

# Revisiting Radical Democracy in (Post) Colonial Okinawa: An Interview with C. Douglas Lummis

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**Abstract:** C. Douglas Lummis, Visiting Professor at the Graduate School of Intercultural Communication, Okinawa Christian University, discusses his experiences in the present resistance movement in Okinawa and how his observations reflect some of the central arguments in his book, *Radical Democracy* (Cornell University Press, 1996). In this series of interviews, Lummis suggests that fundamental political changes can and often do emerge through the conditions that people confront as they are drawn through natural curiosity to communicate with one another and to find out through dialogues what is happening to society. The conditions that Okinawa now faces in the anti-base struggle provide an excellent case study of how radical democracy actually works. Lummis draws upon his experiences and observations over the decades in the *military occupation* of Okinawa, in the Berkeley *Free Speech Movement*, and the *Civil Rights Movement*. The interview features reflections on institutionalized racism and bigotry during the McCarthy Era, analysis of how expressions in public discourse representing the "other" reflected a deeply ingrained subconscious hatred or contempt for African Americans and Asians generally; an illuminating synopsis of colonialism and the lure of the free market in the expansion of capitalism in Africa and Asia as both historical

and antidemocratic processes, all of which point to the rampant inequality and poverty across the current world. Rounding out the discussion is an insightful commentary on the contradictions inherent in respecting Japan's pacifist constitution while maintaining a strong and expansive military.



## 1. Free Association and the Emergence of Democratic Action

Maki Sunagawa: Thank you for entertaining our questions. It has been nearly two decades since *Radical Democracy* came out, and I wonder in what ways some of your central arguments might serve to inform, or shape, the democratic actions we are seeing in Okinawa today.

C. Douglas Lummis: I think Okinawa is an excellent place to observe radical democracy. I take the Henoko Bus (島ぐるみバス) about twice a week, and it is extremely interesting. I began taking it in January 2015, and since it is a tour bus, there's a microphone, and they have developed the custom of passing the mic' around to everybody ... it takes an hour and a half to get to Henoko and [about that] to get back, which interestingly is about the same time as a college class, a university class. They started calling the whole operation in the front of the gate, the whole protest movement, Henoko Sogo Daigaku (Henoko University). In front of the gate, it is more like a college lecture class, because a lot of the longtime activists come and share their wisdom and understanding and their analysis and people listen.

Since activist leaders rarely take the bus, the passengers are mostly ordinary people, retired people, many of whom are not long-time activists themselves. They just started recently, they are ordinary people, so it is more like a seminar. It has been so interesting; for example, people who take the bus for the first time, when handed the microphone sometimes refuse, or sometimes just say their name, and I come from this place, and, '*ganbari masho*' (Let's overcome this together!); then, they hand the microphone to someone else.

People who started out like that have become more and more eloquent. Now on the bus, there is real political discussion. And, this is interesting because in Okinawa, and in Japan too, and in many countries, it's very hard to find a place where you can have a political discussion. Many people can't do it in their family, can't do it at their job; there are some college seminars, but usually the professor dominates (depending on the seminar). You can't do it at your local area 自治会 (community

center) because there are so many different political opinions and people won't talk politics. But on the bus, here are these ordinary people, mostly retired, who haven't made a career of activism but are talking about the situation. Now, Hannah Arendt wrote in several of her books that when a country is going through big changes, and nobody knows what's about to happen, ordinary people will form, what she called, 'councils'.

In the American Revolution, there were committees of correspondence, in the French Revolution, there were small groups, in the early Russian Revolution there were spontaneous councils that came to be called 'Soviets', and in many other countries where in the process of big changes, this council system, she says, 'springs up naturally', because people want to talk to others about what is going on. This is happening in front of the gate. It isn't just protest; it is also a discussion. It is education and the formation of a kind of public will. Most of the people taking the bus (now), basically didn't know each other, until they started taking the bus. Still, usually everyday, there are five or six people taking the bus for the first time and some regular people taking it once a week; there is one fellow who takes it six days a week. But little by little, their will to act together has strengthened so that - especially on the bus - they say, 'they support the governor and what he is doing', but they also say, 'we are the ones who going to decide this'. 'We are the ones who have to stop the construction of the new base'. 'We will do it'.

And that is an instance of radical democracy. That is a case of, 'we will do it', where the governor will do what he can to prevent the construction of a new base, but the action we are taking here is creating Okinawan history ourselves. They say, 'We have to win this one, because if don't, Okinawa is lost, and we

cannot hand this loss to the next generation, to our children and our grandchildren'. So, they are not just talking about electing somebody who will take the action, they are saying, 'We will take the action, and Okinawan history will be changed by the action we are taking.'

Actually, this goes farther back, because Governor Onaga was made possible and made necessary by the action of the voters, when he was Mayor of Naha, and Nakaima was the Governor. With Nakaima's reelection approaching, Onaga explained to Nakaima that you cannot win reelection, you can't be elected governor on the old conservative slogans. The electorate has changed. You have got to say, 'the base must go'. You've got to say, 'Futenma base must leave Okinawa'. Otherwise you won't win. And Nakaima changed (or pretended to change), and he won the election. And, that remains true; no one can win an election in Okinawa anymore unless they say, 'Futenma has to go.' So, the electorate created, and is creating now, Governor Onaga, and he knows that. He is very well aware of that. In his press conference yesterday, (I haven't read all of it, just a few little parts), he seemed to be saying that he was sort of liberated by the changes in the electorate, he was able to say things he couldn't say as a conservative when he first got elected. Yes, this is radical democracy happening.

## **2. Military Occupation, Cognitive Dissonance and Awareness of Social Inequities**

M.S.: I recently met a 22-year-old U.S. Marine stationed at Camp Schwab, the site of the planned destruction of the bay for a new base. He admitted that he felt really confused about the way he is seen and treated in Okinawa.

Having been raised in Detroit and joining the military after dropping out of college, he concluded that joining represented a kind of selfless act. All of his family members, he said, were proud of him for leaving his country and serving another. He has been in Okinawa for more than two years, and the way he is treated here it seems to him that he is seen as no more than a criminal. I wonder if you developed any similar sense when you were in Okinawa as a representative of America just before the Vietnam War?

C.D.L.: Of course, I feel sorry for the kid. I also met him, and he is a very well-intentioned young fellow, a very nice boy. The confusion and the pain that he feels is pretty much inevitable. I think it is something he simply has to go through. It isn't just a question of a bad attitude on the part of the Okinawans. It is his discovering little by little the situation he has gotten himself into.

One of the great mysteries of war between states is the way in which it takes perfectly well-intentioned people, people as well-intentioned as we have a right to expect people to be, and puts them into a situation in which they carry out, sometimes, truly monstrous and horrible acts. And in some cases ruins those people if they are in the war long enough. So, yes, this is something that he just has to go through.

America teaches its young people that Americans will be loved all around the world, and American troops will be and are loved all around the world, and, this is an illusion. There are some people in the world who love American troops, a lot of people who hate them, and a lot of people who don't care one way or another.

It was one of the great illusions of the Afghanistan and the Iraq War. The American president, at the time, George W. Bush and his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, apparently took that myth and made it into policy. That is, if we go into Iraq and get rid of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi people will love us, and they'll throw away all of their traditional customs and manners, and they'll become American democrats. I guess they really believed that, because they had no exit policy and no policy for how to occupy Iraq, and it has become a disaster, that is continuing today.

As for myself, when I was in Okinawa, we were taught as the young Marines are obviously taught now, to stay away from anything that looked like a political movement and not talk to people about such subjects and so on. I remember learning at the time that there was a 'horrible' communist named Senaga Kamijiro, and that we should certainly keep away from him.

