

# State-Building after Disaster: Jiang Tingfu and the Reconstruction of Post-World War II China, 1943–1949

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On 21 October 1949, Jiang Tingfu (T. F. Tsiang), then the Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations, gave a speech at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island on “The Problems of China.” Poverty, he explained, was at the heart of China’s long crisis of modernization. A whole variety of problems, including the failure to democratize, were attributable to China’s continuous, crushing history of poverty.

Yet Jiang also saw signs that modernization might yet be on the way. “For the first time in one thousand years, the mind of China has returned to grain, plants and farm cattle, to water and soil, to coal and iron, to cotton, wool and silk, to brick and cement, to rivers, highways and railways. Before the beginning of World War II, there was a feeling of hope in China.”<sup>1</sup> He described the way in which China had shifted from being an importer to an exporter of cotton in the 1930s, thanks in part to the adoption of more productive American cotton seeds. Jiang wrote of other agricultural improvements in the same era in grain, rice, and irrigation.

One other factor, however, had exacerbated the longer-term debilitation. Agrarian reform, declared Jiang, had been stalled “because the war with Japan put a stop to all constructive effort.” He added, “I am afraid that some

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<sup>1</sup> Jiang Tingfu (T. F. Tsiang), “The Problems of China,” in Chen Hongmin, ed., *Meiguo Hafo daxue Hafo Yanjing tushuguan cang Jiang Tingfu ziliao* (“The Tsiang Ting-fu Collection in the Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University, USA”), 24 vols. (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015) (hereafter MHD), vol. 21, 528.

leaders in China used the war as an excuse for postponing reform.” But his main point was clear: “The war did come. It was real. It was gigantic. It did tax China’s human and natural resources to their utmost limit.”<sup>2</sup>

Jiang was speaking in the United States at a moment when the regime that he represented was on the verge of collapse. Within months, a revolutionary insurgency with a much more radical version of agrarian reform would take power in Beijing, sweeping away the government that Jiang served, the Nationalist (Guomindang) regime under Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>3</sup> Yet although the Nationalists were eradicated from the Chinese mainland, never to return, their brief period of postwar rule included an incipient framework for an alternative postwar settlement for China, with the intention of exercising influence in Asia more widely. In his speech, Jiang argued that his government had advocated plans for postwar relief in China as the starting point for a much more comprehensive process of agricultural and industrial reconstruction.

This article argues that the relief and rehabilitation effort in China in the immediate post-1945 period should be re-examined, not just as an emergency program, but as an example of international engagement with the creation of a new type of postwar state in Asia. The ideas that lay behind reconstruction in China were, by turns, statist, international, and transnational. They were shaped by high modern ideas that were inspired in part by economic planning both of the New Deal and Soviet variety, but were also influenced by the reality of China’s poverty and wartime vulnerability, which made “appropriate technology” relevant in areas such as public hygiene.<sup>4</sup> The reality, as Jiang pointed out, was that the model of reconstruction was too ambitious to be realized. It made huge demands on a state that was not only near-destitute but also suffered hugely from problems of corruption and authoritarianism. Postwar China proposed a model for itself and by extension, other postcolonial societies, without the capacity to fulfil such a model. But its characteristics still bear examination as part of a much longer story of post-imperialist and Cold War state-building that would shape countries in Asia and beyond.

The relative inattention to the reconstruction of postwar China stands in stark contrast to the parallel work on Europe, which has become a major sub-field in modern European history.<sup>5</sup> One primary narrative in that work is of a powerful actor, the United States, rehabilitating occupied countries in an emergent Cold War with the Soviet Union. In recent years, the opening of Eastern

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 531.

<sup>3</sup> I use this Romanization because it is widely recognized, but for other Chinese names, I use the now standard pinyin system.

<sup>4</sup> The classic statement on this is E. F. Shumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (London, 1973).

<sup>5</sup> One recent point of entry to a growing literature is Mark Mazower, Jessica Reinisch, and David Feldman, eds., “Post-War Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945–1949,” *Past & Present*, supplement 6 (2011).

European archives has enabled new work to emerge that shows a messier, less triumphalist reality in the eastern part of the continent. Another major theme has been the importance of international and transnational organizations in carrying out relief and rehabilitation. However, in Asia, as with the Cold War more generally, the idea of rehabilitation as a postwar, rather than postcolonial, phenomenon has been less discussed until recently, the exception being the case of Japan, where the idea of the long *sengo*, or “postwar,” has for some years had significant scholarly currency.<sup>6</sup>

Instead, a dominant narrative in understanding post-1945 Asia has been the rise of developmental, postcolonial, states, most notably South Korea and Taiwan (although not all those states began their development in the immediate postwar period). Another separate, South Asian narrative is the emergence of an independent India and Pakistan through the traumas of Partition in 1947.<sup>7</sup> However, we still have only a partial history of China as a state debating and implementing postwar reconstruction and rehabilitation in the period immediately after 1945, as opposed to reconstruction following the Communist revolution of 1949. China’s status as a leading member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) in 1947 is one example of the way in which China’s domestic experience of reconstruction shaped its international behavior immediately after the war.<sup>8</sup>

The idea and the reality of reconstruction were fundamentally shaped by the circumstances of what Jiang Tingfu termed the “gigantic” war with Japan (1937–1945). If that war had not taken place, China’s developmental path would surely have been very different, perhaps more comparable with that of India. India’s post-independence vision of state-building was drawn in large part from the continuity with the pre-independence state, as well as changing conditions. Despite the terrible violence of the partition period, the majority of India’s infrastructure and territories were similar in form before and after 1947, even if they ended up divided. But in China, the immense physical destruction of factories, agricultural land, livestock, railways, and roads during the war years created a fundamentally different landscape, one that in some senses resembled the devastation of Europe in 1945.<sup>9</sup> China, like France or Poland, was a “postwar” society in a way that India was not. But China, like India, was also a “postcolonial” society in a way that Europe’s liberated countries were not. It is this comparability, but also this difference, that explains the distinct path taken by reformers like Jiang, who wished to

<sup>6</sup> Carol Gluck, “The ‘End’ of the Postwar: Japan at the Turn of the Millennium,” *Public Culture* 10, 1 (Fall 1997): 1–23.

<sup>7</sup> Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> For a contemporaneous discussion of ECAFE, see C. Hart Schaaf, “The United Nations Commission for Asia and the Far East,” *International Organization* 7, 4 (Nov. 1953): 463–81.

<sup>9</sup> See Micah Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China: Henan Province, the Yellow River, and Beyond, 1938–1950* (Cambridge, 2015).

reconstruct the country paying attention to both “posts,” and by doing so influence change not just in China but in Asia more widely. China was shaped by its experience of wartime destruction, but used its postwar agency to construct a distinctive worldview regarding how Asia should be reimagined.

The postwar in China is also associated with the Chinese Civil War.<sup>10</sup> In analyses of this context, the conflict between an insurgent Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and an increasingly unviable Nationalist (Guomintang or Kuomintang) Party has been at the fore. The rise to power of the CCP is often portrayed as the inexorable rise of a military machine, allied with a social program, of an organization that definitively defeated a failed and venal opponent. While there is a great deal to support this interpretation, in recent years a small but growing body of literature has begun to interpret the period within a new framework that reassesses the socio-political program of the Nationalist government. Tehyun Ma’s work examines the importance of transnational concepts of welfare and social security in shaping Nationalist ideas of reform in a postwar China, while Nicole Barnes has examined how hygienic modernity in the wartime era was used to reshaped gendered ideas of the state’s role.<sup>11</sup>

These ideas fell victim largely to the lack of state capacity in Nationalist China, but that lack must be seen in the context of a profoundly damaged state system. Reconstruction was, ironically, harder to implement in a country that was nominally a wartime ally with its own sovereignty than in one that had been either wholly under enemy occupation or an enemy belligerent.

This reality means that we need to better understand the role of international organizations in shaping China’s postwar, particularly the interaction between UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and CNRRA (the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). Rather than seeing the period solely as one in which international assistance came from outside to assist China, it should be emphasized that international, transnational, and local projects for modernization were part of a combined set of ideas. One of the most important figures to link these strands was Jiang Tingfu, a figure who was at once ambitious, principled, and flawed.

This article details the role of Jiang Tingfu, the senior figure placed in charge of China’s postwar relief and rehabilitation, and shows that his goals were dependent on the fractious relationship between UNRRA, the major body responsible for funding postwar reconstruction, and CNRRA, the Chinese partner organization he headed. It then considers his ideas in the context of the immensity of the task that faced the agencies seeking to reconstruct postwar China, particularly in those areas only recently liberated from the

<sup>10</sup> A major study is Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946–1950* (Stanford, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> See articles in the *European Journal of East Asian Studies* special issue on relief and rehabilitation in wartime China, 11, 2, (Dec. 2012).

