous research has explained how the response of the Japanese government to repatriation was to create the official category of *hikiagesha*. One of the main points of Chapter 3 is that the

Japanese government's actions must be situated within those of the Occupation. SCAP had an important influence on how the figure of the repatriate emerged in the post-war. Initially, this was through SCAP officials' emphasis on repatriates' "guilt" for assisting in the implementation of Japanese colonialism. As the Cold War heated-up, this interpretation was allowed to quietly fade whilst that of the repatriate "coming home" co-existed with that of the repatriate as "communist threat". These two sets of images were the work of different sections of SCAP. The so-called intelligence-arm of SCAP – G-2 Section – did much to promote "Red Repatriate" rhetoric which, considering the reputation of its lead officer (General Charles Willoughby) is unsurprising.

More important was the role of G-3 Section which oversaw most of the planning of repatriation. Officers in G-3 based operations on a set of assumptions about the "ideal repatriate" of which the fundamental belief was that repatriation would be able to proceed smoothly largely because most overseas Japanese had a "home" to which they could return to and start the process of reintegration into post-war society. From 1947 onwards, as the political stakes surrounding repatriation became higher, G-3 was involved in promoting repatriation as the "story" of US goodwill towards the Japanese

people. Any narrative that threatened to contradict this version of events, therefore, was potentially damaging to a key part of SCAP policy towards its increasingly important Cold War ally.

This leads to the second point of Chapter 3: SCAP's assumptions about who a repatriate was were challenged by repatriation from Karafuto to Hokkaido. Local officials from Hokkaido-chō, under scrutiny from the US Military Government Team, explained the difficulties of managing repatriation through the concept of the Karafuto repatriate. The official categories for repatriation included that of "repatriate without relatives" (無縁故者). Hokkaido-chō officials, working with "repatriate representatives" from the Rengōkai, used this category to argue that the needs of repatriates in Hokkaido differed from other parts of Japan.

An important side-effect of MGT scrutiny of Hokkaido-chō was to direct officials towards making contact with repatriates. This took the form of co-operation between local officials and those figures deemed to be the representatives of repatriates – namely men of influence such as Sugawara Michitarō who had been important in pre-war Karafuto. As shown in other areas of Japanese society after the "reverse course" from

1947, SCAP's concerns to fight communism in Japan meant support for many pre-war Japanese elites and secured their passage through to the post-war.

By 1950, approximately 10% of the population of Hokkaido had come to the island as repatriates from various parts of the former empire. However, over two-thirds of this total had been in Karafuto. Chapter 4 examined the writing of one repatriate who worked as a newspaper journalist on Karafuto and Hokkaido. This micro-level of analysis showed that the journalist – Ōhashi Kazuyoshi – expressed his greatest anger towards the wartime colonial elite of Karafuto. This is an important point because it shows that, in contrast to the efforts by repatriate groups to create a sense of shared identity around the idea of Karafuto as home-place, by the mid-1950s there was still no widely agreed upon narrative about the war's end on Karafuto. The editors of the newspaper Ōhashi wrote for – the Hokkai Taimusu – published the series *Ushinawareta Karafuto* in expectation that it would be popular with their readers. This suggests that Ōhashi was not alone in his views about Karafuto.

A second important implication of Chapter 4 came from putting Ōhashi's writings (which were some of the first to appear on Karafuto) alongside other "repatriate accounts"

which had become widely available in society at the time. These other writings were dominated by literature by and about Japanese who had been in Manchuria when the USSR declared war against Japan. Fictionalized accounts based on the experience of repatriation such as that by Fujiwara Tei, and memoirs about life in the Soviet gulag including that of Takasugi Ichirō both emphasised the act of returning to Japan as the central theme of what being a repatriate meant. Ōhashi's account of Karafuto, however, although written only a few years later, concentrated less on return and more on the "loss" of Karafuto as his "home-place". To assist him in continuing to identify with Karafuto as his home-place he ascribed "colonialism" to the former Japanese elite who had shown little concern about ordering "ordinary people" to destroy their property and to abandon their homes.