The feeling I had was not so much of criminality, there was no war going on at the time, which made it easier to not notice criminality, but the feeling that disturbed me more and more as the year went by was of being an occupying force, being an occupier, and the difference between life inside the fence and life outside the fence. The contrast was really a violent contrast, much greater than now, because Okinawa at that time was still very, very poor. It was like a third-world country. And ... alongside the roads were whole towns of hand-built homes. People built houses out of scraps that they picked up, with just barely enough room for ... a whole house the size of this office with a whole family living in it with a kitchen and bed and everything, everything they owned in a space just this big.

People were really poor, and the gap, the human gap between me (and my friends on the base) and the people outside was very uncomfortable.

At first, I didn't notice it, but little by little, over the year, it came to be the thing I noticed most. I very much didn't want to stay in that kind of position as an occupier, or a colonist. The word 'colonist' was not in my vocabulary to describe it then, but it is now. But, as someone who was in a position of structural privilege that completely separates you and these other people and you can't make contact, can't make healthy human contact - or it's very difficult - because when you think you have, something comes up that shows you that you haven't.

M.S.: Did you talk to other Marine friends about this gap?

C.D.L.: A little bit. Not many people understood what I was talking about. In the last months that I was here, I did make a few friends outside the bases. The bases in those days, much more than now, were surrounded by a belt of base-related businesses. The base-related business of Koza City was much more highly developed; 'developed' is not the right word, but it was a much bigger enterprise than it is now. The economic gap was huge. So, even though our salaries by American standards were low, if you took a few dollars and went off base, you were rich. You could buy friendship. You could become friends with people who wanted your money, and I managed in the last few months of my stay here to break out, a little bit. I found a coffee shop. There was a young guy who'd started a coffee shop, and he became a kind of friend, and through him I made friends with some University of the Ryukyus students, and we had talks that

approached equality, but nothing could change the fact that I was an occupying Marine, and there was no way that they could see me as not that, and that was painful. Very uncomfortable.

### 3. Laws, Flaws, Lies and Other Slippery Abstractions

M.S.: As you know, at present in Okinawa, many local citizens are wondering about the law and what is right and what is wrong and why the central government in Tokyo seems to be using law as a weapon against the environment and against the people who want to protect the environment from further aggression conducted in the interest of business. What I mean by 'law' here is the process that the central government works within to create the impression that the so-called 'development' of Oura Bay is entirely legal and that the protestors are interfering with the business of carrying out the national interest. Governor Onaga recently rescinded the agreement that his predecessor had worked out with Tokyo (against the will of the local people), but Prime Minister Abe continues to frame the Governor and the protestors as law-breakers. Would you comment on why there seems to be such a clear disconnect in perceptions between the citizens in Okinawa and the powers in Tokyo?

C.D.L.: Yes. Law is a big and confusing issue in this. You know, one of the things that people on the bus talk about a lot (and many of these people are not college educated; but their vocabularies are becoming richer and richer as the discussion goes on and they exchange information and wisdom and knowledge), is the destruction of 法の支配 (the rule of law). Is Japan giving up its status as a country of law? They are very well aware that what the

government is doing is not legal. They are absolutely certain that it is not legal. They have no doubts about that.

I put it this way. Dan, as you well know in your studies of propaganda, one of the classic ways of deceiving people is something called the 'big lie'. The 'big lie' was named by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, who described how the 'big lie' works. His analysis is very sharp. It's very evil but very sharp.

That is, ordinary people can recognize little lies, because they commit little lies themselves. They know what they are. So, when someone is committing a little lie, you can usually see through it. There's a certain way that the logic of lying spins itself out, and the voice changes, and the facial expression changes. Hitler didn't go as far as to say that. But, he said that ordinary people can usually figure out an ordinary lie. But, if you make a lie that is so outrageous and so huge that people can't believe that anyone would dare to make such a lie, they'll think it must be true. No one would have the courage or foolhardiness to make a lie as big as that: 'so, there must be something I don't know, so it must be true'. If you repeat it over and over and over, people will believe it. Hitler's most famous big lie, of course, was that Germany lost WWI because of the Jews. It was a Jewish conspiracy. Of course, there's no basis for it, but if you just keep saying it, people will think 'he must know something we don't know'. And, also, it made people feel comfortable.

Well, when Governor Onaga nullified the permit to reclaim the bay (Oura Bay), it was on the basis of a committee report that said, 'the permit given by Nakaima had "flaws" (瑕疵 (kashi))'. It is interesting, the word *kashi* is not a word in most ordinary people's, vocabulary. I



think a lot of people had to go to the dictionary, and I noticed in the newspaper when they write *kashi*, it is not a Chinese character that is approved for newspapers, so next to it you'll see hiragana, *rubi*. The hiragana tells you how to pronounce *kashi*. So, when you say *kashi*, it isn't clear exactly what that is. Seems sort of abstract. But, what that word is, is the big lie.

The big lie is that you can dump 3.5 million truckloads of dirt and garbage into a coral garden, and it will have no effect on the environment.

Now that is as big a lie as you can get.

Anyone with the simplest common sense knows that that is crazy, but that is exactly what the permit is based upon. I'll say it again; 3.5 million truckloads of dirt and busted up concrete and rocks and all kinds of horrible junk, probably, added into it, and it will have no harmful effect on the environment.

*That* is the basis of the permit.

So, the government [...] has a whole lot of pseudo-legal bureaucratic techniques for overturning the Governor's nullification of the permit, but they can't make that lie into a fact.

Governments can do a lot of things, but they cannot change facts.

They cannot command the dirt that goes into

the Bay not to harm the environment. The dirt will not obey them. The harm will happen, and it is illegal to do that - without the Governor's permit. And, they don't have the Governor's permit. It is, anyway, a crime against nature to do it with anyone's permit. So, the laws that the government is accusing the demonstrators of violating are absolutely trivial compared to that.

And the people in front of the gate consciously violate certain laws. One of the laws is that it is illegal to attach anything to the fence surrounding the base. And, they violate that law. Base security people come by with megaphones and repeat sentences they have memorized, 'this is illegal. You must immediately take it down. Stop putting them up, take them down and take them away with you.'



And, the people do not stop; they disobey, and they haven't arrested anybody for doing that - so far.

But, it is a violation of law. At first, people were

a bit reluctant to carry out that violation, but more and more people are willing to do it. They tie ribbons; they put up signs; they tie ribbons in the shape of hearts, and they do all kinds of things.

The tent village itself is probably illegal. So, having the sit-in there and putting up the tents - little by little, it has grown up into a small village, now, with a place where people can sleep, with a kitchen where they cook, with a workshop where they can make new signs, and it even has a WiFi. You can use your computer there and go online. I'm not sure how they achieve that. They've got all these gadgets, so it's a little town. The police have not quite gotten up the gumption to sweep them away, although they may do that at some point.

Several times they have been swept away, and they've rebuilt. They've been swept away by typhoons, ... swept away once by a very vicious and drunken attack by right-wingers who destroyed a lot of equipment, tore up some of the flags and things, but everything has been rebuilt, and it is stronger now than it was.

Quite likely we will see in the future more serious violations of the law.

The trucks related to construction generally come in the early morning between 6:00 and 7:00AM. For example, this morning it was expected that 500 people would gather there and they would lie down in front of the trucks, which is illegal, and the riot police would carry them away. Then, if they can, they would try to run back around and go lie down again, and the riot police would try to prevent them from doing that, but the trucks are getting in, and

we might see more civil disobedience, or more serious civil disobedience in the future.