Japanese. Challenges included a fundamental economic and financial crisis, embedded structural violence caused by fractured authority, and widespread health crises and malnutrition. The article argues that Jiang Tingfu's ideas provide one of the first, tentative blueprints for what a sovereign Asian developmental state might look like, even if the national circumstances of the time made such ideas impossible to implement in practice. Those ideas were shaped by a combination of the indigenous practices of reconstruction that were developed during the wartime years and new international influences that Jiang, in particular, had absorbed. Jiang was one of the figures best equipped to interact with the new U.S.-dominated international order, yet he was also a Chinese nationalist deeply concerned that any solution be appropriate to the needs of postwar, postcolonial China. Both factors were at play not just in Jiang's thinking, but also in the wider debates he participated in.

#### JIANG TINGFU, UNRRA, AND THE INTERNATIONAL

Jiang was a figure in some ways symbolic of one section of China's Nationalist (Guomindang) elite. Born in Hunan province, he won scholarships that let him study in the United States and earned a doctorate at Columbia. After his return to China he held faculty positions at Nankai and Tsinghua universities and became well-known in the 1930s as a leading figure associated with *Duli pinglun* ("The independent critic"), a liberal journal that criticized Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime on a variety of political issues.<sup>12</sup> Despite that, Chiang appointed him as China's ambassador to Moscow from 1936–1938. During wartime he served as president of an important government body, the Executive Yuan, before being sent to Washington, D.C.<sup>13</sup>

Jiang Tingfu's political thinking developed significantly over his life. While his association with *Duli pinglun* has led to his characterization as a "liberal," his writings show a more complex ideological shift over time. He was always strongly anti-imperialist, and in 1936, even before the war with Japan broke out, Jiang argued that imperialism was economically unnecessary: "There is no need to use political or military force to open markets. The U.S., Britain, and Japan do not do so when they trade with each other."<sup>14</sup> He also argued that popular government might not be effective in modernizing society: "In China, Japan, Turkey, and Russia, modernization has been top-down, and has often violated the popular will.... From these four countries'

<sup>12</sup> On Jiang's political thinking, see Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era* (Cambridge, 2010), 97, 134.

<sup>13</sup> A detailed study of Jiang's life is Zhang Yulong, *Jiang Tingfu shehui zhengzhi sixiang yanjiu* (Research on the social and political thought of Jiang Tingfu) (Beijing, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Jiang Tingfu, "He wei diguozhuyi?" (What is meant by imperialism?), speech originally delivered 13 Apr. 1936, in Jiang Tingfu, *Jiang Tingfu xuanji* (Selected works of Jiang Tingfu) (Taipei: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe, 1978) (hereafter JTF), 629.

modernization processes, we can draw a common conclusion: countries where political authority is more centralized have a greater success in promoting modernization.”<sup>15</sup>

However, Jiang grew more hostile toward the Soviet and Chinese communist models. He came deeply to admire the United States and Britain, and understood the advantages of pluralist democratic politics in a way that Chiang Kai-shek and other conservative figures in the Nationalist party did not. Jiang was always clear that state modernization was a complex process in which different parts of economy and society would need to be brought together. In the 1930s, the Nationalist government had begun to plan for a wartime economy under the National Resources Commission.<sup>16</sup> Jiang was particularly affected by his visit to one project in 1944:

Three years ago, when I was visiting the Tennessee Valley Authority, I found that there were many technicians and managers who were willing to receive relatively low wages and carry on working.... They were not willing to take posts there if it became a private company, even if the company could then pay them several times more remuneration. They felt that the pleasure in the work and the social relevance was their greatest reward. Although the TVA could not make them into rich men, it could satisfy all their most appropriate desires.<sup>17</sup>

This was a rose-tinted view of the TVA, to put it mildly, but Jiang’s intended readership was politically engaged Chinese, not Americans. He expanded further, making it clear that he saw a clear link between public service, state infrastructure provision, and a sense of national moral uplift:

If our intellectuals here can preserve the traditional spirit of the scholar-officials, we can do better than the past three hundred years of Western history. Sun Yat-sen promoted nationalism, people’s rights, and people’s livelihood all at the same time, since he wanted to shorten the historical process [of modernization]. Now the enterprises that engineers are carrying out in China are shortening that historical process somewhat. What we can achieve in terms of systems and mechanics, we ought also to be able to achieve in terms of morality.<sup>18</sup>

These words were written in 1947, after the main UNRRA program had concluded in China. Yet the links between scientific modernity and national morality had always been central to Jiang’s worldview, and they provided his overarching framework for what postwar modernization was supposed to look like. His vision for dealing with the devastation caused by the Japanese invasion of China was not merely one that sought to patch up the damage, but also a model that drew on existing development practice in China to create a Chinese state that

<sup>15</sup> Jiang Tingfu, “Zhongguo jindaihua de wenti” (The problem of Chinese modernization), originally in *Duli pinglun* (1937), JTF, 640.

<sup>16</sup> William C. Kirby, “The Chinese War Economy,” in James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine, eds., *China’s Bitter Victory: The War with Japan* (Armonk, 1992), 192–94.

<sup>17</sup> Jiang Tingfu, “Mantan zhishifenzi de shidai shiming” (Discussing the contemporary destiny of the intellectuals), originally in *Shiji pinglun* 1, 24 (14 June 1947), JTF, 672.

<sup>18</sup> “Mantan zhishifenzi,” 672.

would actually be *more* developed than it had been before 1937.<sup>19</sup> Jiang was an early Cold War liberal, an advocate of progressive anti-communism, in his moralistic enthusiasm for a large state that could nurture his ideological preferences of being anti-Soviet while being pro-development.

#### LAUNCHING RECONSTRUCTION

In late 1943, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was established, with Jiang Tingfu chosen as the Chinese delegate to its Council. While still in Washington, Jiang proposed a revision to the UNRRA plans, arguing for greater commitment to improvements in medicine, transportation, and social welfare. In September 1944, he made a request for US\$945 million of imports (about 40 percent of China's needs), with the services of 2,200 foreign experts. At the time, many of the UNRRA Council members felt that China's demands were too high.<sup>20</sup> However, the analysis of UNRRA's official historian just three years after the program's closure was less critical of Jiang's request: "The supply estimates ... were moderate, considering the enormous need of the areas, occupied or dominated by enemy forces, which they were intended to meet, but they far exceeded, in most categories, what UNRRA was able to devote to the China program."<sup>21</sup>

On return to China, Jiang Tingfu was appointed director-general of the new Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Organization (CNRRA), the sister organization to UNRRA, established by the National Government. He would serve as its leader from January 1945 to October 1946 (when he resigned, replaced by P. H. Ho). Its structure would grow over the next few years. During its period of operation (1943–1947), UNRRA/CNRRA in China would have over thirty thousand employees, a headquarters in the wartime capital of Chongqing, which then moved to Shanghai and Nanjing, fifteen regional offices, six main supply offices, and several specialist field units. It would liaise with the Ministry of Communications, which was in charge of railway and road rehabilitation, and with the Ministry of Water Conservancy for problems of floods and irrigation. CNRRA obtained its internal financing through the Executive Yuan of the government, the Ministry of Finance, and the Central Bank of China. It would also liaise with the CCP-run CLARA (Chinese Liberated Areas Relief Association), which was represented in Shanghai, with major offices in Tianjin and Kaifeng.<sup>22</sup> Over the course of the program,

<sup>19</sup> On prewar development, see Margherita Zanasi, "Exporting Development: The League of Nations and Republican China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, 1 (Jan. 2007): 143–69.

<sup>20</sup> Zhang Yulong, Jiang, 236–39. George Woodbridge, ed., *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York, 1950), vol. 2, 376–77.

<sup>21</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 376–77.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*; Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 240.

TABLE 1.  
*Total UNRRA deliveries to China, 1944–1947*

	U.S. Dollars	Gross Long Tons
Food	131,789,900	1,091,617
Clothing, textiles, footwear	112,530,900	169,339
Medical/sanitation	32,717,200	41,024
Agricultural rehabilitation	71,676,600	395,014
Industrial rehabilitation	169,132,100	663,921
Total	517,846,700	2,360,915

From Table 38 in Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 378.

the total of goods supplied by UNRRA to China was valued at US\$517.85 million, consisting of 2.4 million tons of materials (see Table 1 for details).

