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VIEWS OF RUSSIA IN JAPAN IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY[1]

Japanese people have repeatedly constructed collective memories of Russia on the basis of their experiences and imagination regarding "Siberia." After their experiences of World War Two most Japanese people shared feelings of one-sided victimhood toward the Soviet Union. At the same time, some of them loved Soviet culture, respected Soviet science, or idolized the Soviet Union as the great leader of the leftist movement. Lack of concrete information on the Soviet Union sometimes even caused some people to excessively idealize it. Mikhail Gorbachev greatly improved Japanese people's feelings of closeness to the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. However, these trends disappeared rapidly with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Japanese people who witnessed political and economic turmoil in Russia from the early to the late 1990s again came to have a negative attitude toward Russia.

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Introduction

The Japanese slang term *Osoroshia,* meaning "Horrifying Russia," has been used often in Japan in the early 21st century,[2] suggesting ill feeling toward Russia by Japanese people. There was some discussion of "Horrifying Russia" in Japanese materials in the late 19th century,[3] but fear of Russia among the Japanese population increased markedly after their defeat in the Soviet–Japanese War in August 1945.

This paper discusses changes in the feelings of Japanese people toward Russia (the Soviet Union) from the middle to the end of the 20th century. While these unfavorable feelings had originally developed during Japan's prewar imperialistic expansion, the defeat of Japan in 1945 represented a significant turning point for them.

An important key to understanding the process of the spread of these unfavorable feelings is the overlap in Japanese people's feelings toward Russia in postwar Japan with those toward "Siberia." For many Japanese people the term "Siberia" includes the Russian Far East, which has strong historical links with Japan. This was the region where several tens of thousands of Japanese people worked in the fishing industry as seasonal workers from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, where more than 70 thousand Japanese soldiers fought with Soviet partisans in the Siberian Intervention of 1918–1922,[4] and where more than 600,000 Japanese POWs were engaged in forced labor for Soviet postwar restoration after the Soviet–Japanese War in 1945.[5] The region was also where Japan accessed Russia by sea in recent centuries until Japanese people began traveling to the Soviet Union by air in the late 20th century.

The new electronic media of radio and television caused drastic changes in Japanese popular culture and mass communication in the late 20th century, and these changes affected people's feelings toward the Soviet

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2 For example, see Iurii Izmyiko (Koizumi Yū), "Osoroshia Kōkūki Retsuden (1)", *Kōkū Jōhō* 59, no. 8 (2009): 104–107. We find an example in 1903. See Kōkichi Misawa, ed., *Roshia Kansatsudan* (Sendai: Misawa Shoten, 1903).

3 For example, see Kōkichi Matsui, *Reigo Netsugo* (Tokyo: Matsumura Sanshōdō, 1904). See also Misawa, *Roshia Kansatsudan*. Saburō Shimada, *Nihon to Roshia,* 3rd edition (Tokyo: Keisuisha, 1901). These authors criticized the widespread fear of Russia in Japan.

4 Masafumi Asada, *Shiberia Shuppei* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shisha, 2016), 73.

5 Takeshi Tomita and Ryōji Nagase, eds., *Shiberia Yokuryū Kankei Shiryō Shūsei,* Revised edition (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō: 2020), xiv. Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia Yokuryū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha: 2016), 45.

Union. As few previous studies have paid attention to the role of new media or cultural representation of Russia in Japanese popular culture, this paper clarifies the process by which Japanese people have constructed these feelings, focusing mainly on cultural aspects in postwar Japan.[6]

War Trauma

In the late 1940s, many Japanese people had a shared feeling of victimization as a result of the devastation of WWII. Indeed, heavy bombing by the US Air Force almost annihilated many Japanese cities. Many Japanese people lost their homes and livelihoods, and also lacked basic daily necessities. However, it was difficult to express resentment publicly about the damage sustained in the war because the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), which was acting as the US Occupation authority, controlled Japanese media and prohibited them from criticizing the USA and its occupation policy[7].

Yoshida Yutaka explained the development of Japanese people's one-sided victimhood, and pointed out that this was caused by the war process. First, the Japanese wartime economic and political regime had already brought about a sharp decline in people's living standards from the beginning of the war[8]. Second, Japanese war capability was destroyed, not by Chinese Forces with which Japanese forces had fought since the 1930s, but by US forces as a new enemy with great material superiority over Japan. The long-running and large-scale war with China had already exhausted Japan, but many Japanese people felt that Japan was defeated not by China but by the USA[9]. Third, Japanese people had no opportunities to reflect on

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6 Dmitry V. Streltsov has energetically published his research on the image of USSR in Japan including that in the late 20th century. Dmitry V. Streltsov, "Faktory negativnogo obraza SSSR v Iaponii v period kholodnyi voiny", *Vostochnaia Aziia*, no. 2 (2022): 32–46. See also S. V. Chugrov and D. V. Streltsov, "Evoliutsiia vzaimnykh obrazov v sovremennoi istorii rossiisko-iaponskogo vzaimodeistviia kak somostoiatelnyi factor dvustronnikh otnoshenii", in *Rossiisko-Iaponskie otnosheniia v formate parallelnoi istorii*, eds. A. V. Torkunov and M. Iokibe (Moscow: MGIMO and MID of Russian Federation, 2015), 965-995. But they are not based on perspectives of cultural history.