Civil disobedience means violating the law. That is what disobedience is about. Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi violated many laws and were arrested many times. They were concerned about much more serious crimes being carried out by the other side.

Their disobedience was, of course, always non-violent, it didn't hurt anybody. It hurt a lot people's feelings, but it never hurt anybody physically. We will probably see more of that.

#### 4. Education, Socialization and the Process

## of Constructing Assumptions of Superiority

M.S.: We are educated in school and society to believe in the rule of law. I'd like to know a little bit more about how military members are educated by their instructors (or by the system itself). How do they learn about the Battle of Okinawa, about WWII, about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and about the peace treaty worked out in San Francisco? I wonder whether these details of history form part of the training that Marines (and other services) receive before their arrival? Was it the case for you in the 1950s?

C.D.L.: I got my military education when I was in my ROTC unit in college from 1954 to '58. Then, I became an officer and had officer training for some months after going on active duty, so my military education took place in the McCarthy days during the years at the height of the Cold War in the United States. Because I was in the Marines and because I was an officer I had more detailed training than enlisted men. Another thing that is important is that there're two levels of education that you get in the military. The second level is what they teach that isn't in the training manuals or in lectures, and what is passed on unconsciously or semi-consciously, the underlying assumptions, unspoken, or indirectly spoken nuances of the way people talk.

The Marine Corps teaches people about ground war, not about air war, and so we didn't learn anything (or I can't remember learning anything) about Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Probably the Air Force teaches about that. Most of what I learned about the Battle of Okinawa was in movies. We saw a lot of the films taken by the U.S. military. I can

remember many times seeing the movies of the flame tanks pouring fire into the caves where people were hiding. Several, very, striking and horrible films showing that, I can remember seeing those over and over.

The unconscious, unspoken message that came through about the Battle of Okinawa was that it was a great victory, and Okinawa was taken at great sacrifice, and to the Marine Corps and Army the unspoken conclusion, therefore, was that it belongs to us.

It belongs to us through the right of conquest. It is ours. We took it. The ancient law of war, you take a place by force, and you own it. You can do with it what you want - that is the 'spoils of war'. It was taught to us that Okinawa belonged to the Marines and to the U.S. military under the rule of 'spoils of war'. We took it at great sacrifice according to one of the most ancient laws of humankind. When you take something in that way, it belongs to you, and I believe that that unconscious notion still exists in the Marines.

We took it. We won. They lost. Too bad for them. The U.S. military took it in WWII and then kept it. In other words, there were several decades when the U.S. military was the Okinawa Government. There is no place in Germany or Italy that the U.S. took and kept in that particular way. People talk about the influence of the U.S. military on Okinawa, but there is also the influence of Okinawa on the Marines. Okinawa is a big part of Marine Corps culture.

A few words of *Uchina-guchi* (Okinawan indigenous language) or *Nihongo* (Japanese



language) have become Marine Corps slang. A lot of Marines know 'joto' (good) and 'akisamiyo' (Oh my God!). The word 'honcho' (big boss) roughly comes from the Japanese *hanchō* (leader of the group), leader of a *han* (group). And, a lot of Marines say, 'Oh, that's number one', *ichiban*-a sort of pidgin from Japanese to Pidgin English to 'number one'. There are a lot of things like that. There was a lot of talk about Okinawa and how special a place it was that I heard in the two years while I was stationed in the U.S. As I said, that was during the McCarthy days. Senator Joseph McCarthy led a kind of hate speech campaign against communists, or imagined communists. There was a huge national fear, a panic about communists by this rather crazy alcoholic senator ...

C.D.L.: The Marine Corps was, I believe, the last of the U.S. military units to integrate racially, the last to accept black enlisted. When I was in officers training, I remember only one black person being trained to be an officer. Now a lot of that has changed, but to give you two good examples of the racism at that time ... I remember in the officers school in Quantico, Virginia, ... a captain giving a lecture on how to camouflage your vehicle using branches from bushes, and he said that it is very important not to turn them upside down because the color of the bottom of the leaf is different from the color of the top, and if you make the mistake of turning them upside down, 'Joe Gook' up on the hill will look down and say, '*ah so*' ('I see' in Japanese).

So, 'Joe Gook' was the theoretical enemy, but he spoke Japanese. He would say, '*ah so*', and this (sort of racism) was completely unconscious. In other words, the Marine Corps had fought against Japan during WWII then in Korea, and so their ingrained image of the enemy was Asians. So, the Koreans were

'gooks', the Japanese were 'gooks', the Chinese were 'gooks', and the Okinawans were 'gooks'. They didn't know about the existence of the Vietnamese, but when the Vietnamese War began, of course they were 'gooks', so it means any Asian.

And, I also remember in the officers' mess, at Camp Pendleton, there was a huge amateurish mural on the wall, and it showed an oriental city and a Marine riding in a *jinrikisha* (人力車), which in those years had disappeared from Japan and existed, to my knowledge, maybe only in Hong Kong. And the Marine is sitting luxuriously with a cigar between his fingers and looking like he is king of the world, and there is this big Asian man pulling the *jinrikisha*. He has a Chinese pigtail, a *queue* (辮子) braided, and he is wearing *geta* (下駄) (Japanese wooden clogs), which Chinese people never do.

So, he is 'Joe Gook'; he's 'gook' - just Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Okinawan, whatever. Nobody ever talked about that, but it was just on the wall. Somebody painted it that way and everybody looked at it. Nobody said, 'that's horrible; paint it out'. It was just there. And so, we left Camp Pendleton and came to Okinawa, and we assumed that we were going to that country. Could be Tokyo or Naha.

D.B.: I've wondered about 'gook' myself. When I was studying Korean, it dawned on me that when the Americans were in Vietnam, they possibly imported 'gook' into Vietnam from their experiences in the Korean War, because 'gook' means nation. Likely, the Koreans simply adopted the Chinese conception of America, expressed in the characters beautiful and nation.

C.D.L.: Quite likely, because I don't think it was used in WWII. The racist term was, 'Jap' or 'Nip'. I don't remember hearing 'gook' until the Korean War.

D.B.: You have been writing and talking about issues in East Asia for more than a few decades now. I wonder if your interest in this region began taking hold when you served in the U.S. military before Vietnam, or did it begin in some other way?

C.D.L.: I am not sure about the word 'fascination', but I am pretty sure that if the Marines hadn't sent me to Okinawa, I wouldn't be living here now, or I wouldn't have lived all those years in Japan. When my three years were up - and as I said earlier I felt very strange about living in Asia but always being in 'America' except for occasional forays out and coming back and learning virtually nothing about where I was - I determined not to waste the opportunity. I thought, I will get discharged here and study about it awhile, so I started learning Japanese while I was still on the base, reading a book. I didn't get very far. Then, I told them I would take my discharge, abandon my right to be taken by ship back to San Diego, and I got a passport and a visa, and took a boat to Kansai. I had a friend who had been living in Nara, an Austrian who had been at the University of California while I was there, and we were on the ski team together, and we became friends. And he was living in Nara in a house where there was a vacant room that I could rent, and it seemed like a great adventure.

It felt so nice to shift from Marine Corps life to something that felt like semi-Bohemian, genteel

poverty life. I enrolled in the Japanese language school that existed inside Osaka Foreign Language University, so I would commute from Nara on the Kentetsu Train and take Japanese lessons and then come back in the evening. I had that year and the next year, living in Kansai, a kind of fascination that many foreigners go through in Japan, the exoticism, exotic Nara and exotic Kyoto. So, I did all those typical things of traveling and visiting the shrines and temples and art galleries, seeing a lot of *Noh* plays and thinking it was all very artistic. After two years, I re-entered the University of California Graduate School and decided to major not in Asian Studies (took that as a minor, mostly because I'd been there and could use the language a little bit), but studies political theory. As it happened, two professors in the Department of Political Science who specialized in Asian Studies were [Robert Scalapino](#) and [Chalmers Johnson](#).