In his initial period in office, Jiang found himself intervening directly with Chiang Kai-shek to ask for more relief materials to be added to the small amounts assigned to flights across the Burma Hump.<sup>23</sup> Even before the war's end, UNRRA noted that there was a "serious shortage of food in the liberated areas" (referring to Guizhou and Guangxi).<sup>24</sup> When the war came to a sudden end in August 1945, UNRRA's officials confirmed the urgency of the situation: "Overnight, with coming of peace in Asia, the relief needs of China become of compelling urgency. This relief, too, must be brought rapidly over the entire area of occupied China, instead of piecemeal—as was planned—as liberation moved slowly from one area to another."<sup>25</sup>

This report, issued in the days immediately after the war ended, calculated the total request from the Chinese government at 10 million tons of supplies, priced at some US\$3.5 billion, of which they hoped that 4 million tons (worth \$1 billion) would be supplied by UNRRA. However, the report noted that "severe limitations of available supplies, finances, and transportation, as well as the balancing of servicing among the claimant countries" made it unlikely that China would receive all that it asked for.<sup>26</sup>

The end of the war gave Jiang a new opportunity to ask for further supplies, and in October 1945 he called for 2 million tons more to be sent to China. "The coming winter is going to be terrible," he declared in a speech

<sup>23</sup> Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 251.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Archive, New York (hereafter, UNA): UNA S-0528-0053, China Weekly Reports, 1944–45, report by William J. Green, "Food Production in Liberated Areas in Kweichow and Kwangsi Province," 25 June 1945, 2.

<sup>25</sup> UNA S-0528-0053, China Weekly Reports, 1944–45, E. T. Nash report on "UNRRA and Its Plans for China," 21 Aug. 1945.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



in that month, “and unless we can obtain UNRRA assistance, then the suffering will be dreadful, and next year’s relief and rehabilitation problem will be worse.”<sup>27</sup>

#### A PLAN FOR POSTWAR CHINA?

In the messy reality of China’s late wartime and postwar situation, the distinctive elements of the polity that elements in the Nationalist government were attempting to create were identifiable. The Western Allies had created a strengthened welfare state in their own societies (the Social Security Act and G.I. Bill in the United States, the Beveridge Report in Great Britain); Tehyun Ma has written about the way in which such plans influenced Nationalist Chinese political thinking in the late war years.<sup>28</sup> The USSR reconstructed with a new domestic emphasis on the command economy and wider planning. The first postwar non-Western states to gain independence from Britain, India and Pakistan, were constituted as parliamentary republics.

Nationalist China sought to create, or “reconstruct,” a distinctive polity that drew from these examples, adopting some parts of their systems and rejecting others. This proposed state would participate internationally in the non-communist part of the American-sponsored international order, yet significantly constrain liberal political change at home. China was one of a very small number of extra-Western polities, even in 1945, to have relatively free agency to design its state without a clear external veto, albeit within the very real constraints of badly damaged national finances and crippling war damage. The Nationalists chose to create a postwar state with a partially democratic constitutional assembly, led by a vanguardist party that pledged a limited level of social reform (that is, less free than India but more so than the USSR). They could be accused, not without justice, of redesigning their politics to try and suit an American idea of what a Chinese democracy might look like. But this explanation fails to take into the account the indigenous influences on politics that had moved China in the wartime years much more strongly toward the politics of an economy with strong government intervention, popular mobilization, social welfare, and nationalist sentiment.<sup>29</sup> For Jiang Tingfu, relief and rehabilitation would bring these ideas together, not only to deal with immediate war damage, but also to create the kind of modernized China that he had hoped for in the 1930s but which had been violently thrown off track by the war with Japan. Jiang Tingfu was inclined toward liberal pluralism when it came to political reform, yet he also chose to operate within the limits that the Nationalist

<sup>27</sup> Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 251.

<sup>28</sup> Tehyun Ma, “The Common Aim of the Allied Powers’: Social Policy and International Legitimacy in Wartime China, 1940–47,” *Journal of Global History* 9, 2 (2014): 254–75.

<sup>29</sup> For the prewar path to this model, see Morris Bian, *The Making of the State Enterprise System in Modern China: The Dynamics of Institutional Change* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005).

party imposed on China, hoping for enough flexibility within that system to allow his ideas to have some weight. He was certainly no dissident.

In an interview in *Zhongyang ribao* on 8 December 1945, Jiang gave a clear sense of the plan he envisaged for UNRRA and CNRRA to combine immediate relief with longer-term rehabilitation. He advocated the establishment of temporary relief centers, in cities including Kunming, Guiyang, Yichang, and Xi'an, to cope with his estimate of some 42 million refugees, as well as a wider distribution of soup kitchens and medical centers. He further proposed reconstruction of public hygiene facilities, railways, schools, hospitals, and agricultural production. He also suggested that UNRRA materials could be used to stabilize markets and prices.<sup>30</sup>

In a later article from 1946 entitled "What is UNRRA, and what is it going to do?" Jiang differentiated between "relief" (*jiuji*) and "rehabilitation" (*shanhou*). The first, he felt, was short-term, with "humanitarianism" (*rendao-zhuyi*) at its core, whereas the latter was "long-term and positive," with "progress and development" at its heart. He went on: "rehabilitation is the best and most positive form of relief," adding "relief on its own cannot solve our economic problems." Indeed, blind faith in "relief," he suggested, might be "society's most unwise move."<sup>31</sup>

Jiang argued that dealing with immediate problems of relief should not stand in the way of engagement with more detailed problems of infrastructure. The reconstruction of shattered cities might involve rebuilding destroyed houses, supplying food, rebuilding transport links, and reconstructing commercial networks. Yet China's economy was in no state to afford such a program; Jiang estimated that the country's entire relief budget might support at best 5 percent of the population. Therefore, infrastructure building should become a priority. As an example, he gave the reconstruction of the Tianjin-Pukou (*Jinpu*) railway that linked northern and east-central China. UNRRA help would be needed to pay the workers' wages, but the investment would provide much-needed infrastructure and jobs. The workers might be able to supply food themselves, but their wages would go toward the repair of their houses and the purchase of tools, plants, and so forth.

Jiang laid a particular stress on agricultural rehabilitation, knowing that China's economy would be highly dependent on its rural economy reviving, and aware that human and animal power, rather than mechanization, would be most immediately relevant to postwar China. Among his suggestions was that UNRRA should supply some hundred thousand water buffalos from India. Jiang confirmed the priorities of the UNRRA administrators about continuing the program of rural hygienic modernization: "Investment in the

<sup>30</sup> *Zhongyang ribao* (8 Dec. 1945), cited in Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 253.

<sup>31</sup> Jiang Tingfu, "Shanhou jiuji zongshu: gan shenme? Zenme gan?" (UNRRA: what should it do, and how?), in Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 242.

enterprise of hygiene is, we believe, the greatest investment, the best return.” He also saw the UNRRA program as a means of controlling the chronic inflation that had plagued China during its war years. Funds were needed for emergency relief, but also for rehabilitation through the provision of wages, whether as cash or in kind as food or clothing (the latter in part to prevent too much cash being distributed, which might fuel inflation).<sup>32</sup>

UNRRA acknowledged the priorities Jiang laid out. In the organization’s official history, published just after the program closed, it was acknowledged that more was given to China for rehabilitation “than in most of the European countries” because of the National Government’s view that “fundamental recovery from the war would be most effectively promoted in China if substantial efforts could be made to revive internal transport, production, and trade, as well as to furnish urgently needed war relief to war sufferers.”<sup>33</sup>

Jiang recognized that UNRRA aid would be sent to areas controlled by the CCP and made it clear that he believed in “no discrimination on the grounds of political belief or race.”<sup>34</sup> Yet, overall, the Communist areas received a very small proportion of the total supplied by UNRRA. The official history declared that CLARA received only about 3 percent by weight or 4–5 percent by value of the shipments because “they had no serious food shortage except in small local pockets” and they could supposedly not use the heavy industrial material that was a large part of the shipments. “No attempt was made to calculate, theoretically, what might have been a wholly equitable percentage of goods for the people in Communist areas.” But, the history acknowledges, had anyone done so, the proportion would have been higher than what was supplied.<sup>35</sup>

#### ASPIRATIONS AND REALITY

Jiang’s aspirations for China’s reconstruction might have been admirable, but the government he served was on the verge of financial collapse. The UNRRA’s commitment to the work of reconstruction was therefore a boon for his plans. He was firmly committed to an international presence in China to enable his plans for economic reconstruction and social welfare to come to fruition, but he was a convinced nationalist (with a lower-case “n”) who saw the foreign presence as a means of strengthening China’s domestic situation, not compromising it. That sentiment brought him into conflict with the Americans who were prominent in UNRRA’s China operation.

For most of UNRRA’s period in China, from October 1944 to May 1946, its country director was Benjamin H. Kizer, who was followed, into 1948, by J. Franklin Ray, Jr. (acting); Maj. Glen Edgerton, and Harlan Cleveland. The

<sup>32</sup> Jiang, “Shanhou jiuji,” in Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 243, 244–45.

<sup>33</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 377.

<sup>34</sup> Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 245.