7 Nihon Shinbun Kyōkai, *Nihon Shinbun Kyōkai 10-nen Shi* (Tokyo: Nihon Shinbun Kyōkai, 1956), 74-76, 79-80. Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Henshū Shitsu, ed., *Nihon Hoso Shi 1* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1965), 700–702.

8 Yutaka Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensō Kan* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 260.

9 Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensō Kan*, 261–262.

their colonialization over other Asian countries because of the immediate loss of all colonies with its defeat in August 1945, which took place without any decolonization process.[10] Yoshida also indicated that the American view of the war presented by SCAP considerably affected how Japanese people reflected upon the war. This view underlined the role of US forces in the defeat of Japan and did not mention the role of China or extensive anti-Japanese resistance in the areas of Southeast Asia which were occupied by the Japanese Army. This view also stressed that Japanese "militarists" concealed the truth about the war from the Japanese people.[11] The notion of "cheated people" was widely accepted, because it corresponded to what many Japanese people thought of the war.[12]

Under these conditions, many Japanese people also felt victimized by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945, in the final phase of WWII, and proclaimed the Soviet–Japanese Neutrality Pact of 1941 to be invalid. The three-week war killed more than tens of thousands of Japanese civilians in Manchukuo, South Sakhalin, and Kuril Islands.[13] After the war, about two million Japanese refugees remained in this area and at least several hundred thousand died of hunger, cold, and disease under occupation by Soviet forces, with Soviet soldiers repeatedly subjecting Japanese refugees to sexual violence and looting during their occupation.[14] More than 600 thousand Japanese soldiers were also subjected to forced labor in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Mongolia, and about one in ten of these soldiers lost their lives in Soviet labor camps.

Many Japanese people in Japan proper felt that peace came in the summer of 1945, but there was no contact with those who remained in the former Manchukuo, North Korea, South Sakhalin, and Kuril Islands occupied by Soviet forces since August 1945 until most of the refugees and soldiers began returning to Japan in the late 1940s. Japanese media intensively reported on the experiences of Japanese refugees and POWs on their return, but these reports were rapidly replaced in the media by news of the Korean War after 1950.[15] Many returning soldiers remained silent

10 Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensō Kan*, 262.
11 Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensō Kan*, 34–35.
12 Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensō Kan*, 36–37, 59.
13 Tomita and Nagase, *Shiberia Yokuryū Kankei Shiryō Shūsei*, xiv. Tomita, *Shiberia Yokuryū*, viii.
14 Takeshi Tomita, *Nisso Sensō: 1945-nen 8-gatsu* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 2020), 218.
15 Takeshi Tomita, *Shiberia Yokuryūshatachi no Sengo* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 2013), 84–85, 88.

for a long time about their own individual experiences in "Siberia,"[16] as the Japanese police regarded them as having been brainwashed by Soviet communism and subjected them to intense scrutiny.[17]

Several contemporary popular songs caused many people to share ill feelings toward "Siberia." The popular song "A Foreign Hill" ("Ikoku no Oka") became a hit song in 1948. Its popularity was sparked by a radio program broadcasting amateur singing contests, in which some returning soldiers from "Siberia" entered and sang the song.[18] The song was written in wartime Manchukuo by a soldier named Yoshida Tadashi, who later became a famous Japanese composer, and became very popular among Japanese soldiers in "Siberia."[19] The song lyrics describe soldiers' hope of returning home and nostalgia for their homeland. The lyrics merely contain the words "abroad" and "homeland" instead of concrete words "Siberia" or "Japan," directly mentioning neither their loved ones nor their home. These lyrics, which did not include detailed description, were so simple that they resonated on a deep level with many people.

The lyrics of the 1954 popular hit song "A Mother on a Wharf" ("Gampeki no Haha") are also simple. Recordings of the song sold well over a million copies, and a film from the song also became successful. The song's lyrics describe a woman whose son was forced to labor in "Siberia," and who probably died. Many women gathered in the port of Maizuru in central Japan when ships carrying returning soldiers arrived from the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The songwriter wrote the lyrics based on a real woman,[20] focusing merely on her sorrow without depicting her resentment against Siberia, the Soviets, or the war. The lyrics even lack the words "Siberia" and "You" (referring to her son). The cover version from the 1970s includes the line, "How cold it is in Siberia where it snows and

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16 "20-seiki no Kiseki 607, Kayōkyoku 18, Ikoku no Oka, Ganpeki no Haha", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Morning edition), April 29, 1982.

17 "Shiberia Yokuryū: Seikan Go mo Tsuduita Kunan no Ayumi", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Edition "B"), October 17, 2015., "Himitsudatta Yokuryū: Aniki yo, Naze", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Morning edition), October 6, 2010.

18 "Showa 23-nen 8-gatsu, Ikoku no Oka: Geinōshi wo Aruku", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Evening edition), March 3, 1986.

19 Tadashi Yoshida, *Inochi Aru Kagiri: Yoshida Tadashi, Watashi no Rirekisho* (Hitachi: Hitachi Shimin Bunka Jigyōdan, 2001), 79, 116–117.

20 Reiko Yanagikawa, "Dai-2-ji Soren Kikoku Aiwa, 10-nen Kaeranu Wagako wo Matsu: Ganpeki no Haha ha Kanashi", *Fujin Kurabu* 35, no. 5 (May 1954): 134–137. It became evident that the woman's son was alive in China in 2000, 19 years after her death. "Dai Hitto Kyoku Ganpeki no Haha no Musuko ha Ikiteita", *Yomiuri Shinbun* (Osaka: Morning edition), August 12, 2000.

blows!” However, the original version simply expressed the mother’s grief at loss of her son. The song became popular among many people who were waiting for the return of their own loved ones.