I enrolled in Robert Scalapino's seminar the first year I was there, for a semester, and I discovered that the atmosphere was very similar in a strange way to what I hated about being in the Marines. They were not military people, although Scalapino had learned his Japanese language as an occupation military man. The first-generation post-war Japan scholars, pretty much all learned their Japanese in Monterey in the Army Language School and then participated in the occupation. Scalapino was one of them. The students were not necessarily military people, but when they talked about Japan, they talked as colonials. They were looking at this thing, down there (points) called Japan and analyzing it and talking about how strange this custom is and how funny that is, and how can we get that changed, how we can use it to the advantage of the United States. Very, very contemptuous, looking down on it (Japan) from a high place.

And, then, there was Chalmers Johnson, now very popular among antiwar people. But this was the time that, as he later confessed, he was working for the CIA, and he was, as he admitted in *Blowback* and *The Sorrows of Empire*, very angry toward, antiwar students. That is, he was, rather, in a rage against anti-Vietnam War students. Contemptuous, and given that I was one of them I never enrolled in any of his classes.

So, the two of them prevented me from becoming a Japan specialist. I am not now and never have been a Japan scholar. 'Fascination' was no longer the word. For very complicated family reasons. Since then, when I have written and studied about Japan, it is just because I ended up living in Japan. You have to be concerned about where you are living.

## **5. Radical Democracy vs. Manufacturing Consent for Elite Concepts of Free Market Development**

D.B.: Yes, and what you're saying reminds me of a chapter in *Radical Democracy* where you seem to suggest that in the West we are habituated through the lessons of history to believe that development equates to democracy, yet you go on to make a good counterintuitive case for seeing economic development as anti-democratic. Since publication of the book in the 1990s, I wonder if you have observed any significant strengthening of democracy and/or any moves toward greater freedoms for workers or citizens in so-called democratic societies? In other words, has democracy become more radical?

C.D.L.: In one sense radical democracy is a state of society that can pop-up in almost any system. People gather with a common concern about something and when they realize that there are enough of them to make a difference, they begin to act. This can happen anywhere, and the possibility hasn't gone away. But in another sense, if you think of freedom for workers, economic development left to itself produces a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Economic development taking place in a genuine free market means also a free labor market, and in a free labor market, as Marx pointed out, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

The way to rescue some piece of democracy in that situation was to form strong unions and strike for higher wages, strike for better working conditions, strike for better control of the workplace. This is a form of radical democratic action. It was a way of changing the situation, and when the unions were strong, the workers in those unions were in a better position. They could make demands of their employers and have their demands met. I am not talking about one-hour strikes or one-day strikes. I am talking about strikes that are carried out day after day, week after week until the employer hurts, and when they start to really hurt, maybe they're going to go bankrupt, they allow higher wages.

Well, in the U.S. and Japan and many parts of the world, in recent decades the union movement has been very much weakened. In Japan, there are hardly any unions that aren't 'yellow unions', that is, unions basically organized to cooperate with the managers. There is hardly ever a strike that lasts even a full day, so it becomes ritualized. This is a great sadness. This was a way that some degree of democracy was recovered in the world of wage labor. It is not just a question of getting enough

money to live.

There're different ways of defining what 'poverty' means. There is absolute poverty where people don't get enough to eat, don't get clothes enough to keep them warm in the winter, don't get enough medicine to stay healthy. But, there is another kind of poverty that simply means a gap between the workers and the people over them. In other words, there is the word 'rich', when you talk about the rich and the poor. What 'rich' means, if you look up 'rich' in the *Oxford English Dictionary* ..., its original meaning was 'power' - not 'money'. It was the kind of power that a king wielded over his subjects. The word '*reich*' grows out of it. It is the kind of power a king has, and the kind of power a king has is created by a group of people who, when the king gives orders, they obey them. If somebody stands up and says, 'hey everyone, I'm 'king,' and everybody else says, 'so am I', there is no advantage to being a king, because the other 'kings' won't do what you tell them to.

So, originally power is not money, it is people who obey. And little by little the word 'rich' came to mean 'being in a position to force people to obey by using money'.

So, you can make a person rich either by giving *him* more money, or by arranging to have *these people* have less money. The thing is, there has to be a gap, so that these people can't live properly unless they do what this person says. If this person says, 'I won't give you any of my money unless you work in my factory or on my plantation', then that's what they must do.

In that sense, the world completely organized

around wage labor is organized around inequality. It is a system in which it is built-in that if you don't plug-in to the wage labor economy in one way or another, you don't eat. And, that is not a situation of freedom.

When the Industrial Revolution began to spread outside Europe and America and into Asia and Africa, ... many of the people, in the villages and towns of those countries, for example in South Asia, were simply not interested in participating in this form of economy.

The colonist would say, 'Look, if you work for me, I'll give you money'.

And the native people would reply, 'What's that, what's it good for? We don't have a money economy; everything we need we can get from the forest, or from the river, or from the sea. Sometimes we trade with shells, a little bit. But this money won't do us any good'.

So, then imagine the Europeans setting up a little store, coming in as traders, and saying, 'look at all this good stuff we brought over here from California or from Paris. If you had money, you could buy it'.

So, one pattern was that somebody would look, and he'd say, 'Oh, I'd love to have that knife, because that's made of steel. How much is it?'

'Oh, it's a dollar'. 'If you come to my house, I'll pay you a dollar a week to work in the kitchen.'

So, the person works in the kitchen for a week, gets a dollar, buys the knife, and quits the job.

The colonizer would say, 'why did you quit'?

'I got the knife', the employee would reply, and 'That's all I wanted'.

That kind of thing really happened. It's called the backward bending supply curve of labor. ... You raise the wages and people, once they get the wages they needed to buy the one or two things they wanted, quit the job.

Very few people in those cultures had a custom of working eight, ten, twelve hours per day. So, it is a fact that is pretty much unknown by most people who write about the history of economic development that in country after country after country the only way the Europeans and the Americans could get people to work was through forced labor. Forced labor is just another name for enslavement. Forced labor is *temporary* enslavement - enslavement until the project is done.

The original infrastructure in most of the colonies - the harbors, the buildings for the Europeans to live in, the factories, the roads, the railroads, were built by forced labor. And, there were two kinds.

One was forced labor, not with rifles and bulldozers (they didn't have bulldozers then), but it was at the point of a sword or a gun. I've seen pictures of railroad workers in Africa chained together by the necks and shackled by

the feet. Of course, a whole lot of people died. In the Caribbean islands, the native people became extinct, which is why most people in the Caribbean are descendants of African, or mixed African and colonists. There are very, very few who claim Taíno ancestry, the native peoples who were there when Columbus arrived. And there was that kind of forced labor for the first generation of workers.

Then, there was another kind, called indirect forced labor. That is, you come into a country where there is a hunting-and-gathering economy, where people go into the forest and into the sea to get what they want, where they can get everything they want - food, medicine, building materials, materials to make their clothing with, materials for jewelry, out of the forest or out of the sea-you can cut down the forest and replace it with a plantation, plant rubber, or coffee, or sugar cane. Then if people still want to live in the same area, the only way they can live is by working on the plantation because their means of subsistence has disappeared. This was described by people at the time as 'indirect forced labor'. Re-arranging the world in such a way that if you don't enter this economy, you can't live. Well, we live in that world now; it is our world.

