CHAPTER 1

The NPR in the Literature and Archives

Any study seeking to examine the NPR in detail must first look at the literature which already exists on the force. This chapter begins with an examination of this material – looking at the range of English and Japanese language scholarship which exist on the NPR. The relative strengths and weaknesses of this material are examined, as are its interpretations of the character, creation and evolution of the NPR. This chapter also examines the various archival materials available on the NPR and looks at the relative merits and shortcomings of them when used to analyse the force. The chapter concludes with an exploration of some of the contested concepts surrounding the NPR and offers a set of definitions from which a more nuanced analysis of the NPR can be drawn.

Secondary Literature

The English language scholarship on the NPR exists across a chronological and ideological spectrum. The approach many American scholars employ to the subject focuses mostly on the international context of the force. This strength is an aspect of the existing scholarship which benefits the content of this study, but the general emphasis on the international and American influences on the force tends to obscure other equally powerful influences from within Japan itself. The examination of the domestic influences on the force forms the first main aim of this study, an aim clearly validated by the current neglect of the subject. The second main aim of this study is to examine the character of the force. This is again required due to the scant amount of attention played to the character of the force until now. The common approach by most English language scholars is to label the force (usually as an army from its very creation) using a very thin source base, with most sharing a single secondary source as the root for their judgments. This seems a gross oversimplification of a force

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1 Some other English language based scholars are working in the field but it remains largely an American preserve, partly as a legacy of the Occupation itself and the academic careers pursued by former Occupation participants from the 1950s onwards.

which was influenced by many differing policy actors and events, and whose character evolved over time. This weakness again confirms the requirement for a study such as this which aims to fully explore the character of the force using a broad and varied range of primary sources. The remainder of this section is devoted to a general survey of the scholarship on the NPR followed by specific engagement with a number of key works which make reference to the force.

As Carol Gluck noted in her historiographical essay; ‘Entangling Illusions – Japanese and American Views of the Occupation’, American scholarship on the period shifted into roughly two ideologically and chronologically distinct groups in the early 1970s, with the earlier, first generation of Occupation historiography being challenged by an emerging second generation. The first generation, also sometimes characterised as the ‘orthodox’ school, mainly argued that the Occupation’s reform agenda was largely complete by 1948 and the ‘reverse course’ (the alleged reversal of GHQ’s progressive agenda in the later years of the Occupation), far from being a reversal of policy, was a new initiative adopted to confront the challenges of the emerging Cold War after reform was complete. In this Justin Williams (the former Parliamentary and Political Division Chief of Government Section) and others denied that the ‘reverse course’ ever actually occurred at all: ‘the reverse course concept...does not stand up under close scrutiny’. Gluck argued that the position of the first generation of scholars, particularly in works produced prior to the late 1960s, constructed a historiography which she claims depicted the Occupation as a ‘heroic narrative’ in which enlightened and benign American reforms were highly successful. Correspondingly, the emphasis of most scholarship of this

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5 J. Williams, Japan’s Political Revolution under MacArthur: A Participants Account, University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1979, p. 208.