The war and subsequent events undoubtedly worsened Japanese people’s feelings toward the Soviet Union. In a public opinion survey conducted in 1950 by the Japanese news service agency, Jiji Press Co., 53.0% of respondents classified “the Soviet Union” as the least favorite country with only 1.0% calling it their favorite country.[21]

Enhanced Victimhood Feelings

The beginning of the Cold War helped to maintain the feeling of victimhood among Japanese people toward the Soviet Union. The Korean War made the Far East a new front in the Cold War. The USA converted its occupation policy toward Japan and preserved the Japanese political and economic regime to some extent to make Japan its base against communism in Asia.[22] SCAP ordered a Red Purge in Japan under which the Japanese government and commercial companies dismissed more than 10 000 employees who were communist sympathizers.[23]

The USA hastened to conclude the peace treaty with Japan and endeavored to secure a reliable partnership with the country as its de facto client state after its independent recovery. These environments favored a “tolerant” San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951, which refers to neither Japan’s responsibility for the war nor any arms limitations to Japan, and enabled Japan to escape heavy reparation payments to the victorious nations.[24] This “tolerant” peace treaty meant that the Japanese people missed an opportunity to reflect on their own imperialist past.

The Soviet Union along with Poland and Czechoslovakia refused to sign the treaty due to opposition to its contents.[25] This delayed the settling

21 “Sukina Kuni Kiraina Kuni”, *Jiji Tsūshin Senryōki Yoron Chōsa* 8, *Reproduction* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1994).

22 Junnosuke Masumi, “Sengoshi no Kigen to Isō”, in *Senryō to Kaikaku*, eds. Masanori Nakamura, Akira Amakawa, Kooncha Yun, and Takeshi Igarashi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 18–19.

23 Shōbē Shiota, *Red Purge* (Tokyo: Shinnihon Shuppansha, 1984), 42–43.

24 Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensōkan*, 75–76.

25 Hirofumi Hayashi, “San Francisco Heiwa Jōyaku to Nihon no Sengo Shori”, in *Iwanami Kōza Nihon Rekishi* 19: *Kingendai 5*, eds. Tōru Ōtsu, Eiji Sakurai, Jōji Fujī, Yutaka Yoshida, and Sungsi Lee (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2015), 9.

of several unresolved problems between the Soviet Union and Japan, and reinforced Japanese people's feelings of victimhood toward the Soviet Union.

Feelings of victimhood toward the Soviet Union had already taken root in Japan before WWII when the Japanese Army intervened in the Russian Civil War. Soviet partisans in Amur Basin wiped out a Japanese battalion, and subsequently killed thousands of Russian civilians and Japanese captive soldiers in Nikolaevsk-na-Amure in 1920.[26] Hundreds of Japanese civilians who went along with their Army were also killed at the battle. The Japanese media stressed "the Bolsheviks' inhuman cruelty,"[27] leaving aside the question of why the Japanese Army was there in the first place. Many Japanese people shed tears only for Japanese casualites, and the Japanese Government succeeded in continuing their intervention in the Russian Far East with support from the Japanese public.

Feelings of victimhood in the 1920s and 1930s were mainly caused by two concrete threats: communism and violation of Japanese fishing rights in the Soviet Far East. The former was symbolized by the Public Order and Police Law enacted by the Imperial Diet in 1925, when the Soviet Union and Japan concluded the Soviet–Japanese Basic Convention and normalized relations between the two countries. This law targeted social movements, especially revolutionary movements, and played a major role in state thought control in relation to the Japanese people until SCAP ordered its abolition in 1945. This law, which was revised to widen its applicability in 1928, enabled the Japanese authorities to destroy the Japanese Communist Party.[28]

The latter threat occurred from the late 1920s when the Soviet leadership began aggressive investment in the Soviet Far East fishing industry. The Soviet Union guaranteed Japanese fishing concessions in Soviet Far East waters, which Japan had ensured by the peace treaty after the Russo–Japanese war of 1905. However, Soviet state fishing companies developed rapidly in the first and second 5-year plan periods and overwhelmed rival Japanese companies through competitive bidding for coastal salmon fishing.[29] Major Japanese fishing companies launched a media campaign in the early 1930s, insisting that the Soviet authorities had infringed legitimate Japanese fishing rights.[30]

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26 Asada, *Shiberia Shuppei*, 156–159.
27 Asada, *Shiberia Shuppei*, 162–163.
28 Yasuhiro Okudaira, *Chian Iji Ho Shōshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006), 187–189.
29 Eisuke Kaminaga, *Hokuyō no Tanjō* (Yokohama: Seibunsha, 2014), 88–90.
30 Kaminaga, *Hokuyō*, 93.