<sup>35</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 389.

relationship between Kizer and Jiang and their respective staffs would shape the joint UNRRA/CNRRA agenda. Essential though the UNRRA was in terms of bringing funding and expertise, its presence in China caused friction when it encountered the strong sense among Chinese political actors that their country ought to be able to shape its own postwar destiny. By 1943, when the UNRRA was established, China was a formal ally of the United States and Britain, in which role it made its anti-imperialist views clearly known. The treaties that had permitted the system of extraterritoriality had been abandoned earlier that year. China was in an unusual position in that it was neither a conquered nor occupied state, yet it did not have the resources of the other major Allied belligerents and so could not fully dictate the shape of the postwar environment.<sup>36</sup>

Discussions within the UNRRA leadership showed continuities with the prewar advisers from the League of Nations, who had played an important role in creating a developmental framework within China.<sup>37</sup> Part of the dilemma as to the appropriate role for postwar China was expressed in correspondence between administrators who debated whether China should be a contributor to the overall UNRRA budget, not just for financial reasons but also to provide a clear indication of China's commitment to the agency, and by extension, to the newly emergent international order.<sup>38</sup> As it turned out, the two sides expressed very different views about this question.

Harry B. Price, Assistant Director for the UNRRA China Office, wrote to Edwin G. Arnold of the Deputy Director-General's office in Washington to inform him that Jiang Tingfu wanted to settle questions of responsibility for relief, procurement, and technical assistance, among other issues. Key to Jiang's demands was that the Chinese government agency, CNRRA, should be in charge of the distribution of resources, although UNRRA should organize technical requests, subject to Chinese government requests. At the meeting, Price had mentioned "Chinese ability to pay, or China's position as a contributor or non-contributor." He went on to argue in a personal comment on 31 December 1944, "On further reflection, my own mind has become more open on this question. The extremely low standard of living, the ravages of the war, and China's relatively small foreign exchange assets in relation to her population or to the gigantic tasks of reconstruction to be faced after the war, all seem to point to the reasonableness of according to China a status of non-contributor." He then posed an alternative way of considering the issue:

<sup>36</sup> For postwar Chinese diplomatic planning, see Xiaoyuan Liu, *A Partnership for Disorder: China, the United States, and Their Policies for the Postwar Disposition of the Japanese Empire, 1941–1945* (Cambridge, UK, 1996).

<sup>37</sup> Zanasi, "Exporting Development."

<sup>38</sup> UNA S-0528-0032, Correspondence, Chungking to Washington, D.C. headquarters, 1944–1949, Price to Arnold, 31 Dec. 1944.

On the other hand, if China contributed a portion of her foreign exchange assets to UNRRA, would the psychological effect upon the Chinese people and Government be better than if she got something for nothing? Would UNRRA's operations in China be subject to less criticism among the contributing countries? Would a contribution by China tend to make the whole relief and rehabilitation operation a more serious and earnest one on the part of the Chinese government? And would such a utilization of a part of her exchange resources actually contribute to an attitude abroad of greater willingness to invest funds in China for the reconstruction period, and thus result in a net gain for China?

He concluded, "It may be that China's grave economic and financial problems and limited resources will preclude the possibility of her becoming even a partial-contributor, but the question appears to demand rather searching analysis in the light of all available facts before definite conclusions are reached." He added, with some foresight about arguments that would spring up after the war: "Incidentally, if China were to contribute a share to UNRRA, it might lessen criticisms which might otherwise develop should China prove unable to undertake an internal contribution to relief and rehabilitation on the scale envisaged in the program presented to UNRRA."<sup>39</sup>

Price said that press coverage of China needed a "deeper historical perspective, a better understanding of China's problems and people, and a greater disposition to deal with facts rather than hearsay." This was prompted, no doubt, by the largely negative view of Nationalist China to be found in the U.S. press at that moment: *Time* magazine's assiduous correspondent Theodore White had covered the rapid defeat of Chinese troops in central China during the Japanese Ichigo campaign that had begun in the spring of 1944, as well as the recall of General Joseph Stilwell in October of that year, which was portrayed as a victory for Chiang as a capricious dictator over a dedicated American career soldier.<sup>40</sup> At that point, it seemed likely that China might collapse militarily before the war in Asia could be ended, which would render moot the question of the country's postwar reconstruction under the Nationalists.

However, Price had been right to see that the "searching analysis" to which he referred was central to China's role within UNRRA: should it be seen as a supplicant or a participant, particularly in light of the heightened position that it now occupied in the new global order at the United Nations and elsewhere? From the Chinese point of view, however, the question was phrased differently: what rewards did China have a right to expect, having made immense sacrifices as the first Allied actor in the Asian theatre?

Jiang was central to making this case because of his long engagement with the Americans. He expressed it clearly in a speech he gave in Washington, D.C. in January 1949, in which he argued that "the long war against Japan" was the primary cause of China's immediate agricultural crisis. He turned the

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> See Hans J. Van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925–1945* (London, 2003), ch. 1.

accusation specifically against his American listeners: "People in the United States do not have the least knowledge of the meaning of this long war in terms of human misery in China.... We fought Japan by deepening our misery. That went on for eight long years. This burden of war-born misery added to the centuries-old misery was simply too much."<sup>41</sup>

Jiang acknowledged the failings of the Nationalist government ("the Government, by adopting wiser measures during the war, might have lessened the misery of the people by a small percentage"), but he insisted nonetheless that "with the best wisdom in the administration, the Chinese people would, nevertheless, come out of the war in a very pitiful condition."<sup>42</sup> The prospect of an immediate collapse in China lessened after the Ichigo campaign halted in early 1945, and political and military relations improved somewhat with the appointment of General Albert Wedemeyer to replace Stilwell. Jiang Tingfu and Benjamin Kizer held regular meetings during the initial period of coordination between UNRRA and CNRRA. During a meeting on 7 February 1945 Jiang was clear that he wanted to draw up lines of control between UNRRA and the Chinese government and was obviously prickly about their presence in China. (This was, after all, the scholar who had written in scathing terms about imperialism and its effects less than a decade earlier.) He was insistent that the office must not be seen to encroach on the privileges of the Chinese government and expressed further discomfort at the idea that UNRRA might "establish" new programs and attempt an "invasion of his authority," and he demanded that "no foreign voluntary relief agency now conducts operations within China without the consent of the Chinese government." Jiang had wanted a paragraph declaring that UNRRA employees would not "criticize any department of the Chinese Government or in any other way ... interfere in Chinese politics."<sup>43</sup> Kizer declined to offer such an assurance in writing, but he did provide alternative phrasing and reassured Jiang that the agency had no independent aims of that sort.

The correspondence between Price and Kizer illustrates a recurring problem that lay at the heart of the interaction between Jiang and UNRRA. Jiang's claim to Chinese autonomy regarding reconstruction was, in the end, a moral one: the country had contributed to the defeat of Japan, and therefore should be given special status when it came to reconstruction. In this view, problems of corruption and abuses of power were real, but were in significant part a consequence of the weakness of the Chinese state engendered by a war that China had entered through no fault of its own. In his 1949 speech on "The

<sup>41</sup> Jiang Tingfu, "The Situation in China," speech to Republican Club, Washington, D.C. ([?], 14 Jan. 1949), in MHD, vol. 21, 511.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> UNA S-0528-0032, Correspondence, Chungking to Washington, D.C. headquarters, 1944-1949, Kizer to M. Menshikov (UNRRA Deputy Director-General), 7 Feb. 1945.

Problem of China,” Jiang declared: “For eight long years Free China used the western part and less developed half of the country as a base to fight against Japanese invasion and blockade. The world has not begun to understand the economic meaning of that long war and blockade.... This economic aftermath of the war indeed served as fertile soil for the growth of communism in China.”<sup>44</sup>

Jiang’s concession of error on the part of the Nationalist government is only partial, but significant because he was serving in that government at the time he made his remarks. He was taking advantage of his status as a liberal figure who was valuable in making the Nationalist government better regarded in the United States at a time when it was close to collapse, but his criticism was notable for its consistency in these postwar years: he placed blame for specific issues on the shoulders of Chiang’s regime, but insisted that the devastation caused by the war itself was the major factor in holding back China’s development. Of wartime China, he declared,

She could have done better, but not much better. In the first place, in western China, which was Free China, industry has not been developed to any high degree. There was very little wealth for the government to tax.... Most farmers grew the food for the consumption of their own families.... Meanwhile, inflation has wiped out the whole middle class.... Some criticize Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek as shouldering the chief responsibility. Leaders do have their responsibility, but I submit that an objective study of the total situation in China would declare that the sad plight of China today is mainly the result of the war, on top of a poverty, which was deep-rooted, vast and old.<sup>45</sup>

In his January 1949 Washington speech, Jiang criticized the UNRRA project largely on the grounds of comparative size. He noted that the total amount spent in China was some US\$600 million (\$571.8 million according to the official UNRRA history):

It is a very big figure, but it is only about as big as the amount spent by UNRRA in Italy, not much more than the amount spent in Greece or Poland. The per capita relief in China amounted to less than one dollar and a half, while the per capita relief in Eastern and Southern Europe averaged more than twenty-five dollars. Relief by UNRRA alone has been found insufficient to stem the tide of communism in either Greece or Italy. Much more has been done for both these countries since UNRRA closed its doors.<sup>46</sup>