Every college student, unless their parents are rich landowners, has to think, when I graduate, can I get a job?

And if I have unusual political opinions or criticize those in power too much, maybe I can't get a job, so I'd better be careful about what I say. That is a true in countries that we call democracies, but it is a huge anti-democratic factor. It is so built-in that it is awfully hard to answer the question: 'Well, what are you going to do about it'?



For many years, people had the dream that something called socialism would solve the problem, but so far, that option has been pretty disappointing, at least in most of the countries that have tried it.

It is very difficult to come up with a plan that would solve this problem, but it doesn't mean it isn't a problem. It means it is something we should all think about.

## 6. The Exercise of Free Speech in the Development of Radical Democracy

M.S.: To shift from a global view to a local one, how do you see the attitudes of Okinawan people expressed toward both Tokyo and Washington, and to the US-Japan Security Treaty?

C.D.L.: First, concerning the theoretical claim that democracy is a condition rather than being a system. I sometimes use the word 'condition' and sometimes 'state'; the image is of a change of state. The image everybody is familiar with is of ice becoming water, and water becoming steam. It's all H<sub>2</sub>O, but it behaves in a completely different way. When people, or some big part of the people, shift from being obedient subjects following the rules, and following the routines, and doing everything as expected, and instead gather and talk to each other and realize that by gathering they have power, then they begin to talk about whether and how to change the system of laws and rules, daily routines and habits. That's a change of state. That is what I call 'radical democracy'.

My personal experience that drove the image into my head was, when I was at the University of California in graduate school in 1964, there was a movement that was called 'the free speech movement'. The university took it upon itself to close down a little area of campus where people were allowed to do political organizing. This was the time of the civil rights movement. There were civil rights organizers, there were antiwar organizers, and there were also young conservative organizers all using this little space, and the university shut it down and said 'you can't do that anymore'. And the free speech movement began.

A fellow named [Jack Weinberg](#) carried a card table right to the middle of the plaza in front of the administration building and put it down, and began passing out leaflets for the civil rights movement. A police car drove onto the campus and they arrested him, and put him in the police car. It happened to be about 11:55 in the morning. And at 12:00 o'clock, there was a scheduled rally about free speech. It just happened that all these people were coming to the rally, and they saw Jack Weinberg in the police car about to be taken away. Many of them had been to the south the summer before participating in and supporting the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and civil rights work, and they had learned about something called the 'sit-in'. So somebody shouted, "Sit-in!" Everyone there sat down around the police car. And the police car couldn't move.

And then, the brilliant young philosophy undergraduate named [Mario Savio](#), who was to chair the rally, arrived. People were asking, "What will we do about the rally?" And he said, "We'll have it here." And he took the microphone and climbed on top of the police car, and began talking. This was in the early days of the student movement. It was not the

police's mode of operation to mishandle college students. In a few years, this never would have happened but this time, they did not attempt to force the police car out of there. The police car was there eventually for, I think, two days or so, and more people were sitting down. The number of people sitting down grew. The rally went on twenty-four hours a day. The speaking went on. Sometimes people were sleeping. I went home and got my sleeping bag, and ... spent the night there.

It was students versus the university, okay? Students protesting against the university. And at some point, you look around and there were about 5,000 students sitting there. And, soon, we asked, 'what do we mean, students versus the university? This is a big piece of the university'. 5,000 students - without students there is no university. Students are not outsiders to it; they are an essential element of it. Otherwise, it's a research association where professors talk to each other. It's a university because there are students. If they throw out 5,000 students, they are cutting off their arm. So, at some point, people in the protest became, not the whole university, but a big enough part of it that the university couldn't ignore them. First, the authorities said, 'We won't negotiate'. Later, they negotiated, and Jack Weinberg went free.

A lot of other things happened after that, but now the University of California has free speech on campus. It changed. But it was so interesting to sit in that group of 5,000 people, people around you whom you'd never met. Food was being passed around and everybody was friendly, and if you look at the photographs, you'll notice the faces of the protesters and the faces of their opponents are completely different.

The opponents have, sort of, cynical grins. You can pick them out from the crowd, the people who wanted to use hate speech against us. For those few days, there was something like a new form, a different form of society, presaging a different way of people relating to each other. And, it was such a powerful experience that a lot of people who participated could never quite go back, could never quite forget that. We were changed by that experience.

I think the same thing happened in the Philippines during the anti-Marcos movement of 1983-86, and in Poland on a far larger scale during the Solidarity Movement of the 1980s. When this change of state takes place, it's not just that it is effective and you get what you want, but it itself is a different way of being, a different way in which humans relate to each other. That is exhilarating.

There is a little bit of that on the bus that I was describing before - not quite as powerful because it's not twenty-four hours a day. But the resistance in Henoko has lasted a lot longer than the free speech movement did, indeed it has continued for twenty years. Little by little, people on the bus see themselves differently from the way they had seen themselves earlier. Most of these people are, as I said, retirees. What would they be doing if they were not taking this bus? The message in the song [they sing] is, 'If you sit at home all day watching TV, not doing much and not singing songs and not dancing, you will become senile very early. But if you participate in Henoko University, you will not get senile.' In other words, it's a way of joking about their being old. Maybe you are bald, maybe you have false teeth, maybe your legs aren't so strong, but you can still sit. So, you can sit-in. You can also engage in political debate. Partly, what they are doing is instrumental. It has an effect, and that's exciting. But partly, it's a way of becoming a

different sort of being. You don't usually think of retired people as a political force.

By the way, this same Jack Weinberg, from the top of the police car, coined a slogan that became a slogan for the '60s, "**Don't trust anybody over 30.**" He was the one who coined that saying for the youth movement. I heard him say that. Now, I've been saying to the people on the bus, 'now we've got our own slogan, "Don't trust anyone under 60.'"

Retired people *can* form a political class. In Okinawa, they are the people who remember the war, bear that burden, bear that memory, or at least, they are familiar with the horrible situation right after the war when they were children. For many of them, this is their best and last opportunity to transform that memory into something positive and concrete. They are not going to give up easily. They are ready to come everyday.

To move to the second half of the question about attitudes of Okinawan people toward Tokyo and Washington, especially the attitude toward Tokyo has, I think, changed in interesting ways. I've been here 15 years. When I first got here in the year 2000, the political map of Okinawa was that there were progressives who opposed all bases anywhere in Japan and opposed the Japan-US security treaty, and there were conservatives, many of whom were not positively enthusiastic about the bases but thought there was nothing that could be done about them and that it was a waste of time trying to get rid of them, so the best thing to do is use them to our advantage, get money from Tokyo and build nice buildings for people, parks and so on. There was that kind of political spectrum.

In the year 2000, there was also a very small group of people who, instead of holding that all bases should be removed from Japan and the security treaty should be abolished, began saying, 'Futenma Base should be moved to the mainland'. They were very, very unpopular. They were breaking a taboo. You weren't supposed to say that. They took lots of abuse, mostly from mainlanders and other Okinawan activists for saying such a thing, because Okinawan people were supposed to act in solidarity with brothers and sisters in mainland Japan.

Local activists shouldn't say anything that would anger mainland activists, or trouble them. They should continue to say, 'abolish the US-Japan Security Treaty, that's the only solution'.

As I said earlier, at the time of Nakaima's re-election bid in 2010, Mayor Onaga told him, 'The only way you can win this election is to say, "Futenma base should be moved to the mainland".' It turned out he was right. Nakaima took the advice and won the election.