In contrast, many Japanese people believed that Japan and Russia were well balanced in military strength before WWII. The myth of a great victory in 1905 had convinced them of the invincibility of Japanese Imperial forces.[31] Therefore, the disappointing defeat by the Soviet Union in 1945 was a major shock to the populace. This shock may have resulted in the criticism that the Soviet Union suddenly broke the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact.[32]

Importantly, the Soviet Union remained a great menace to Japan after the war due to both communism and fishing in the North Pacific Ocean. These two threats remained unchanged before and after WWII. First, the Japanese postwar regime took a clear anti-communism stance in deciding to follow US global strategy and it re-examined postwar democratization policies in the early 1950s to restore the prewar regime to some extent. Second, strained relations with the Soviet Union affected Japanese ocean salmon fishing in the North Pacific Ocean.[33] Third, unlike before the war, the postwar Soviet Union considerably surpassed postwar Japan in its military capabilities. In addition, Japan, which had lost all of its colonies, including South Sakhalin and Kuril Islands, came to face Soviet military pressure much closer to Japan proper than before the war.

Respect for Soviet Culture

Japanese people were starved not only for daily foods but also for various forms of entertainment, which had been strictly prohibited by the Japanese authorities during the war.[34] To encourage the democratization of Japan, SCAP censored media content and banned the publication and broadcasting of militaristic and anti-US content.[35]

31 For example, Tēichi Mutō, *Muteki Nihongun* (Tokyo, Dainihon Yūbenkai Kōdansha, 1938).

32 Shirō Sada, "Sodōmei ha Nisso Chūritsu Jōyaku wo Yabutte Nihon wo Shinryakushitaka", *Zen'ei*, no. 65 (1952): 58–61., Shizō Koizumi, *Kyōsanshugi to Ningen Sonchō* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū Shinsha, 1951), 42–43.

33 Kaminaga, *Hokuyō*, 201–202.

34 Akira Kurihara, "Shakai Ishiki no Henyō: Taishū no Sengo Ishiki", in *Sengoshisō to Shakai Ishiki*, eds. Masanori Nakamura, Akira Amakawa, Kooncha Yun, and Takeshi Igarashi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 190.

35 Eiji Takemae, "GHQ to Nihon Senryō: GHQ-ron", in *Senryō to Kaikaku*, eds. Masanori Nakamura, Akira Amakawa, Kooncha Yun, and Takeshi Igarashi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), 47.

The golden age of Japanese cinema began in the early 1950s.[36] Movies became the center of Japanese popular entertainment until they were replaced by television in the 1960s.[37] While as many people liked Japanese and American movies as before the war, many people also became fascinated with Soviet movies, which censorship had sometimes prevented Japanese people from seeing in theaters in prewar Japan. The 1946 Soviet film «Каменный цветок» [The Stone Flower] was the first color movie to be released in postwar Japan,[38] and the 1947 Soviet film «Конёк-горбунок» [The Humpbacked Horse] was the second feature-length animated film released in Japan.[39] Imported Soviet animated films inspired some future Japanese masters of animated film.[40] Japanese audiences recognized the Soviet Union's technical progressiveness and rich cultural traditions through its high-quality movies.[41] Japanese people appreciated the Soviet Union as a cultural and technology superpower along with the USA in the post-WWII world.

Most Japanese people liked Japanese and American popular songs, which were prevalent in popular movies or radio.[42] In the democratized postwar environment, many young workers, students, and high school students spontaneously began to organize their own cultural club activities all over Japan.[43] Some formed choral clubs not only for fun, but to improve their way of life, and they called these activities the "Utagoe Undō" [The Singing Voice Movement].[44] They demanded "clean songs with clean lyrics" instead of commercially successful popular songs, which included contemporary Americanized music or lyrics with sexual nuances. Young people belonging

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36 Tadao Satō, *Nihon Eiga Shi 2: 1941–1959, Revised version* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006), 229., Inuhiko Yomoda, *Nihon Eiga 110-nen* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2014), 144.

37 Yomoda, *Nihon Eiga 110-nen*, 166.

38 This was screened in Japan in 1947. Neia Markovna Zorkaia, *Soviet Eiga Shi*, trans., Chie Ōgi (Tokyo: Roshia Eiga Sha, 2001), 456., "Gaikoku Eiga Shōkai: Ishi no Hana", *Kinema Junpō*, no. 22 (758), November 1947, 20., "Graphic Shinsaku Shōkai: Ishi no Hana", *Kinema Junpō*, no. 23 (759), November 1947, 4–5.

39 This was screened in Japan in 1949. Zorkaia, *Soviet Eiga Shi*, 456., Yasushi Watanabe, "Roshia Soren Anime Senzen Sengo no Nihon Kōkai no Rekishi", *Biranji*, no. 40 (September 2017): 112.

40 Watanabe, "Roshia Soren Anime", 112, 117.

41 Ippei Fukuro, "Tennenshoku Eiga to Ishi no Hana", *Eiga Hyōron* 5, no. 1, January 1948, 3–5., "Geki, Eiga Hyō: Ishi no Hana", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Morning Edition), November 5, 1947.

42 Kurihara, "Shakai Ishiki no Henyō", 189.

43 Kurihara, "Shakai Ishiki no Henyō", 188., Naoya Unoda, "1940-nendai Kōhan no Circle Undō", in *Circle no Jidai wo Yomu*, eds. Naoya Unoda, Takayuki Kawaguchi, Hiroshi Sakaguchi, Koji Toba, Izumi Nakaya, and Chikanobu Michiba (Tokyo: Kage Shobō, 2016), 22.