He reiterated the point in his speech in October of that year: “UNRRA spent in China altogether US\$670,000,000.00 [*sic*]. It was a big sum. Seventy per cent of this sum came from the good people of this country; Great Britain, Canada, Australia, India and several Latin-American countries, notably Brazil, all contributed.... But the per capita relief in China, as compared with the per capita

<sup>44</sup> Jiang, “Problem,” 531.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 532.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 512.

relief in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, and Greece is equivalent to one to thirty. It was extremely meagre.”<sup>47</sup>

One purpose of Jiang’s complaint was to distract attention from a chaotic and corrupt governmental structure. Yet UNRRA’s own official history, published just five years after the end of the war with Japan, admitted that there was still justice in his argument, suggesting that it was simultaneously true that a very great deal had been done for China, and that it was still not enough: “Although not commensurate with the nation’s vast needs and less in relation to the population affected than the European aid programs, the UNRRA program for China was more extensive than any comparable effort ever previously undertaken on behalf of a single nation.”<sup>48</sup> In the end, the question of payment was settled with a decision that UNRRA should provide supplies, and CNRRA (in effect, the Chinese government) should deal with its distribution and processing. The total cost of financing the Chinese part of the program was estimated at US\$190.9 million, in 1947 dollars (calculated at CN\$405.6 million in prewar, pre-inflationary Chinese currency). The figures are approximate, but the official historian believed that “they are sufficiently accurate ... to indicate that the cost of assimilating the UNRRA program in China was 35–40 percent of the estimated value of the UNRRA supplies.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, China’s contributions to the cost of the program were very significant, and these costs place in some perspective the (often justified) accusations of graft and corruption against the regime.

#### WARTIME DEVELOPMENT: INDIGENOUS PRACTICE

Jiang felt aggrieved at what he regarded as American aspersions on his program and the implication that China should contribute further to its own reconstruction. A specific reason for this resentment was his awareness that the Nationalists had undertaken significant reform long before UNRRA had been established. Rather than UNRRA’s contribution being a flow from Western benefactors to eastern recipients, Jiang saw the combination of international input and indigenous developments as being central to a successful reconstruction, with China providing an example to other emergent nations in its own right in the way that it dealt with issues such as health and public hygiene. He commented some years later on the way that health and hygiene issues had been developed during the war: “It was the National Government which established, for the first time in Chinese history, a national health service. This service, though understaffed through the eight years of war with Japan, was nevertheless able to prevent any epidemic in China.”<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 532.

<sup>48</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 371.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 399–400.

<sup>50</sup> Jiang Tingfu, “The Far Eastern Crisis,” speech given at the Indianapolis English Speaking Union, 1 Mar. 1951, MHD, vol. 21, 553.



Jiang's phrase "national health service" was perhaps meant to bring to mind the British Attlee Labour Government (1945–1951), which he admired ("Now the Labour Party in Britain, using free democratic means, has taken authority," he wrote in 1947).<sup>51</sup> In practice, "service" was too grandiose a term to describe a patchwork of facilities that had come together often under improvised circumstances. More accurate, and perhaps more suited to the reality of China's wartime situation, was the combination of a limited amount of classic high modernity (such as the building of urban hospitals) with a concentration on behavioral change and appropriate technology.

Yet even if change was limited, Jiang was correct to suggest that it was a serious effort. Recent research has showed that there had been significant developments in public services in wartime China, many undertaken in the expectation that they would lay the foundation for a postwar China.<sup>52</sup> In particular, the state made important efforts to implement reform in areas of public health and hygiene. This tendency emerged well before the war began; Ruth Rogaski has written of the importance of "hygienic modernity" in shaping China's nationalism and modernization in the early twentieth century. During the war, the discourse of New Life (the ideological program of hygienic and spiritual renewal espoused by the Nationalists after 1934) and rejuvenation went hand in hand with a series of measures relating to health.<sup>53</sup> Sichuan province, one of those areas most securely under Nationalist rule, was an important site for new social programs. Chongqing, as the temporary capital, was a central focus of much experimentation in public health, which Jiang was aware of when he specified hygiene as "the greatest investment" within the reconstruction project, and when he made his later comments about a "national health service."

During the last years of the war, Chongqing and the areas of Sichuan where the Nationalist government broadly had control were required to engage with different forms of hygienic improvement. In March 1944, the Sichuan provincial government hygiene office received orders from the central government that obstetrics should become a top priority. "Having started in experimental counties in and near Chongqing, the program will be expanded to the whole of Sichuan province," the provincial authorities were told.<sup>54</sup> Other orders encompassed a wider agenda of hygienic improvement for the temporary capital: "Deal with cleaning roads, garbage processing,

<sup>51</sup> Jiang Tingfu, *Zhengzhi ziyou yu jingji ziyou* ("Political freedom and economic freedom"), originally in *Shiji pinglun*, 26 Apr. 1947, in JTF, 665.

<sup>52</sup> See essays in *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 11, 2 (2012).

<sup>53</sup> Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley, 2004); and Federica Ferlanti, "The New Life Movement at War: Wartime Mobilization and State Control in Chongqing and Chengdu, 1938–1942," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 11, 2 (2012): 187–212.

<sup>54</sup> Sichuan Provincial Archives, 113–16: Minguo 30–33/1941–1944, "Zhongyang weisheng shiyanyuan ... banfa" (Methods ... of the central government hygiene experimentation institute), correspondence, Mar. 1944.

waste water, improving drinking water, toilet improvement, and tidying up the appearance of the city.” The program also included ambitious proposals to clean houses, maintain nurseries and schools in a hygienic condition, and collect information on the nutrition level of the population. Mobile clinics were to be converted into fuller-service hygiene centers, and the plan stated that there should be one such center for every five county towns.<sup>55</sup> A further edict declared that an experimental factory district should be set up as a “hygiene district” and workers should be employed in the patriotically defined task of “cleaning toilets for national purposes,” as well as in carrying out wider community environmental improvement. Citizens ought to be made to pledge to a “household cleaning system,” grounded in motivational activities including using meetings and market day gatherings to propagandize for hygiene, and carrying out spot-checks, along with “hygiene competitions.” Offenders could be fined. Finance for these activities was less assured, and authorities were advised that they could “borrow from other budgets” or solicit donations.<sup>56</sup>

The vague comments about finance are a reminder that programs of hygienic modernization in Chongqing showed positive intent but ran up against shattered infrastructure and deeply constrained state capacity, as well as the limitation that the Nationalists controlled only a part of the country. There were two means of addressing the crisis. One was to find “appropriate technology” to provide reform at low cost. The other, complementary to the first, was to use the funds provided by the new international organizations, UNRRA in particular, to fulfil developmental goals. Jiang Tingfu’s aim was to build on the former using the latter.

During the war itself, concentration was necessarily on what was possible rather than most desirable. Large-scale surveys by UNRRA in the immediate postwar period would suggest that some parts of China that had been occupied were suffering from severe malnutrition by the end of the war. However, to address broad food security issues was not within the power of the Chinese government before the end of the conflict (which neither UNRRA nor the Chinese government had expected to happen as early as summer 1945). These restrictions meant that, for instance, outside the major city of Chongqing, in rural counties where there was little infrastructure, there was more attention to locally feasible hygiene work. In various Sichuan counties, reports of rehabilitation work were submitted that detailed more modest but important goals, many based on the provision of clean water and the maintenance of local toilets. In one county, local officials concentrated on “keeping the well clean, preventing people washing their vegetables in it, and keeping a lid on the well.” In the

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

same county, they had closed down one noisome toilet, improved six, and built four new ones. In another, 82,015 buckets of disinfectant were reported to have been used on forty-one exercises in hygiene; fourteen new toilets were set up, with fifty-seven existing facilities being sterilized; and a long list of diseases were treated.<sup>57</sup>

The low-technology approach to healthcare was useful enough as a stopgap during the war years, but it proved inadequate to the challenges of the postwar. The sudden end of the war in August 1945 meant that the task of postwar reconstruction moved from being a “piecemeal” (in the word of the UNRRA administrator cited above) prospect some two or more years away to an immediate, urgent priority. The Nationalists could just about rehabilitate part of the territory they controlled before August 1945. Their capacity was not remotely adequate to the sudden resumption of sovereignty over the entire country. The external perception of China had changed too. Once the war was over, China’s strategic importance had lessened, and its needs had to be weighed up alongside commitments to a destroyed Europe.