What that means is the consciousness of ordinary voters was a little different from the consciousness of most progressive leaders who felt indebted to the Japanese movement for the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese rule. Many of the progressive leaders had been active in the reversion movement of 1972, which ended U.S. direct rule and returned administrative authority over Okinawa to Japan. Progressive leaders were concerned about alienating their mainland allies who were opposed to building bases on the mainland. Ordinary voters don't have allies in the mainland that they are afraid

of insulting, and they felt more resentment toward the mainland for imposing the bases on Okinawa.

The slogan, 'Futenma Base should go to the mainland' is also a way of expressing dissatisfaction and anger with Japanese treatment of Okinawa. It's not simply a practical solution. It's also an expression of discontent, a way of pointing your finger at the Japanese and saying, 'This is your responsibility'. So, little by little, more progressive leaders have been persuaded by the slogan, although many still are not. The progressive camp is still divided. But the slogan, in Japanese *Kengai Isetsu* (県外移設), which in Okinawa means, 'move Futenma base to the mainland', is what made the 'All Okinawa' (オール沖縄) movement of 2015 possible. This is because one section of the conservative camp had always been unhappy with the unequal burden of the bases and unhappy with the discriminatory way they are treated by Japanese, but they had no way of expressing it.

They were not ready to say the 'Japan-US security should be entirely abrogated'. But, it was and is possible for them to say, 'This is unequal treatment. It's discrimination'. It is as wounding to a conservative as anyone to be discriminated against. They are human beings, and they can become as angry as anyone about such treatment. It isn't the replacement of an anti-war movement by an anti-colonial movement. But, the anti-war movement is expanding to include an anti-colonial sentiment. This is a huge change that is still going on.

On Monday, (November 30, 2015), I took the bus to Henoko, and at the gate and on the bus

on the way back, there was a furious debate on the question of *Kengai Isetsu* (moving Futenma base to the mainland). It was very lively, with a lot of anger. Anger is inevitable because it's very painful for people to shift from the present circumstances, a quite impossible dream of abrogating the Japan-US security treaty and accept as their immediate slogan moving at least one base to Japan.

But one by one, people who were advocating the former are shifting to the latter. For ordinary voters, it makes perfect sense - 'of course the base should be moved to mainland Japan. It's their treaty. Okinawa never entered into any treaty like the Japan-US Security Treaty.'

When you point this out, some people say, 'Now that you mention it, that's true'. That is, the word 'Okinawa' nowhere appears in the US-Japan Security Treaty. Many people in Japan vaguely seem to think that the US-Japan Security Treaty means that U.S. bases should be in Okinawa. But that is not what's written there. It says they can be put in Japan. Right now, according to the most recent opinion poll, 86% of the Japanese people say they support the Security Treaty, and only 2% say it should be abrogated, and 75% answer 'yes' to the question, 'Should U.S. bases be placed in Okinawa'? What this means is that people don't understand that supporting, or not opposing, the Japan-US Security Treaty means approving the possibility of a U.S. base next to your house. That's what it means.

Hopefully, when people start to understand that, though, they'll rethink their support for the Security Treaty. The U.S. Consul General in Okinawa got on the front page recently by saying, 'Oh yes, Okinawan public opinion about

Henoko is very, very, very important, but compared to the Japan-U.S. alliance, it's very, very, very small." He was trying to please both sides, but aside from this failed attempt at being diplomatic, it's also incorrect because right now, Okinawan public opinion is a *gigantic* issue in the Japan-US alliance. It has the potential to shake that alliance down to the roots. One of the reasons Japanese people have been quieter year by year about the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty is, 'After all, the bases go to Okinawa.' Okinawa has played the role of allowing those bases ... so Japanese people can, on one hand, imagine that they might be honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for being so pacifist (Article 9 of the Constitution) and, at the same time, be protected by U.S. bases in Okinawa.

Because of that way of thinking that I did not, and do not, support, some Japanese supporters of Article 9 propose awarding the Nobel Peace for Japanese supporters of Article 9. Most of the supporters of Article 9 also support the Security Treaty - so long as the bases are in Okinawa. Now Okinawans are saying, "We are tired of being the factor that allows you to deceive yourself. If you support the Japan-US Security Treaty, then you get the bases."

So, it is not a small thing at all. It's huge. The diplomats who are smarter than the present consul general have said as much: that the Okinawan problem has the potential to endanger the Japan-US alliance. The consul general should study a little bit.

M.S.: Do you think the current social and political conditions you are observing during frequent trips to Henoko are ripe for creating a greater or stronger democracy in which well-informed citizens can transform the situation? I

ask this in light of some of the propaganda I have studied, which is obviously attempting to sell local people on central government concepts of "development," which seem to destroy any sense of informed consent.

C.D.L.: At the main gate of Schwab, there are generally experienced political activists who consciously, or unconsciously, frame or control the things that are talked about and set the tone. The bus passengers, though, are inexperienced people, mostly, and so there is a political discussion among ordinary people, and many of them are participating in any political movement for the first time, but little by little over the weeks and months, the discussion deepens and becomes enriched, partly because people exchange ideas collectively. They have lots of information among them, and they exchange it and learn from each other, and their debate skills gradually improve as they listen to others speaking and talk themselves. So, it becomes very rich. And it is also the kind of experience people call 'empowerment'. The people gain confidence. All this means that it approaches a condition called 'radical democracy'. So, as people talk and learn and improve their skills, they gain confidence and their manner of speaking changes little by little. At the beginning, it largely took the form of

"We will support the Governor. We are trying to help the Governor do what he wants to do. We demand that the government do something ..."

But increasingly, you hear people saying

"Well, the Governor will take this, that, or some other action, but we are the ones who have to



prevent the construction. We have to do it. We are going to do it. We can do it."

So, instead of hoping that somebody else will change the course of history, or, build the course of history, they see themselves as 'the actor' who will do this.

"We will stop the construction. We can do it. Not individually, but collectively."

It is a very interesting change. So, this is the way in which movements begin perhaps as a complaint, or a protest, and gradually become empowered and approach the situation of democratic action with people doing it rather than asking someone else to do it.

## 6. Rightwing Mythologies, Ignorance and the Communist Scapegoat

M.S.: Perhaps you have heard recently that the LDP has been paying party members who belong to the Net Supporters Club (自民党ネットサポーターズクラブ) to assault the new media landscape with messages that contradict, sharply criticize, or attack *ad hominem* any citizens who oppose Mr. Abe's plans. Many people involved in the struggle against LDP policies, such as in the secret TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) negotiations, the so-called Secrecy Law, re-interpretations of Article 9, the ongoing Fukushima nuclear meltdown issue, and Henoko, are evidently put on 'blacklists' and monitored by the central government. Have you seen any other examples of information manipulation on this scale?

C.D.L.: I'm not sure if I can give a very satisfactory answer to that question. I have no evidence of, for example, the hate speech crowd being paid by the Liberal Democratic Party. It wouldn't surprise me. It seems, given the nature of the Liberal Democratic Party, quite natural, unsurprising if they do that. But I have no evidence. I haven't encountered somebody who looks like a spy or a paid provocateur.

If I were organizing something like that for the Liberal Democratic Party, I would try and find people more intelligent and more informed than the people who are actually driving by shouting invectives at the demonstrators. The right-wing crowd who come by and sometimes personally harass the demonstrators, or sometimes drive by in cars and shout things, sometimes say, 'We hope you are enjoying those lunches that are paid for by China!' But everybody knows that they paid out of their pockets, so it's just silly. And they say, 'Oh, you're getting 10,000 yen, 20,000 yen every day to come to the demonstrations'. But everybody knows that they are not getting that. So, it's counterproductive for them to shout like that because it just reveals how little they know about what's going on. Surely, if the Liberal Democratic Party is hiring those people, I would advise them to make them study a little more about what they are doing.