44 Hiroshi Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin* (Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2010), 270–272.

to the movement selected traditional European, American, and Japanese folk songs.[45]

The 1947 Soviet color musical film «Сказание о земле сибирской» [Ballad of Siberia], which was first released in Japan in 1948,[46] sparked a boom of interest in Soviet songs.[47] Amateur chorus members who loved "clean songs" soon became the center of this boom in Soviet songs. This typical Stalin-era Soviet movie impressed many young chorus members because they found a perfect world in idealized Siberia where Soviet people cheerfully endeavored to reconstruct their war-damaged country, singing "clean" songs beautifully.

Japanese people called all songs from the Soviet Union "Russian folk songs" at that time.[48] Consequently, "Russian folk songs" in Japan included not only "genuine" folk songs of uncertain authorship, such as «Вот мчится тройка почтовая» [The Troika–Mail is Running] and «Эй, ухнем!» [The Song of the Volga Boatmen], but also contemporary Soviet popular songs, such as «Катюша» [Katyusha] and «Подмосковные вечера» [Moscow Nights].

The "Singing Voice Movement" grew from the late 1940s to the middle 1950s and played an important part in the spread of various Russian songs across Japan. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP), which had its own young members' chorus, actively supported the movement and helped young people who were not members to organize their own choral clubs.[49] Therefore, some right-leaning groups blamed the movement for communist propaganda activities.[50] However, most young cultural club members among the movement actually kept the JCP and its political motivations at a distance.[51]

Some large cafes at which customers could sing in chorus appeared in big cities in the mid-1950s.[52] These "Singing Voice" cafes attracted young

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45 Eisuke Kaminaga, "Utagoe Undō toha Nanika", *Niigata Kokusai Jōhō Daigaku Jōhō Bunka Gakubu Kiyō*, no. 15 (April 2012): 4-5., Seiji Chōki, *Sengo no Ongaku* (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2010), 95. About "clean songs," see also Eisuke Kaminaga, "Utagoe Undō no Naka no Roshia", *Ikyō ni Ikiru 5* (Yokohama: Seibunsha, 2010), 323–338.

46 Zorkaia, *Soviet Eiga Shi*, 456.

47 Chōki, *Sengo no Ongaku*, 95.

48 It is considered that "popular songs" («народные песни») were accepted erroneously as "folk songs" when they were translated from Russian into Japanese.

49 Choki, *Sengo no Ongaku*, 86–87. Hideya Kawanishi, "Utagoe Undō", in *Sengo no Ongaku Bunka*, ed. Tatsuya Tonoshita (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2016), 147–148.

50 Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin*, 248.

51 Kurihara, "Shakai Ishiki no Henyō", 188.

52 Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin*, 263–264.

people who wanted to sing easily and casually. These cafes had their own wait staff who sang lead vocals. Cafes made their own songbooks, which devoted many pages to "Russian folk songs," because young customers wanted to sing these songs.[53]

Both "Singing Voice" cafes and the "Singing Voice" movement were booming from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s.[54] Moreover, free commercial radio broadcasting and television broadcasting, which started in the early 1950s, also changed the circumstances surrounding music in Japan.[55] New songs came into fashion via radio in the 1950s. Some "Russian folk songs" sung by professional singers became popular through radio and television broadcasting.[56]

"Russian folk songs" were popular among young people from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, and these lovers of "Russian folk songs" continued to love Soviet songs. "Singing Voice" cafes that were reopened in some cities from the 2000s to the 2010s attracted old lovers of Soviet songs.[57] These people, who had never been the majority in Japan, hated neither the Soviet Union nor Russia, despite the general enmity with which they were held by many Japanese people.

Grassroots Relationships

The Soviet Union and Japan signed the Soviet–Japanese Joint Declaration, which provided for the restoration of their diplomatic relations, in 1956. It brought about marked increases in economic and cultural exchange between both countries,[58] although they were unable to conclude a peace treaty or settle territorial problems regarding the Kuril Islands.

At the same time, the success of Sputnik I (1957) and Yuri Gagarin's flight in space (1961) cemented the idea among Japanese people that the Soviet Union was ahead of most other countries in advanced scientific technology.

53 Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin*, 264–265.
54 Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin*, 274. Choki, *Sengo no Ongaku*, 81. Kawanishi, "Utagoe Undō," 149.
55 Hiromi Tsuji, "Kayōkyoku", in *Sengo no Ongaku Bunka*, ed. Tatsuya Tonoshita (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2016), 127., Kazufumi Suzuki, "Terebi Hōsō," in *Sengo no Ongaku Bunka*, ed. Tatsuya Tonoshita (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2016), 146–147.
56 Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin*, 267–268.
57 Watanabe, *Utau Kokumin*, 276–277.
58 Nisso Nichiro Keizai Kōryūshi Shuppan Group, ed., *Nisso Nichiro Keizai Kōryūshi* (Tokyo: Tōyō Shoten, 2008), 48–50.

Many amateur astronomers looked for Sputnik in the night sky,[59] and many amateur radio operators tried to track the radio signals from Sputnik all over Japan.[60] Many people welcomed Gagarin warmly around Japan when he and his wife, Valentina, visited the country in 1962. To many Japanese people, Gagarin became a symbol of positive Soviet attributes.[61]

In 1960, the Science Council of Japan resolved to enhance Russian language education in Japanese universities.[62] Urgent large-scale imports of Soviet-made live oral poliovirus vaccine in 1961 greatly helped to stop the spread of a polio epidemic in Japan.[63] This also demonstrated the progressiveness of Soviet science to the Japanese people.