In the words of Harry B. Price, who issued a major report titled “Immediate Problems of Relief and Rehabilitation” on 23 August 1945, just two weeks after Japan’s surrender, “Capitulation of the Japanese has greatly hastened the need of relief and rehabilitation over a very wide area.”<sup>58</sup> Price asked whether the OSS and Chinese army could provide further data with which to make judgements. However, the immediate aftermath of the war allowed snapshots to be taken of the state of the occupied areas. He categorized the major areas of concern under sixteen headings: intelligence (and the lack of it) about local conditions; supply, and the need for a clear picture of what resources were available; shipping; supply and transportation services; allocation of goods (and the creation of authority to do this); distribution of relief supplies; health and medical relief; work relief projects; the restoration of utilities; the rehabilitation of transportation; the rehabilitation of industries; the rehabilitation of agriculture and fisheries; the provision of personnel to staff programs; the establishment of a more robust overall organization for relief and reconstruction; finance; and the transfer of control from the military to civilian organizations.<sup>59</sup> In his comments on finance, Price noted: “The deep financial crisis through which the Chinese government has been and still is passing has made extremely difficult up to now the support of even modest emergency relief programs. Adequate preparation for relief and rehabilitation now calls, however, for very substantial outlays.... Will the Chinese government be able to

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> UNA S-0528-0053, China Weekly Reports, 1944–45, report by Price, UNRRA China Office, “Immediate Problems of Relief and Rehabilitation,” 23 Aug. 1945, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

provide funds for the essential relief and rehabilitation goods and services until the importation of UNRRA supplies in quantity is possible?”<sup>60</sup>

There was a request for “essential overall coordination” with relief and rehabilitation as the “primary objective of the government.” The medical crisis revealed by the end of the fighting led Price to request “comprehensive planning” for hospitals and epidemic treatment. His report declared that UNRRA regarded this as an “emergency programme of great value” because the agency needed information that would be of use when “larger areas are liberated.”<sup>61</sup> The program was also considered “an excellent means of training personnel for the bigger job ahead and in providing a basis for realistic planning.”<sup>62</sup>

One survey by UNRRA officers Raymond T. Moyer and Mildred Bonnell involved a trip of some 550 miles across central and western Henan, one of the worst-affected areas. They interviewed local officials and missionaries and personally inspected areas in need. They estimated that the population of the area affected was around twelve million persons, with “conservatively approximately 2,000,000 persons ... already in desperate need of relief.” In the western part of the province, they estimated that there was sufficient assistance for only 30 percent of the population, whereas “without outside assistance the rest are faced with slow starvation and serious exposure.... The situation in the greater part of the other affected areas may not be as desperate, but still very serious.” Conditions had been badly affected by the fighting in early 1945, when clashes between Japanese and National Government troops led to mass refugee flight and the destruction of homes and businesses in the area. Silk production had been important in this region, and “a great deal of this industry was wiped out,” removing an important source of local employment.<sup>63</sup> They calculated the numbers “without food and clothing” at five hundred thousand, the number of buildings destroyed at one hundred thousand, and work animals lost at 140,000. Overall, they declared, “If measures for rehabilitation are undertaken at the same time relief is given, the population can achieve some measure of stability by fall.”<sup>64</sup> They went on to comment that “we found everywhere an enormous interest in the problems of relief and rehabilitation,” with some areas setting up relief committees with “honest and efficient personnel,” whereas others were “not followed up with an effective organization.” However, “almost every magistrate has it [relief and rehabilitation] as a major worry.”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>62</sup> UNA S-0528-0053, China Weekly Reports, 1944–45, report by William J. Green, “Food Production in Liberated Areas in Kweichow and Kwangsi Province,” 25 June 1945, 11.

<sup>63</sup> UNA S-0528-0058, Honan, 1944–1949, famine report by Raymond T. Moyer and Mildred Bonnell, 3 Nov.–6 Dec. 1945.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

## AUTHORITY AND THE VARIABLE GEOGRAPHY OF VIOLENCE

UNRRA's observers and Jiang Tingfu shared an understanding of the fragile situation of postwar China. In postwar Germany, the collapse of Nazi power had given way to a reasonably stable structure provided by the Allied occupiers. No such stability obtained in China, which did not have the ironic benefit of a strong occupier, but also lacked a strong centralized authority. In summer 1945, the state had rapidly to take on a new and expensive set of responsibilities in areas that had spent most of the war either under occupation or on the front-line, without the capacity to address them adequately.

The situation in 1945 was in large part caused by the huge numbers of refugees who had fled during the war years. There were similarities to Eastern Europe, where hastily constructed geobodies such as the Nazi Generalgouvernement that occupied territory previously belonging to prewar Poland were being deconstructed swiftly or were plunging into their own civil wars (as in the conflict near-contemporaneous with the Chinese one, the Greek Civil War of 1946–1949). In China, the sudden end of the war in 1945 saw the collapse of the Japanese occupation and its replacement by a weak regime.

Before the war, Jiang had identified “warlords” and “political factions” as agents of national disunity. He also stressed that China needed to work “progressively toward economic unity.” He cited the advantage that the United States had in operating as a single economic unit, and argued, “Europe’s most advanced people have long advocated studying American examples and organizing a pan-European united country. Today’s economics demand a relatively large economic unit to produce efficiency.”<sup>66</sup>

In some ways, the war against Japan had accelerated the process that Jiang had hoped for. One consequence of the war had been a clear breakdown in what Prasenjit Duara has called the “traditional nexus of power.”<sup>67</sup> This nexus had already come under severe pressure during the Nanjing decade, but was subject to still further degradation after the outbreak of war with Japan in 1937 because of refugee flight and the destruction of many traditional land and landholding patterns. Local patterns of development could recover after an initial Japanese occupation, as Toby Lincoln has shown for the Wuxi area, but the Yangzi delta benefited from the fact that it was not subjected to severe conflict after the initial phase of the war in 1937–1938, unlike much of central China. However, there was less stability in parts of China where there were multiple and shifting sources of authority. In many occupied areas, Japanese control was limited to zones close to the railway lines or

<sup>66</sup> Jiang Tingfu, “Lun guoli de yuansu” (The factors for national strength), originally in *Xin jingji yuekan*, 16 Nov. 1938, in JTF, 651.

<sup>67</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power and the State; Rural North China, 1900–1942* (Stanford, 1988).

major cities, with the countryside much harder for them or their collaborators to penetrate. Furthermore, significant parts of China were subjected to experiences during the wartime period that weakened local control or even eliminated it. The flooding of central China after the Yellow River dykes were breached in June 1938 had catastrophic effects on local governmental structures. This area, along with a much wider tranche of central China, was once again subject to major destruction during the Ichigo campaign, as well as subsequent campaigns in 1945. These created huge disruption in areas where authority was already weak.<sup>68</sup> The war did break up the fiefdoms of many of the militarist leaders (“warlords”) who had controlled much of China before 1937, as Jiang had hoped, but a new force, the Communists, emerged in the ascendant. In the postwar, the challenge was not traditional militarism but the rise of a newly powerful opponent that had a clear social contract at the heart of its ideology. This added an ideological urgency to Jiang’s liberal developmentalism. The continued conflict over authority created violence and disruption on the ground in large parts of China, and it would soon become a civil war.

The disruption affected all parts of China, but the aftermath was particularly notable in areas that had suffered major military and environmental disruption during the war years. This reality is reflected in the frequent disorderly responses seen to the attempts by UNRRA and CNRRA survey groups to gather information for reconstruction. One famine team, moving around the Hengyang area, encountered violence on a regular basis. In Leiyang, a town of some thirty thousand people, where there was very little food for sale, “the people were very restless and angry. They kept milling about, shouting and quarreling [*sic*]. As we walked among them, they crowded about us to such an extent that the officials [... and] a few soldiers had to push and shove them away and some were struck across the face and head. They would grab at us, try to get close and would throw themselves down in the road in front of us, crying for food.”<sup>69</sup>

As the team left, their car was mobbed by the locals. They estimated the numbers as around 1,500 in total, a “frightening and disheartening experience” that ended only when soldiers with pistols forced the crowd to release the visitors’ car. In this area, the local magistrate “said he was convinced that there was no hoarding.”<sup>70</sup> In the Lingling area of Hunan, surveyor Vera McCord wrote of a “mob spirit” and a “near riot” as hungry children climbed into their vehicles, demanding food.<sup>71</sup> Essentially, foreigners needed military

<sup>68</sup> On disruption, see Muscolino, *Ecology of War*; on partial reconstruction, see Toby Lincoln, *Urbanizing China in War and Peace: The Case of Wuxi County* (Honolulu, 2015).

