initial error was based on fear, ignorance, and prejudice. It was sustained, though with a half-hearted reservation and some excellent dissents, by the Supreme Court. It was supported by the professional racists and selfish economic interests of one geographic area.

But it was firmly resisted and so far as possible atoned for by thousands of American citizens, including many on the Pacific coast. These people went out of their way to make Nisei GIs feel at home in Wisconsin, New York, Mississippi. They organized committees to see that Nisei resettling in their midst received fair treatment. They exploded with logic and fact the balloons of prejudice, and their point of view was expressed in the statement of General Stilwell that “We cannot allow a single injustice to be done to the Nisei without defeating the purpose for which we fought.”

**A Positive Program**

Four things should now be done to consolidate the gains that have been made and to assure that some good will issue from a great wrong:

1. Encourage review of the basic issues by the Supreme Court.
2. Enact legislation which will permit resident Japanese aliens who so desire to become American citizens. This would help to heal the break between Nisei and their parents and, without allowing new immigration, would correct an indefensible situation. It would also destroy the present legal basis for the alien land laws.
3. Demand legislation such as the bill already before the House which would permit repayment for some of the immense losses occasioned by evacuation.
4. Keep up the citizens’ committees which proved how the forces for good in a community can gain popular support and overcome the always organized special interests. Such committees should, with community-wide support, turn their attention to other abuses of citizenship, discrimination against minorities, and to the exposure of groups which seek for various reasons to foment discord. In California the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play and the Friends of the American Way did yeoman service as did church and welfare groups in many eastern cities.

Some casualties are beyond cure. They include the several thousand Nisei who, embittered by the rude shock of evacuation, requested “return” to a Japan many of them had never seen. It is no excuse to say that we, at least, did not mistreat our Japanese alien population as the Japanese mistreated our citizens. For it is only by holding resolutely to an absolute scale of values that we can continue to merit the moral leadership to which our material welfare has obligated us.

**CURRENT CONDITIONS IN POSTWAR HONAN**

HONAN WAS ONE OF THE PROVINCES of North China invaded by the Japanese early in the war. By 1945, this province had been almost completely overrun by Japanese armies. Of its 35,000,000 inhabitants, approximately 12,000,000 lived in regions damaged seriously by the invasion. At least 2,000,000 were on starvation rations last winter; an equal number possessed only summer clothing, inadequate bedding, and poor shelter. Epidemics of at least one of the following diseases have ravaged badly disrupted communities: malaria, dysentery, typhoid, typhus, smallpox, relapsing fever, diphtheria. Unhappily conditions in Honan are evidently typical of conditions in a number of the wartorn provinces of interior China.

The writer’s tour of investigation took him through the seriously affected portions of western and central Honan. The level plains and the rolling hills of this rich, agricultural province were covered with the green growth of the fall-planted wheat. People were buying and selling in market towns on the traditional days but without the old gaiety. Their faces showed worry, malnutrition, and recent illness. Streets of village after village were bordered with gutted dwellings, their smoke-blackened, mud walls still standing.

The most serious factor in the relief and rehabilitation of Honan is the problem created by the diversion of the Yellow River. In May 1938 the Japanese army, advancing westward, had reached Kaifeng, the capital of Honan Province. Chinese forces in the area were not strong enough to check the advance, which threatened Sian to the west and Hankow to the south, then the seat of the National Government, recently removed from Nanking. In a desperate attempt to prevent the fall of these key cities, the dikes of the old channel of the Yellow River were cut, releasing the full volume of water.

From a military point of view this move was successful. The waters, swollen with late spring rains, formed a barrier which the Japanese forces could not cross. Compelled to change their strategy they then had to advance on Hankow the long way, up the Yangtze River; and this gained for the National Government six months of valuable time.