Many Japanese people came to know about the Soviet Union through television, which became widespread in Japan in the 1960s. Television programs featuring foreign affairs reports were very popular in Japan.[64] More Japanese people also traveled to the Soviet Union from the mid-1960s,[65] when the Government of Japan allowed Japanese nationals to have free foreign travel.

The 1966 film «Маленький беглец» [A Little Runaway] saw the start of Soviet–Japanese co-productions.[66] Among them, the 1975 film «Дерсу Узала» [Dersu Uzala] directed by the famous Japanese director, Kurosawa Akira, won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and was commercially successful in the Soviet Union, Europe, and North America, but not in Japan.[67]

A deepening understanding of the Soviet Union was backed by the fact that some Japanese cities on the Sea of Japan became twinned with Soviet Far East cities from the 1960s to the 1970s. For example, the municipal

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59 "Nihon demo Mieta", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Morning edition), October 6, 1957.

60 "Katasukashi Kutta Ham", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Evening edition), October 5, 1957.

61 For example, "Nikoyaka ni 'Uchūjin'", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Evening edition), May 21, 1962.

62 "Daigaku ni Okeru Roshiago Kyōiku no Jūjitsu ni Tsuite", Nihon Gakujutsu Kaigi, Accessed August 30, 2022, https://www.scj.go.jp/ja/info/kohyo/02/05-02-k.pdf. According to the resolution, 45 Japanese universities opened Russian language courses from 1961 to 1980. See Nihon Roshia Bungaku Kai, ed., *Nihonjin to Roshia Go* (Tokyo: Nauka, 2000), 429–430.

63 Masao Kubo, *Polio ni Kōshite* (Tokyo: Kubo Masao, 1983), 59., Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai Shakai-bu, ed., *Shōni Mahi wo Otte* (Tokyo: Fujin Gahō Sha, 1961), 98–99.

64 Tokyo Hōsō Shashi Henshū Shitsu, ed., *Tokyo Hōsō no Ayumi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Hōsō, 1965), 493., Nobuo Shiga, *Terebi Bangumi Kotohajime* (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2008), 176–177, 407–408.

65 Kazuo Nonomura, *Soviet Ryokō Annai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1966), 4., JTB 100-shūnen Jigyō Suishin Iinkai, ed., *JTB Group 100-nen Shi: 1912–2012* (Tokyo: JTB, 2012), 153–154.

66 Zorkaia, *Soviet Eiga Shi*, 453.

67 Kiyokazu Takeuchi, "Nani ga Hittoshita ka," *Screen* 30, no. 3 (387), March 1975, 76.

assembly of Maizuru in central Japan had already resolved its trade expansion and friendship with the Soviet Union in 1956, and the mayor visited Nakhodka in the Maritime region to arrange an agreement for the two cities to become twinned in 1958. The official agreement was signed in June 1961 and Maizuru became the first Japanese city to become twinned with a Soviet city.[68] Nakhodka was the main repatriation port for Japanese POWs in the Soviet Union, and Maizuru was the main port that received repatriation ships. Indeed, Maizuru was the port city where the above-mentioned "mothers on a wharf" had waited for their sons. Niigata and Khabarovsk subsequently signed twinning agreements in 1965,[69] followed by Otaru and Nakhodka in 1966[70] and by Asahikawa and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in 1967.[71]

In contrast, the Soviet Union, as the world leader of communism, was losing its political authority in Japan.[72] De-Stalinization in the Soviet Union and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 severely shook Japanese socialists, communists, and their sympathizers. In 1956, the JCP then regarded the Hungarian uprising as an antirevolutionary movement and did not criticize the Soviet Union for its armed intervention. However, the JCP soon took an independent political line from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the early 1960s.[73]

While cultural and economic exchanges developed, bilateral political relations remained strained. The Soviet Union one-sidedly rejected negotiations with Japan on a peace treaty and a territorial problem because the USA and Japan signed a new security treaty in 1960.[74] Soviet border guards continued strict control over Japanese fishing boats operating in the sea near the Kuril Islands.[75] This sometimes resulted in fatal accidents, and news of these accidents had a negative effect on Japanese public opinion.

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68 "Shimai Teikei Data," CLAIR, accessed August 30, 2022. http://www.clair.or.jp/j/exchange/shimai/data/detail/1073.
69 "Shimai Teikei Data," CLAIR, accessed August 30, 2022. http://www.clair.or.jp/j/exchange/shimai/data/detail/648.
70 "Shimai Teikei Data," CLAIR, accessed August 30, 2022. http://www.clair.or.jp/j/exchange/shimai/data/detail/648.
71 "Shimai Teikei Data," CLAIR, accessed August 30, 2022. http://www.clair.or.jp/j/exchange/shimai/data/detail/26
72 Yun Kyonchoru, *Nihon Shin Sayoku no Kenkyū* (Tokyo: BokutakuSha, 2001), 16.
73 Nobuo Shimotomai, *Nihon Reisen Shi: 1945-1956* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2021), 318–319.
74 Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Hoppō Ryōdo Mondai to Nichiro Kankei* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2000), 71–72.
75 Kaminaga, *Hokuyō*, 206–207.