C.D.L.: The first time I encountered this new generation of hate speech people was when the 'All Okinawa' (オール沖縄) group, led by then Mayor Onaga, went to Tokyo carrying a petition to give to the government. It had three demands: (1) close down Futenma Base; (2) do not move the base to Henoko or anywhere else in the prefecture; (3) and no Osprey flying machines in Okinawa.

In addition to handing this petition over to the government, they had a rally in the outdoor amphitheater in Hibiya Park (日比谷野外音楽堂) in downtown Tokyo, and a demonstration in the Ginza on Sunday on January 27, 2013. I happened to be in Tokyo at the time, so I participated in both. The rally was very interesting. Over the years, I have participated in political rallies in that theater, and there were always progressive types, labor union people, workers on that stage. And, hardly anybody was in a dark suit and a necktie. But at this rally were the heads of every government unit in Okinawa except the Governor. The Mayor of Naha, the Mayor of every city that has a Mayor, the heads of every town, ward, and village in Okinawa, plus members of the National Diet (Parliament). So, here is this row of dark suits, and neckties, establishment-looking people, defying the conservative party, the LDP, including many who would later be expelled from the party. So, this was Okinawa's political establishment at the time - the heads of every political unit.

It was very interesting to see them on the stage, protesting. Then, we went out for the demonstration, and there were the hate speech people lining the streets on both sides for hundreds of yards, a very large number of them. This was the first time I saw this new breed of radical conservatives. They didn't look the same as the conservatives I had known before. They didn't look like gangsters, the way many of the conservatives look like yakuza. Many of the old generation of conservatives are, in fact, yakuza. That was rather disconcerting. They looked like middle-class working people, lots of women wearing ordinary clothes, not right-wing uniforms, and flying dozens and dozens of hinomaru (日の丸) flags, their faces twisted with hate. They were not just professionals spouting a right-wing line. They were really feeling hate. They were *hating*. When you shout hate, your face gets

quite ugly. They were ordinary people, who ordinarily looked nice, but, in the act of this hating, they were making themselves very ugly.

And they revealed that they didn't know what they were talking about because they were saying two things. One, they were saying,

"You are pawns of China; go back to China; you are being used by China; the Chinese will be so happy to see you demonstrating here."

They hadn't studied enough to realize that the slogan of the All Okinawa Movement was 'the Futenma Base should be moved to the mainland', out of Okinawa, *Kengai Isetsu* (県外移設). That was the chief slogan. If that ever happened, it would likely be moved to Kyushu, which is closer to Beijing than any place in Okinawa. Moving the base nearer to both Beijing and Pyongyang; there is no reason that China would welcome that; China would gain no military advantage if the base moved from one place to another within Japan. The whole China thing is based on misinformation.

Now, many of the people marching would support all of the bases moving out of Okinawa, and some of them are even opposed to the Japan-US Security Treaty, but the slogan of the All Okinawa (オール沖縄) Movement is not that. It is: this one base (Futenma) should be moved to the mainland.

And the other thing they were shouting was, '日本から出て行け' (get out of Japan!). This also means that they were not thinking about who they were talking to. This is a slogan that would make sense in an ugly way if they shouted it at

Koreans, or if they shouted at me. But, this was a demonstration led by the entire Okinawan political establishment, Okinawans who are Japanese citizens and political leaders, walking at the head of the column in their dark suits, white shirts and neckties, many of whom had never been in a demonstration before. This was the first demonstration in their lives, and they were coming to Tokyo, the capital of Japan, to make an appeal to the Japanese people and what they hear is 'get out of Japan!'

To say that to you or me is different from saying that to Okinawans as a whole, and I suppose many of these politicians from Okinawa thought,

"Yes, okay, that's an idea; maybe we should think about that."

In the past few years, thoughts about Okinawa independence have developed and moved from the periphery to becoming one of the mainstream subjects of discussion. Okinawa is very far from having any powerful independence movement, but the talk of independence is no longer ridiculed, as it was a few years ago. So, again these people, when they think about what to shout at the Okinawa anti-new-base movement, they should study a little more about what that movement is about if they want to be effective. That is my advice to them.

D.B.: It seems as though the neo-nationalists who drive by in Henoko and spew hate speech at the protest obviously ... have reduced the world to black and white terms. I was wondering if you have noticed anything about the discourse or the actions within the

movement that counter this over-simplification.

C.D.L.: It is very tempting, especially for the males (including myself), to want to shout back. When you are shouted at with hate speech, anger boils up and you think of some answer to it and many people there have been guilty at times of shouting back and calling them names in revenge. Of course, that is falling into the trap; that is playing the role that they want you to play. It takes some effort to ignore them, turn our backs on them, remain silent, don't look at them. The very best day that I have seen, the best manner I have seen in responding to these hate-speech people, happened on a Friday. In Henoko every Friday during the lunch break, there is a *sanshin* (stringed instrument) class. A very good *sanshin* player and singer comes on Fridays and teaches the group, they practice together, and he also stands in front of the microphone and plays and sings for the whole sit-in group, and sometimes people come out and dance the Okinawan dance '*kachashi*', a very easy dance to do and a very happy dance of celebration.

Everybody was ... out on the sidewalk dancing to his music and a hate-speech truck came by and they just turned their backs to the shouters and continued dancing. The truck passed by, I think, four times. It would pass by, do a u-turn, and come back again and do another u-turn, and the people on the truck would shout,

"Stop dancing; what are you doing dancing? You are not supposed to be having fun out there! You are making fools of yourselves! Dancing here? Why?"

But, everyone just kept on dancing and finally

the truck just went away, and everyone clapped and said, 'We beat them!' They were not ignoring their antagonists, you can't really ignore them because they are right there. You can't pretend that you don't hear it, but the protestors snubbed them. They just refused to play the game, the hate game, and they danced right through to the end, very happily. That was a triumph. That day, they turned a corner and there has been less temptation to shout back. I haven't seen the hate speech group there the last several times I have been there.

Maybe they have given up. They have to drive all the way from Itoman, and then they only drive by about four times. They are never there longer than a half hour, and then they have to drive all the way back. Maybe they have decided that it is a waste of time, which it surely is.

D.B.: I wonder how that mistaken perception of the anti-base movement developed. I hear it often. I hear people talk about it. I hear military folks sometimes talk about it.

C.D.L.: Yes, in logic it is called deductive reasoning rather than inductive. What they imagine they are looking at, they deduce from their right-wing ideology. China is the enemy; Henoko is being built to frighten China and to deter China's 'imminent' attack and, therefore - this is the deductive move - these people (the protestors) must be the patsies of China, China's agents - therefore - they must be getting money from China and their lunches must be paid for by China. And, what they see before their eyes doesn't count as evidence. If they would get out of their truck and come and look, they would see people paying money for the bento (lunch), and if they had any knowledge about what was going on, they

would know that no one there is getting any money from China. All of the people there know that they are getting no money from China.

So, it is a way that the ideological mind sometimes works. The facts are deduced from the theories rather than the theories being deduced from the facts.

D.B.: It seems to involve a long history of labeling as communist whatever speech or actions don't square with the established power. Even when I was serving in the military, I often heard, wherever I was, whether it was in Panama or in Korea or even in Japan, having taught with universities on the bases, I have heard so many military and family members reduce any protest to 'communism versus capitalism'. There seems to be a clear oversimplification or dichotomy [drawn] that you find in the thinking among people.