<sup>69</sup> UNA S-0528-0009, Famine Surveys, report by Harold Matthews, “Observations and Experiences on Highway from Hengyang to Leiyang,” n.d., 1946, 2–3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>71</sup> UNA S-0528-0009, Famine Surveys, report by Vera McCord, “Welfare Wurvey: Ling-ling Area, Hunan Province,” n.d., 1946, 2.

protection to travel around because of the fear of riots. One discussion of the methodology of the nutrition surveys made it clear that certain areas of Hunan would be selected because of “the conditions of transportation” and “safety of those places,” these factors being listed ahead of “the severity of the famine,” even though places lacking in the first two might easily be worse off when it came to the third.<sup>72</sup>

#### THE FEAR OF FAMINE

UNRRA was the inheritor of prewar networks of knowledge that concentrated on issues of rural rehabilitation in Asia, operated through the League of Nations. Sunil Amrith and Patricia Clavin have shown how the League of Nations drew on the experience of rural rehabilitation in Eastern Europe to promote ideas of “development” in Asia in the prewar years. In this vision, the desire by Western reformers (largely drawing on British imperial experience) to try and control issues such as malnutrition and disease through technological change was combined with the visions of Asian nationalists who advocated national planning as a way of dealing with a potential crisis of food security.<sup>73</sup> In August 1937, a conference on rural hygiene was held under League auspices in Bandung, in the Netherlands East Indies, at a time when, in the words of one League official, “In each country, ‘rural reconstruction’ is prominent in the papers, and is on everyone’s lips.” India, Japan, Siam, the Philippines, and China were among the countries represented, but the latter was already in the first weeks of the Sino-Japanese conflict that would destroy much of China’s state capacity.<sup>74</sup> In 1945, Jiang Tingfu and his collaborators would attempt to pick up the process of internationalization that had had to be downplayed, if not abandoned, in the face of war.

However, the desperate lack of food in significant parts of China was the most pressing theme to occupy UNRRA and CNRRA in the immediate aftermath of the war, with areas of Henan, Shanxi, Shandong, Jiangsu, Fujian, Hunan, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Anhui provinces particularly affected.<sup>75</sup> UNRRA estimated that some 6.76 million Chinese were in “critical need” in April 1946, and some 32.8 million were in need of supplementary food. “The needs of these areas alone far exceeded the relief resources provided to China by UNRRA,” noted the official history, “particularly in 1946.”<sup>76</sup> Networks of supply were a major problem in the region. Deliveries of flour were insufficient in amount and being sent in a form that left the powder

<sup>72</sup> UNA S-0528-0009, Famine Surveys, report by C. F. Wang, Enid Fisher, and Anne Huizenga, “Nutrition Survey, Hengyang-Lingling Region,” n.d., 1946, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Sunil Amrith and Patricia Clavin, “Feeding the World: Connecting Europe and Asia,” *Past and Present* (2013, suppl. 8): 29–50, 38.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>75</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 386–87.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 406.

hard and caked. People were eating clay that caused bowel obstructions. Jiang's plan had given priority to using supplies to recreate China's economic infrastructure, but McCord saw the level of desperation and wondered whether more of the supplies available should be used to relieve simple destitution, rather than being saved to pay for work relief schemes.<sup>77</sup>

The UNRRA Welfare Survey team visited the refugee camps in Hengyang, Hunan province, in June 1946.<sup>78</sup> The atmosphere was still one of widespread chaos, nearly a year after the war with Japan had ended. The Hengyang area had been at the center of one of the hardest-fought battles of the Ichigo campaign. Refugee flight combined with chaotic bureaucracy led to major obstacles in bringing effective relief to the city. The mayor had spoken of the difficulties caused by the increase in the population from 150,000 to 200,000, of whom some ninety thousand were said to urgently need food. One camp (no. 5) visited by the team housed some six hundred people in tents that provided little protection against the heat; the refugees were in a state of advanced malnutrition. Supplies were often unusable; one delivery of flour could not be used because there was no cooking equipment. Promised supplies of milk were not being delivered. There was a "complete breakdown" in coordination between officials, with a death rate "on the streets" of around thirty a day. Other reports from the area spoke of the camps being as bad as Belsen, or worse than during the famines in wartime India, with "horrible physical collapse" frequent.<sup>79</sup>

Surveys of areas in Hunan province allow us to understand details of the levels of devastation suffered in the parts of China most affected during the Ichigo campaign. UNRRA surveyors visited Hengyang and Lingling counties in 1945–1946, largely before the civil war began in earnest, and found conditions of intense distress. Vera McCord, the leader of the Famine Survey Team in Lingling, estimated that some 158,000 of the region's 528,000 people needed relief. Based on an extensive set of interviews with local officials and ordinary people, UNRRA contacts, and missionaries, she said that there was an urgent need for medical care, and further, that there was no sign of hoarding. She also noted the danger of a poor harvest in 1947 and that assistance to farmers was a top priority. In Lingling's villages, some 15 to 180 *li* from Lingling city, there were reports of beriberi and malaria. "There appeared to be a decrease in the birth rate," McCord reported.<sup>80</sup>

While Hengyang was clearly in crisis, it was by no means the only such area. When Moyer and Bonnell visited western Henan in November and December of 1945 they noted the effects of a variety of factors, including

<sup>77</sup> McCord, "Welfare Survey."

<sup>78</sup> UNA S-0528-0009, Famine surveys, report by Enid Fisher, "Welfare Survey, Hengyang Area, Hunan Province," n.d., ca. 1946.

<sup>79</sup> Fisher, "Welfare Survey"; Matthews, "Welfare Survey."

<sup>80</sup> McCord, "Welfare Survey." One *li* is about 500 meters.



flooding, the Japanese occupation, and depredations by the Chinese military, which had fought major battles there the previous spring and summer. The region had a population of some twelve million, of whom two million were in “desperate need.” The local silk industry had been devastated, and the Japanese had transported immense quantities of grain away from the region. Epidemics were rife, and only some 30 percent of the population could be assisted with locally supplied resources. The surveyors noted that the returning refugees had also brought diseases with them, and that 80–90 percent of the population had become ill between their return and the UNRRA survey visit. In the worst-affected areas, the mortality rate reached some 15 percent.<sup>81</sup> Overall, the sentiments of the surveyors were summed up in two contrasting statements: that “the problems in western Honan [*sic*] illustrate beautifully the genius of the conception of relief and rehabilitation,” and that “people need *everything*.”<sup>82</sup>

Social breakdown also encouraged more radical political solutions and contributed to direct confrontation. In a letter to UNRRA China Director Glen Edgerton on 10 December 1946, the organization’s chief Regional Representative Harald H. Lund complained about the CCP searching CNRRA trucks. He noted that many of the drivers for CNRRA might previously have driven Nationalist soldiers, meaning that caution was necessary when in territory where Nationalist and Communist jurisdictions might clash. There was a “lack of mature and well-qualified people to manage the CNRRA teams in Communist territory,” he observed, and it would be “not wise” to send supplies to a Nationalist-held city without some also being sent to surrounding CCP-held territory.<sup>83</sup>

In North China, in areas where the CCP had a strong presence, violent encounters took place on a regular basis. In some cases, as when a relief convoy was hijacked between Beijing and Chengde in late November 1946, the issue was quickly resolved, with the CCP admitting it was a “mistake” and paying CN\$300,000 in compensation.<sup>84</sup> However, relations began to break down as the Nationalists tried to use CNRRA convoys as a means of attacking the CCP-controlled areas, and both sides started to use access to food and supplies as political leverage. By the end of the UNRRA program, the CCP was clear in its negative view of the agency: “No matter how UNRRA decorates itself, people of the whole world have never been so aware, as at the present time that UNRRA has degenerated from an international relief organization to an instrument of the American State Department, and its China Office is a war supply agent for the Nationalist Government.”<sup>85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Moyer and Bonnell, “Report,” 1–2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>83</sup> UNA S-0528-0032, Lund to Edgerton, “Taiyuanfu-Shansi: Confidential,” 10 Dec. 1946.

<sup>84</sup> UNA S-0528-0032, Grant cable to UNRRA Shanghai, 27 Nov. 1946.

<sup>85</sup> *UNRRA Relief for the Chinese People: A Report by CLARA* (Shanghai: Information Office of the Chinese Liberated Areas Relief Association, 1947), 1.

The weaknesses of Jiang's program of rehabilitation were creating space for a more radical alternative.

#### THE UNRRA CRISIS

The UNRRA itself was a troubled institution in many ways, and its early demise owed perhaps more to the problems it encountered in Europe than to those in China. In some ways, UNRRA was the inheritor of the colonial framework that had shaped the League of Nations, and aspects of that colonial mindset grated on the Chinese. In Europe, UNRRA had to deal essentially with conquered or liberated peoples. In China, it had to negotiate with a country as devastated as any in Europe, but also a sovereign ally that had only regained its full sovereignty a year or two earlier, with all of the touchiness on both sides that the situation implied.