NEW COLD WAR

Okinawa Prefecture (the Ryūkyū Islands) was occupied by the USA in 1945 and returned to Japan in 1972. In this year, Japan and the People's Republic of China normalized their diplomatic relations. These changes highlighted unresolved diplomatic problems with the Soviet Union, but the Soviet leadership continued to insist that there were no territorial issues between the two countries, and negotiations on a peace treaty hardly proceeded.[76]

With regard to traditional fishing issues, the USA and the Soviet Union declared their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in the late 1970s. This had a major effect on Japanese pelagic fishing in the North Pacific Ocean.[77] In particular, the surprise Soviet announcement about its EEZ setting was fiercely criticized in the Japanese media.

Grassroots concerns over harm caused to Japanese citizens in WWII increased in the 1970s. Some citizens' groups published collections of essays based on their memories of the war, including the Soviet–Japanese war of August 1945 and the suffering of Japanese refugees in Manchuria under Soviet occupation.[78] Groups of grown-up Japanese children left behind there at the end of the Soviet–Japanese War regularly came to Japan to inquire about the fates of their family members and relatives as late as 1981, which moved many people in Japan to tears. These conditions sustained Japanese people's long-lasting ill feelings toward the Soviet Union.

More Japanese people went abroad in the 1970s because group inclusive tour air fares became more affordable as passenger aircraft increased in size.[79] However, many people still travelled to Europe by the Trans-Siberian Railway and Soviet domestic flights, thereby avoiding relatively expensive airline fares.[80] Although many Japanese tourists were going not to the Soviet Union but to Europe, on the long journey there, they could actually see in person how Soviet people lived.

From the 1970s to the early 1980s, Soviet–Japanese relations at the state level remained largely unchanged. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 caused a boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics held in Moscow. Japanese Olympic athletes who were obliged to join the full boycott

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76 Hasegawa, *Hoppō Ryōdo Mondai*, 72.
77 Kaminaga, *Hokuyō*, 210–211.
78 Yoshida, *Nihonjin no Sensō Kan*, 175.
79 JTB, *JTB Group 100-nen Shi*, 187.
80 Hideo Tani, *24-ka Koku Sekai no Tabi* (Tokyo: Azuma Shobō, 1972), 55.

endured in the public mind. Curiously, only in Japan did the official mascot of the Olympics, which became a well-known Soviet character in Japan of the 1980s, have its own television animation series, “Koguma no Mīsha” [Misha the Little Bear].

The setting for a 1980 hit song for young people “Saraba Shiberia Tetsudō” [Farewell, Trans–Siberian Railway] was set on a Trans–Siberian Railway train in December. A winter Siberian scene was linked with a sense of irreversible loss to become romantic sadness in the song. Young Japanese people accepted “Siberia” as a faraway place, which was farther from Japan than in realty.

It was not uncommon for “Siberia” to be seen as something exotic in Japanese youth pop culture. In the popular manga for girls in the late 1970s “Haikara-san ga Tōru” [Haikara-San: Here Comes Miss Modern], the heroine’s fiancé, a young military officer, disappears in the Siberian Intervention and makes a surprise return as a Russian refugee. “Siberia” is drawn in the story as a mysterious place of unimaginable cold.

While large numbers of Japanese people were travelling to many parts of the world, Japan’s neighboring socialist countries, the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea, were still restricting Japanese tourists’ freedom of entrance and movement within their borders. Young Japanese people saw these countries as exotic. For example, the documentary TV series “The Silk Road” produced by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), whose crew reached the Silk Road region within China and the Soviet Union, was greatly popular and caused a boom in interest in the Silk Road in Japan in the 1980s.[81]

A highly symbolic event of the new Cold War, which spurred Japanese people’s anti-Soviet attitudes, occurred on September 1, 1983. On this day Korean Air Lines Flight 007, which had drifted from its original planned route and was flying through Soviet prohibited airspace, was shot down by a Soviet fighter aircraft over the Sea of Japan near Sakhalin. All of its 269 passengers, including 28 Japanese nationals and the crew, were killed. The Japanese media and government fiercely criticized the Soviet Union not only for shooting down the aircraft but also for its insincere response to the accident. Only three years later, Japanese people again experienced false allegations and concealment on the part of the Soviet authorities in relation to the Chernobyl disaster in April 1986.

81 Yasuko Enomoto, “Sōkai Chūgoku: Silk Road Boom no Genryū wo Tazunete,” *Tōa*, no. 648 (June, 2021): 68–70.

"Gorby" Boom

The Cabinet Office of Japan (the General Administrative Agency of the Cabinet until 2000) have conducted large-scale public opinion surveys and released the results every year from 1978 to the present. One of these surveys shows the percentage of Japanese people who like or dislike Russia (the Soviet Union until 1991): in 1984, 85.6% of respondents "did not feel close" and only 7.7% "felt close" to the Soviet Union.[82] The trend remained almost unchanged from 1980 to 1987. The percentage of those who "felt close" to the Soviet Union never exceeded 10% and those who "did not feel close" to the Soviet Union never decreased below 80% in these eight years.[83]

The trend shifted in 1990, with 23.3% answering in the affirmative ("feel close") and 70.8% answering in the negative ("did not feel close") that year.[84] The following 1991 survey result marked a "record", with 25.3% reporting that they "felt close" and 69.6% reporting they "did not feel close" to the Soviet Union.[85] Thus, in 1991, over a quarter of Japanese people felt positively toward the Soviet Union. This record has not been broken since.