C.D.L.: What American rightist, or Japanese rightist, mean by 'communist' - especially the American rightwing - what they mean by 'communist' just doesn't work in contemporary Japan, because there is a legal established Communist Party. It is a legitimate electoral party that has from many years back been non-violent and engaged in electoral politics. Their electoral politics has very little anymore to do with Marxism. It is basically a liberal platform. They have their problems, and a lot of people in Japan dislike them for different reasons, but they are not a conspiratorial violent set of revolutionary agents of a foreign power. They are a political party as they are in Italy and in France and in other countries. We are not talking about the same thing. They (the neo-nationalists) are talking about communism as deduced from rightwing ideology and distorted memory of what communism was in the days of

the Soviet Union. It just does not fit with what Japan's Communist Party is now. The Japan Communist Party is, in fact, a big part of the All Okinawa (オール沖縄) coalition in Okinawa, and there are some people who like to work with them and some people who dislike it. They have a little rigidity in their thinking and their organizing, but they are not what the American rightwing imagines, by any means. They are a parliamentary political party that does its best to get its people elected. The American rightwing image, again, is a case of deduction taking precedence over induction.

D.B.: Seems like an over-simplification, seems to dominate the minds of people who belong to the *anti-anti-base* movement. They can't seem to see the plans being devised to destroy this bay, they can't seem to see outside of the black-and-white box they have constructed.

C.D.L.: Well, you see similar things, though not as virulent, but similar distortions on the part of the left, or the progressive movement as well. For example, sometimes we hear people say, 'the Abe government is fascist'. And, it is not. There are much more accurate ways of criticizing the Abe administration, much more accurate than saying that he is like Hitler. I dislike him, but we don't have brown shirts walking down the streets, smashing windows, and dragging people out of their homes and into the streets and beating them, which is how the fascist movement started. The Nazi movement, fascism in Italy, the same thing, brown shirts, gangs of people randomly beating up 'enemies' and so forth. This is also a kind of deductive thinking ...

"If a movement is very conservative and trying to oppress us and is hateful, it must be the same as Nazism."

It is a different variety, and it is more effective if you avoid stereotypes like that, but try to analyze carefully what it is you are dealing with.

M.S.: I want to ask if you have any ideas about how to encourage young people to engage more in political demonstrations. They don't seem to understand what is actually going on in Okinawa. Many of my friends are not informed enough.

C.D.L.: I don't have a nice trick, or a solution, or surefire plan. If I did, I would be trying to enact it. But, I was raised in the 1950s. That is, I went to junior high school, high school, and college, in the decade of the 1950s. We were called 'the silent generation'. The same things that were said about us are said about young people now: 'uninterested', 'neutral', 'it's got nothing to do with me', 'don't know anything about it', 'apathetic', and so on. And it was pretty much true. How it happened that that the generation of the 1950s gradually became the youth movement in the 1960s is still a mystery to me. It's very hard to understand, very hard to know how it happened. It seemed like a natural evolution.

I was an undergraduate at U.C. Berkeley in the mid-50s. What they call The Youth Movement of the 1960s was already started a little bit at U.C. Berkeley in the '50s. There was a small student movement. They seemed different from what was called the 'Old Left' - the middle-aged, and aging people, who maintained the leftist movement ideology from the 1920s through the 1940s. There was something fresh and new about it. It had to do not only with political ideology, but lifestyle and music. The



style of music changed, people started singing about politics, folk music, very exciting young new singers like Bob Dylan. He appears at the beginning of the 1960's actually.

I think, partly, it had to do with capturing a kind of boredom with consumer society. People were sort of sickened, young people were dissatisfied with what they were given by consumerism. It simply was not adventurous, exciting. They didn't feel quite alive. There was a very popular movie that came out in the mid-50s called *Rebel Without a Cause*. It was one of only three movies that James Dean starred in. It was a B movie, low budget, not very well directed, not very well acted, except by James Dean. But the idea of *Rebel Without a Cause* captured something about the 1950s. People wanted to rebel. Rebellion seemed interesting, but the only way to rebel was to become a juvenile delinquent or something, become a punk, refuse to go to school, refuse to obey your teachers, refuse to obey your parents, which is a little bit interesting, but not all that interesting. The idea of rebelling and actually having a cause somehow captured the imagination of youth at the beginning of the 1960s. In the United States, the actual youth movement was begun by black people in the South, the Civil Rights Movement. Many of the important movements in the US were first begun by black people, the idea of 'sit-in' was invented by black students. The very first big political action, was not staged by young people, but the movement led by Martin Luther King in Montgomery, Alabama, the 1955 Bus Boycott. And, a few years later, the 'sit-ins', where black students would go into restaurants that said, 'We do not serve blacks' and sit at the table, peacefully, and not be served, and stay there all day. They were hurting the restaurants because they couldn't have any business.

It seems to me that more and more students in Okinawa are getting involved. I see more and more young people coming to Henoko from the mainland and from within Okinawa. When it becomes clear that it's effective, when people really understand that it works, and that this movement is going to stop the construction, I think that will start to excite young people's imagination.

Standing in front of the Prefectural Office Building, and raising your fists and shouting your slogans, and marching down Kokusai Dori (International Street in Naha City) to be viewed by tourists only, most of them from Taiwan now, it's not interesting. It's ritual; it's mannerism. It looks like satisfying your feeling that you are doing something, but without being really effective. I can see why young people would not be attracted to that. Much of that is carried out in the spirit of nostalgia by gray-haired people like me, remembering the good old days when those demonstrations were effective. But, it is true, sitting-in in front of the gate at Henoko and failing to stop the trucks is also not so exciting. Now, the movement is, right now, as we are talking, reorganizing itself in such a way as to have the ability actually to stop the trucks from entering. It is trying to get 1,000 people out in front of the gate. Other actions are being talked about. When it looks like this is a movement that's a real adventure, not carried out in the spirit of nostalgia but actually fighting - not violently fighting - but when it becomes clear that this is a movement that really can prevent the construction from happening, and defeat this plan, it will seem much more exciting and interesting to Okinawa students.

There is another thing that has made it difficult for young people to participate and that is that such a very large number in Henoko participating in the past have been from the

mainland. There is a tendency, since Okinawa has a history of being colonized by the mainland, for people from the mainland to take over and make the movement *theirs*, consciously or unconsciously. It's like a habit. I think some local people go there and look around and say, "Oh, this is a mainland movement." And they feel very uncomfortable and don't come back. At some point, I can imagine Okinawan young people organizing and taking over the movement, *becoming* the movement, becoming the leaders, taking over from the older generation and taking over from the people from the mainland, saying in effect, 'This is our movement'.

There was a point in the civil rights movement in the U.S. when people in the South, the black leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) said to the white students coming down from the North ...

"Don't come down here anymore, we want you to organize in your own cities in the North. We will have our own movement now. We don't need any more white people coming to the South in solidarity. Thank you for coming in the past, but, no more."

And that was a great shock ... to the white liberal and white radical students in the North. It was very painful. But it was essential, at that time, to make that move. It had a huge effect in changing the Civil Rights Movement into the Black Power Movement. People started talking about empowerment. And that made James Brown's song possible: 'Say it loud; I'm black, and I'm proud'. That whole black pride movement began with that.

I think if the movement became a movement led by Okinawan youth, it would become much more exciting and much more interesting to them than going to one of these movements and finding themselves in the second strata. The mainland young people maintain their strong position in these movements in part because they come for a few weeks and go back. There are always new faces. A few have moved down here and stayed on. But mostly, it is for a few days, a few weeks, a summer vacation, or something like that. There are people who get on the bus saying, 'This is the seventh time that I have come to Okinawa'. Very proud of having done that. Of course it is all well intentioned, but I hear that it makes it uncomfortable for local people who participate.

But, that can be overcome by taking over.

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