The effect, however, on the people caught in the path of the river, as it spread out over the flat countryside, was catastrophic. Refugees stated that the flood came at night, entirely without warning. In some places the water was only a few feet deep, and the population found spots of higher ground to which they fled. In other places the depth forced the people to attempt escape by climbing to the tops of houses or trees, with the old often less successful than the young.
Within a few days at least three million inhabitants were caught in the flood's path in Honan Province alone. Devastation spread to the provinces of Anhwei and Kiangsu. Accurate statistics do not exist, but it is estimated that eventually about two million acres of farm land were inundated. Probably a quarter of a million persons were drowned in Honan. Approximately three times that number are believed to have died of disease or starvation; and some six hundred thousand are reported to have left the area. Between a million and a half and two million people remain.

Approximately one million of this affected population are now constantly on the border line of starvation. Wheat is planted on land from which water has receded, although flood waters destroy a certain proportion of the crop each year. Grass is cut from abandoned fields and peddled for fuel. Many catch fish, so that this article of food now is the cheapest form of meat obtainable in the adjoining unflooded cities. Begging has greatly increased.

**Need to Confine Yellow River**

A requisite in solving the situation is that the Yellow River be confined; and work is already under way to close the breach in the dikes and force the water into its old channel. This channel, some four hundred miles long to its outlet on the Shantung coast, needs repairs, however, to prevent the water from laying waste fertile land in other places. A certain amount of excavation is necessary, and the dry channel presents an opportunity to eliminate bad bends for a sounder defense against future floods.

Work has been under way since January. Tens of thousands of men are quarrying stone, strengthening dikes, excavating the channel, and closing the crevasse. UNRRA flour is being used to feed the workmen, most of whom are in need of relief; and UNRRA has furnished piling and a large quantity of other imported supplies required for this tremendous undertaking. A good deal of the rapid progress being made is due to the energetic efforts of an American engineer, Mr. O. J. Todd, who has had long experience in China working with flood control and irrigation projects.\(^1\)

A visitor to China seeing only Shanghai, Tientsin, or Canton might conclude that China has suffered very little loss as a direct result of the war. That conclusion would be incorrect. Coastal cities actually were recovered to a large extent intact, but there have been destruction and serious loss in the interior parts of China. The loss of crops in these regions, for instance, was a major factor in the decline of crop production in China in 1945. Were this loss distributed uniformly throughout the rice growing area the problem would be less serious. Being concentrated to a large extent in these devastated regions, starvation conditions have been created for many millions of people.

In one devastated region in southwestern Honan, the Japanese, after repeated failures to reach Sian by other routes, launched an attack along the local main motor highway. Upwards of a hundred thousand Japanese troops entered the area, while possibly half that number participated in the frontal engagement in which they were defeated and forced to retreat. Fighting continued along other lines through the spring and summer, until Japan's final surrender in late August. The eight hsien (counties) fought over in the course of this invasion contained a total of about four million inhabitants. In the two hsien where frontal fighting was the most severe, between two and three hundred thousand persons left their homes and belongings to flee into the mountains. They fled in late March and early April, before harvest of the wheat crop, which was lost. They returned in late August and early September. In this more southerly valley, a crop of corn, soybeans or sesame is usually planted after the harvest of wheat, and gathered in the autumn. When the refugees returned, their fertile soil was producing only weeds.

This was a disaster of great magnitude to the majority of the refugees who were forced to consume in the mountains their slender reserves of food and money and who had in sight no further supply of food before the next wheat harvest, eight months in the future. Besides, most of them had lost their work animals and implements, and they had no wheat seed for planting. In ruthless retaliation for the unexpected show of resistance, Japanese troops had deliberately burned tens of thousands of homes, and other homes were ruined by bombs and artillery fire.

To make matters worse, epidemics of disease had been induced by malnutrition, exposure, and unsanitary conditions following in the wake of battle. In some districts ten or fifteen percent of the whole population died between return to their homes and mid-November.

This following of disaster upon disaster reduced about two hundred thousand people to desperate straits in the two hsien most seriously affected, and probably another hundred thousand were in similar straits in the districts less badly hit. The people appeared overwhelmed by the hopelessness of their situation. In home after home the same story was told:

\(^1\) The New York Times of May 12, 1946 reported Mr. Todd as stating that it was hoped that the dikes could be repaired and associated engineering work completed prior to the annual flooding of the river in July. In the same report the Director of UNRRA's office in Shanghai was quoted as stating that the food situation in Honan Province was growing worse, with 35,000,000 persons existing on an inadequate diet and 7,000,000 of them on the verge of starvation. A "side operation" of the engineering task would be resettlement of some 250,000 people who had established villages on the original course of the Yellow River.
"The wheat was not harvested, and the summer crops were not planted; we have nothing to eat or wear, and nobody wants our labor."