Chapter 5 moved on from Ōhashi's articles to consider how a public narrative in keeping with that of the Rengōkai in the late-1940s and more supportive of the message that all Karafuto repatriates should unite came to be projected through the monument The Gate of Ice and Snow in the city of Wakkanai. Returning to the point made in Chapter 3 about the importance of connections between leading Karafuto repatriates and officials in local

government, the chapter argued that in the mid-1950s there was initially little sympathy in the city for repatriates (who made up almost 20% of the local population). The success of several repatriates in accessing local networks of political influence was a necessary part of the reason why, by the early 1960s, the city had two monuments about Karafuto repatriates on which it based its public image. The influence of these repatriates alone, however, was not sufficient: the backing of Wakkanai's mayor was what enabled sufficient funds to be raised to construct the monuments.

Although this might seem like a local case study, there are broader implications to the building of the monuments in Wakkanai. These relate to the means by which a public narrative about Karafuto came to be formulated in the 1950s and 1960s. Previous research emphasised the divide between "repatriates" and "the state". Wakkanai shows that, on this occasion, the main representative of the state in local politics – the city mayor – was a key player in working with the more influential repatriates to enable them to get their representation of Karafuto set in stone as the monument The Gate of Ice and Snow.

The final chapter analysed the writing of the main text about Karafuto during the wartime and the four year period between the collapse of Japanese control and the end of group repatriation. Karafuto Shūsenshi was researched and written by a group of leading repatriates, prominent academics and a well-known local journalist. The money to research the book came from Hokkaido-chō. The text was, therefore, a joint effort between the various “groups” in society that in previous research have been assumed to have taken opposing positions.

The detail of the book shows how accounts such as Ōhashi Kazuyoshi’s were incorporated and selectively edited so that criticism of the colonial elite was filtered out. The use of interviews, roundtables and solicited reports also enabled the researchers to claim that their work was representative of all Karafuto repatriates. However, examination of some of the original sources used to produce the book shows that those involved were drawn from the upper-echelons of colonial society. Since the book’s publication in the early-1970s, it has become the standard source for not only researchers but also many repatriates who started to write memoirs and “self-histories”

(*jibunshi*) from the early-1980s onwards. The influence of the book in shaping post-war views of one part of Japan's pre-war empire has, therefore, been considerable.

In sum, this case study of Karafuto repatriates reveals that the supposed divide between repatriates and the state in the post-war was complicated in numerous ways which have had a significant impact on decolonization in Japanese society. The complexity has its origins in the structure of Japanese colonial society on Karafuto. The most influential local figures often held what can be termed "semi-official" positions where they worked closely with the colonial authorities. In the post-war, following the return to public life of such men of influence shows how repatriate groups were more than simple pressure groups seeking to advance their members' interests. Rather than concentrate on high-level politics in Tokyo, a focus on regional and local politics reveals that repatriate groups worked closely with local representatives of the state in pursuit of their interests. Public narrative about the former empire was, therefore, not only representative of views held by the leaders of repatriate groups but also reflected the influence of local state actors.

A phrase frequently heard about repatriates is “they returned with only the clothes on their backs”. The flattening of colonial society into the category of repatriate helped to obscure the processes of decolonization in Japan and have given the misleading impression that the society quickly “forgot” a history of empire. Instead, managing the aftermath of empire has been a central concern of those most affected by its collapse – repatriates. In addressing that concern, a range of tactics have been used which have necessitated responses from various actors in society and who have never been allowed to exist solely in a state of silence and denial.

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Archive Abbreviations

HMK	Hokkaido ritsu monjokan esturanshitsu.
PB, HPL	Purange bunko (Prange Collection), Hokkaido Prefectural Library.
WCL	Wakkanai City Library.
NSKS, NDL	Nihon senryō kankei shiryō (Materials on the Allied Occupation of Japan), Kensei Shiryō Shitsu, Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan (Constitutional Documents Room, National Diet Library).

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