Doubtlessly, Mikhail Gorbachev greatly improved Japanese people's feelings of closeness to the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. He and his domestic reforms known as "perestroika" were rated highly from the end of 1980s to 1991 in Japan. Gorbachev's diplomacy, which resulted in the end of the Cold War, was also highly appreciated in Japan. Although the socialist regimes in China and North Korea remained, Gorbachev eased tensions in East Asia's international relations.[86]

The positive image of Gorbachev as a fresh leader was created in Japan through the Japanese media. Due to Gorbachev's information disclosure known as "glasnost," Japanese audiences saw the Soviet leader's image much more frequently than that of past leaders. Gorbachev was one of a very few friendly Soviet icons for Japanese people, most probably second only to Gagarin.

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82 Naikakufu, "Gaikō ni Kansuru Yoron Chōsa: 2 Chōsa Kekka no Gaiyō, (2) Nihon to Roshia, A Roshia ni Taisuru Shinkinkan, Hyō 4: Sankō" Accessed August 30, 2022, https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/r03/r03-gaiko/zh/h04-s.csv.

83 Naikakufu, "Gaikō ni Kansuru Yoron Chōsa"

84 Naikakufu, "Gaikō ni Kansuru Yoron Chōsa"

85 Naikakufu, "Gaikō ni Kansuru Yoron Chōsa"

86 Hasegawa, *Hoppō Ryōdo Mondai*, 77.

In April 1991, President Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, made an official visit to Japan. He was the first Soviet leader to visit Japan, and he was welcomed there. Some popular newspapers and magazines called him by his Western nickname "Gorby."[87] The Japanese media covered his visit extensively, anticipating an immediate conclusion of the territorial issue between Japan and Russia. Gorbachev admitted that a territorial problem existed between both countries but adopted a cautious stance to its early settlement.[88]

This was the year Soviet popularity peaked in Japan. There was a boom in twinning arrangements between Japanese cities on the Sea of Japan and Soviet Far East cities.[89] However, these trends disappeared rapidly with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The results of the afore-mentioned public opinion survey on the Russian Federation by the Government of Japan in 1992 showed that 15.2% of respondents felt close to Russia and 79.6% did not feel close.[90] Exports from Japan to Russia rapidly decreased. Due to the systematic transformation from socialism to capitalism and a corresponding insufficiency of legislation, several Japanese companies failed to sustain their joint venture projects, having been the target of hostile takeovers from their Russian partners in the 1990s.[91]

Japanese people who witnessed political and economic turmoil in Russia from the early to the late 1990s again came to have a negative attitude toward Russia. Some Japanese people even showed a haughty attitude toward Russia as an economic backwater because Russia was reduced from a superpower and had become a recipient country requiring Japanese technical assistance to move toward a market economy.[92]

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87 For example, see "Gorby Smile Tokyo wo Iku", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Morning edition), April 17, 1991.

88 Hasegawa, *Hoppō Ryōdo Mondai*, 237.

89 23 Japanese local municipalities established twinning relationships from 1990 to 1995 alone. See "Shimai Teikei Data", CLAIR. Accessed August 30, 2022, http://www.clair.or.jp/j/exchange/shimai/data/detail/49.

90 Naikakufu, "Gaikō ni Kansuru Yoron Chōsa."

91 Nisso Nichiro Keizai Kōryūshi Shuppan Group, *Nisso Nichiro Keizai Kōryūshi*, 86–87, 472–475., "Keiyaku Mushi, Soshō Aitsugu", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Morning edition), November 6, 1998.

92 For example, Seiichi Kajiwara, "Roshia no Jijō", *Yomiuri Shinbun* (Osaka: Morning edition), May 5, 1992.

Conclusion

A type of sponge cake named "Siberia" ("Shiberia" in Japanese) with a traditional Japanese sweet jelly filling made from soft red beans is considered to have first appeared in Japan around the beginning of the 20th century.[93] Judging from its ingredients and recipe, the cake probably originated in Japan, but no further information is available on why it is called "Siberia." The only thing known for certain is that "Siberia" was already famous among Japanese people, and this may have inspired a positive attitude resulting in the name.

As mentioned above, after the appearance of the "Siberia" cake, many Japanese people came to have an unfavorable attitude toward the word throughout much of the 20th century. Japanese people have repeatedly constructed collective memories of Russia on the basis of their experiences and imagination regarding "Siberia." After WWII, in accordance with their memories of the war they had most recently experienced, most Japanese people shared feelings of one-sided victimhood toward the Soviet Union as if they had forgotten their imperial past. At the same time, some people loved Soviet culture, respected Soviet science, or idolized the Soviet Union as the great leader of the leftist movement. Lack of concrete information on the Soviet Union sometimes even caused some people to idealize it excessively.

A feeling of closeness toward Russia has increased recently in Japan. According to the afore-mentioned Japanese Government surveys, those who "feel close" to Russia exceeded 17% and those who "do not feel close" to Russia decreased below 80% from 2012 to 2021.[94] These facts suggested a potential link between feelings toward Russia and wartime memories. Many Japanese people were losing their wartime memories, and ill feelings toward Russia based on these memories were also fading. However, it is unlikely that there will be further signs of improvement in these feelings toward Russia in the near future as a result of the war in Ukraine that started in February 2022. This war will undoubtedly rekindle Japanese people's unfavorable feelings toward Russia.

93 "Yokohama Michi: 18 Kotei Bakery 1", *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo: Evening edition), December 12, 2020.

94 Naikakufu, "Gaikō ni Kansuru Yoron Chōsa."

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