The largest city in the battle zone was Hsihsiak'ou, which was about ninety percent destroyed. Streets were lined with ruined buildings. The agricultural land supported mainly a rank growth of weeds. Approximately 50,000 acres were in this condition in September. Yet, within a few months the battle area was covered with fresh green wheat. The transformation had been achieved entirely by the efforts of the local people and enlightened authorities. Perhaps two-thirds of the uncultivated land had been plowed and planted with the help of the few animals brought back from hiding, by hand spading and grubbing, or through assistance from friends and relatives. The remaining third, which the owners themselves could find no way to prepare, had been planted as the result of an organized effort initiated by the local government, based on the simple philosophy that those who have ought to share with those who have not. In one hsien alone the labor of more than 3,000 animals was contributed by farmers, for work averaging about twenty days in length. These were organized into teams, which often were sent as far as twenty-five miles from districts less damaged to other districts where the damage had been severe. The prospect of a supply of food by June 1946 which this undertaking made possible was the only encouraging factor in an extremely grim picture for those who were then entering the winter with so little hope.

**Internal Strife Prolongs Suffering**

In Nanyang, the largest city of southwestern Honan, there were reports that Chinese Communist troops had attacked towns twenty-five miles distant. Along the road city walls were being hastily repaired; and barbed wire barricades blocked passage at night. North of the Yellow River, Communist and Central Government troops were contending for control of the railway to Peiping in a conflict of a much larger scale. To supply foodstuffs to the troops of both sides grain was being requisitioned locally, in some cases out of supplies already inadequate to meet local civilian needs, because the lack of facilities made it impossible to transport stocks held elsewhere. Obviously, internal strife was prolonging the suffering of the people.

The greater part of the suffering, however, was directly a result of the war with Japan; and there was ample evidence of the desperate need of the affected population for immediate assistance. On the other hand, it was almost equally apparent that very serious difficulties must be overcome to bring adequate assistance even to those most seriously in need. China is a large country with many people. Investigators returning from trips through Hopeh, Hupeh, Hunan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung Provinces reported almost identical conditions. To meet the enormous need resulting from this destruction even the substantial quantity of relief goods allocated to China by UNRRA will be grossly inadequate.

Another serious problem is the shortage of transportation facilities. These were inadequate before the war, and the shortage now is much greater. Adopting the same general tactics employed in the war against Hitler, Allied airmen shot up locomotives and bombed other railway equipment. Dead engines and overturned cars filled sidings and yards in every main railway center. Boat service on rivers also had been greatly reduced. And the trucks and gasoline needed for local transportation could not be delivered to interior points unless transported there on boats or trains.

**Relief Program Under Way**

Nevertheless, a substantial program of relief and rehabilitation is now under way. Offices with a suitable complement of staff have been set up in at least ten regions to organize and carry out the programs. Reinforced with equipment supplied by UNRRA, railway service on the major lines and boat service on the Yangtze have been expanded. A trucking service has been organized to carry supplies from the main railway centers and ports into the hinterland. Canadian and American wheat is leaving for Honan on several trains each week carrying only relief and rehabilitation goods. Steamers with medical supplies, foodstuffs, transportation equipment, and equipment for agricultural and industrial rehabilitation are arriving in increasing number in Shanghai, Canton, Tientsin, and Tsingtao. There is hope that the Yellow River will be placed within bounds by summer. No one is fully satisfied with the progress, but assistance in relief and rehabilitation of China is being felt.

The reaction of the Chinese common people to the devastation represents something fundamental in Chinese nature. They are able to bend when adverse winds are strong, and to stand upright again when the wind has passed. They possess a hope which does not easily die; and they are willing to endure extreme hardship to make their living, demanding little of either nature or of man. They are the rural people of China, the backbone of the nation.

RAYMOND MOYER

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