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**Christopher Aldous. "The Anatomy of Allied Occupation: Contesting the Resumption of Japanese Antarctic Whaling, 1945-52." *The Journal of American East Asian Relations* 26:4 (2019): 338-367. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/18765610-02604002>.**

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Japan's insistence on its right to exploit and consume whales has long provoked international condemnation.<sup>1</sup> Since the early 1970s, such condemnation has been motivated by environmental concerns. However, there is a longer history: When Japan first dispatched a whaling fleet to the Antarctic in the 1930s it drew heavy criticism from established whaling nations—on economic and not environmental grounds—for flouting international limits on catches. During the post-war Occupation of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur's General Headquarters (GHQ) sought the resumption of Japanese whaling. To begin with, this was motivated out of a need to boost food production and to avert famine. As the food crisis abated, economic recovery was used to justify continued whaling. No matter the reason, the resumption provoked fierce opposition from those same whaling nations.

Christopher Aldous examines this whaling diplomacy and adds to an established trend on the historical literature on the Occupation of Japan which reframes it as a multilateral allied undertaking, rather than a unilateral or bilateral enterprise.<sup>2</sup> Allied countries were able to make their case by using the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) and the Allied Council of Japan (ACJ), consultative bodies established to monitor the Occupation and which have generally been regarded in the historiography as having only a minimal impact, if any.<sup>3</sup> Though Japanese whaling fleets were dispatched, Aldous shows how the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and Norway were able to limit the scope of these expeditions. By concentrating on *processes* rather than *outcomes*, he illustrates the multilateral nature of the Occupation in this case. While the United States was able to hold sway over internal and domestic aspects of the reform program

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Victor, "Japan to Resume Commercial Whaling, Defying International Ban," *New York Times*, 26 December 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/26/world/asia/japan-whaling-withdrawal.html>. Simon Denyer and Akiko Kashiwaji, "Japan to Leave International Whaling Commission, Resume Commercial Hunting," *The Washington Post*, 26 December 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japan-to-leave-international-whaling-commission-resume-commercial-hunt/2018/12/26/2c32fb20-08c9-11e9-892d-3373d7422f60\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/japan-to-leave-international-whaling-commission-resume-commercial-hunt/2018/12/26/2c32fb20-08c9-11e9-892d-3373d7422f60_story.html).

<sup>2</sup> Carol Gluck, "Entangling Illusions: Japanese and American Views of the Occupation," in Warren I. Cohen, ed., *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). Roger Buckley, *Occupation Diplomacy: Britain, the United States and Japan, 1945-52* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Roger Dingman, "The View from Down Under: Australia and Japan, 1945-52," in Thomas W. Burkman, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: The International Context* (Norfolk: MacArthur Memorial Foundation, 1984). Eiji Takemae, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> See for example Takemae, *Inside GHQ*.

(education, policing, etc.) on matters with international ramifications, such as food aid and fisheries, and especially on those affecting its Allies' interests, it felt constrained to work with these Allies and minimize any 'political turbulence' (342).<sup>4</sup>

GHQ concessions to the Allies included limits on the number of vessels and on allowable catches, and an increase in the number of Allied inspectors on board the whaling vessels who were tasked with ensuring compliance with these strictures. The challenges and travails of these inspectors form a large part of Aldous's narrative and show the extent to which this history was simultaneously a matter of high politics and transnational interpersonal relations. Tensions and compromises between the inspectors themselves on the one hand, and between them and their Japanese hosts on the other, were, as Aldous maintains, "a kind of microcosm of the Allied Occupation itself" (359). A sign of the importance that was attached to their mission can be seen from the fact that on their return MacArthur, who usually preferred to cultivate a distant and aloof image, met with and praised them for their work.

For all the concern over consultation and concessions, GHQ was not above engaging in sharp practices in order to ultimately get its way. The first expedition, which was active during the 1946-47 southern hemisphere summer, was portrayed as a humanitarian mission designed to alleviate hunger and one that should not be seen as setting a precedent. When a second expedition was planned, Allied nations cried foul and the resulting diplomatic spat was marked by "bitterness" (355). In deference to Allied sensibilities the size of the fleet was not increased from the two ships sent in 1946-47, but it and subsequent expeditions still went ahead.

A fascinating aspect of this diplomacy is the degree to which U.S. policy was aimed at reintegrating Japan into the family of nations and into the liberal international post-war order it was then in the process of building. Aldous quotes MacArthur, who warned the Japanese whalers that their actions on the high seas would be "a test of their fitness to be included in the family of law-abiding nations" (349). This idea of a kind of civilizational probation was clearly linked to ameliorating Allied discontent. It also reflects the reformist zeal of the Occupation, especially in its early stages. This aspect is one which this reviewer would have liked to have seen Aldous pursue further, particularly in relation to Japanese opinions on the importance of whaling and how these opinions intersected with Japan's evolving place in the postwar international order and its relations with other states. Indeed, Japanese voices are largely absent from this account, which is unfortunate to say the least, but may well reflect both the subaltern status of Japan at this time as well as a disadvantageous archival situation.

In any case, Aldous has produced a lively and well researched account of a curious and compelling episode in the Occupation and makes a strong case in support of viewing it as an international and global process.

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<sup>4</sup> Aldous addressed the multinational aspect of food aid and the Occupation in, Aldous, "Contesting Famine: Hunger and Nutrition in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 17:3 (2010): 230-256. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1163/187656110X548639>.