By 1946, UNRRA and CNRRA's cooperation was coming under major strain, with Jiang Tingfu very much in the crossfire. The financial structure of the program generated increasing problems. China was permitted to sell a proportion of the UNRRA material to bring in government income, but because the Chinese currency was unstable, shipping costs to the interior continued to rise and ended up as a significant burden on CNRRA (as noted in the section above on the total costs borne by the Chinese side). This forced CNRRA to take on a major loan from the Central Bank, which in turn reduced CNRRA's standing within the Executive Yuan, and it also reduced the credibility of Jiang's arguments that the agency could serve as a force for a progressive reconstruction.<sup>86</sup>

Events came to a head in June 1946 when reports were received in the United States that shipments of material were piling up in Shanghai harbor, leading UNRRA's director, former New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, to place a ban on any further shipments to China. In July, Jiang gave an angry press conference, reported by the *Shenbao* newspaper, which hit back at criticisms of his agency. He pointed out that eight years of war had "almost completely destroyed water and rail transportation networks," leading to inevitable bottlenecks. He argued that the situation had improved, and that of nearly 560,000 tons of UNRRA material that had been delivered by March 1946, all but 79,000 tons had been transported by June. Jiang argued also that it was a "misunderstanding" that only 2 percent of the UNRRA supplies made it to the CCP-controlled areas, and asserted that material such as "jeeps, railway and steamship equipment, river defence material, etc." was not for general distribution. He claimed, perhaps disingenuously, that while 80 percent of the UNRRA material was grain, "most of the Communist areas have had a strong grain harvest. When we distribute material, we must do it on the basis

<sup>86</sup> Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 255.

of need.”<sup>87</sup> Jiang continued to defend CNRRA’s record in later articles. In September 1946, in his last month in office, he argued that the separation of obligations between UNRRA and CNRRA had led to serious financial problems: “From the end of June to the beginning of July, CNRRA had no money. During this period, the government did not provide any expenses and the banks would not give us a loan.”<sup>88</sup>

Clearly Jiang was seeking to justify the performance of the agency which he headed. However, UNRRA’s own later assessment of the China program, shortly after its conclusion, was positive in significant part. Accounting for errors, “the actual proportion of UNRRA food which ... did not reach the intended recipients was perhaps 10–15 percent,” with about the same amount being poorly distributed. “The remaining 70–80 percent, it is believed, went to participants in real need, and it is certain that the distribution affected in deficit areas relieved acute shortages for the population as a whole in those areas.” Regarding work relief programs, “at the end of October 1947 it was estimated that through UNRRA-supported flood-control, irrigation, and drainage projects about 4,366,000 acres of land had been reclaimed, while several times that amount had been protected against flooding by dike construction and repair work.” They assessed that some two to three million people had been rescued from starvation, and eight to ten million (including 1 million refugees) “given some assistance” as they returned home. Over two million were given “employment in UNRRA-supported work projects” that helped restore “several thousand miles” of highways and railway roadbeds. They undertook sanitation, dredging, and construction, revived local industries, and succeeded in “restoring to production more than four million acres of land and affording added protection to about thirty million acres.” Over US\$71 million in agricultural rehabilitation supplies contributed significantly to “restoring China’s indigenous food output to approximately its prewar level.” Rehabilitation had found substantial successes: annual food production from reclaimed land would be “four times the total amount of food provided to China by UNRRA and about thirty-seven times the amount of UNRRA food used in support of those projects.” The assessment concluded: “These were among the positive benefits to the people of China jointly attained, in spite of all difficulties and shortcomings, through the largest program of internationally sponsored assistance ever developed on behalf of a single nation. How much more extensive and enduring the results might have been, but for the continuing dislocation and destruction resulting from civil war, must be left to conjecture.”<sup>89</sup>

Jiang Tingfu’s vision for cooperation between UNRRA and CNRRA—that is, between an international organization and a newly-sovereign Asian

<sup>87</sup> *Shenbao*, 12 July 1946, cited in Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 257.

<sup>88</sup> Zhang, *Jiang Tingfu*, 258.

<sup>89</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, 409, 412, 452–53.

national government—never reached its potential. He never got a grip on the less effective parts of the bureaucracy, and his anti-communism did not help in brokering a solution between China's warring parties (although that also proved beyond the capacities of more experienced negotiators such as General George C. Marshall). That said, perhaps the single most important, and retrospectively underappreciated reason for the mismatch between aspiration and achievement was the sheer scale of the task. As the data above shows, the scale of destruction was huge and the resources available to combat that destruction were relatively small. Yet the fact that the project was not fulfilled should not obscure the importance of the ideas that Jiang was seeking to implement, which were concerned with not just immediate relief, but also the continuation and expansion of a *pre-existing* modernizing project that was interrupted in 1937.

#### CONCLUSION: TOWARD THE ASIAN POSTCOLONIAL STATE

Writing in 1947, shortly after the end of the UNRRA program, Jiang proposed an argument that seemed to have the aura of Bretton Woods and its penchant toward economic interdependence, perhaps gathered from figures such as Sun Fo who had attended the meeting:<sup>90</sup>

Modern scholars of economics have become more optimistic overall about the future of the world economy. They feel that with modern science, the production capacity and standards of living of the whole world can be greatly raised. They believe that one country's poverty leads directly to disaster in other countries. To put it the other way, one country's prosperity can directly affect the benefit felt by another country. Economically, this is a world of mutual coexistence and mutual prosperity. If every country's foreign policy was decided by economic factors, international cooperation would be smoothly realized.<sup>91</sup>

There is a poignancy, along with an unreality, about the "if" in Jiang's last sentence. He continued to make the case, as late as 1949, for the Nationalist government as potential reformers. During his January 1949 Washington speech, he argued that the aim of the Nationalist government was to mandate rent reductions for tenant farmers from 50 to 33 percent of the produce from the land: "that has been the law of China for the last three years." He acknowledged, though, that there had been little action on land reform under the Nationalists and that further action was needed in a variety of other areas: "better seeds, better and more fertilizers, better irrigation, better marketing facilities, and better processing machinery."<sup>92</sup> He argued that the Central Agricultural Research Institute had done work before the war that produced increases in rice and grain productivity of from 11 to 13 percent, that they had imported

<sup>90</sup> Eric Helleiner, *Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar Order* (Ithaca, 2014).

<sup>91</sup> Jiang, *Mantan zhishifenzi*, JTF, 674.

<sup>92</sup> Jiang, "Situation," 508.

cotton seeds from the United States, and that they had improved flawed irrigation. “What the present government has done, however, has not been enough. It should have done more. It could have done more. It is not true, however, that the Government is blind to the needs of the peasantry or that the ruling class of China during recent years has been dominated by the class interests of the landlords.”<sup>93</sup> By January 1949, when he made this speech, this pleading was far too late.

Why, then, should we treat these as anything more than the last, poignant thoughts of a liberal voice that was about to be overwhelmed by a politics that was radical beyond anything he had yet imagined? The answer is that the task undertaken by Jiang and the CNRRA authorities helps us reassess the idea that the victory of the CCP was the only narrative of importance during China’s postwar.

Hewing to that narrative exclusively obscures a context that helps to explain the structure of the postwar world. The Communists and Nationalists did not operate in isolation from one another; they were clearly in competition, and Jiang’s mixture of Marxist-influenced social thought *combined* with his increasingly strong anti-communism showed that he understood the need for a progressive, modernizing (rather than “feudal” or “reactionary”) postwar reconstruction, and hoped to use the UNRRA/CNRRA program to help achieve it. His postwar admiration of the TVA and the Attlee government shows a commitment to social welfarism and pluralism very different from his prewar regard for Soviet modernization. The civil war of ideas in China was not simply between an old regime and a new, but between different visions of the postwar. Jiang Tingfu’s model was clearly traceable to the nation-building modernization that had occurred in pre-1937 China, about which he had been one of the most eloquent writers, and to the postwar models of other Allied nations. Yet his model was also shaped by the experience of war itself, particularly the range of social reform and hygiene programs that emerged during those years, as well as China’s experience of being a postcolonial as well as postwar state. Jiang Tingfu was not an anomaly. His reading of politics was part of a spectrum of possibilities, many of which have been retrospectively obscured.

Jiang’s proposed program was, very explicitly, a form of postwar modernization that W. W. Rostow would later recognize, all the way down to the idea of a “traditional society” needing a “takeoff.”<sup>94</sup> The Nationalist project in the postwar can be read as a deeply flawed and ultimately failed form of developmental state, but it was not simply a “feudal” regime that collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions. Jiang’s attempts to use UNRRA to promote

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, UK, 1960).

rehabilitation in postwar China need to be considered as a starting point for a longer history of how postwar Asian societies used development as a site for contestation over modernization. China was treated by the international community as a significant state that had a certain level of agency to act and make political choices, in contrast with Japan, reconstructed under American occupation, or the authoritarian developmentalism of Syngman Rhee in South Korea in the aftermath of a failed UN trusteeship. China's membership in the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East was one visible part of that integration as a sovereign state into a new international order in Asia, although its role in that order would be fundamentally altered by its loss of the civil war in 1949. Yet even postwar Taiwan would draw on some of the lessons learned on the mainland.<sup>95</sup>

In his October 1949 speech, Jiang declared: "China's basic problem is poverty, and the chief solution is economic development."<sup>96</sup> In 1950, after the regime had fallen on the mainland, Jiang maintained his view that China's development was part of a longer trajectory toward democracy and economic development and also part of a wider Asian trend:

I have been connected to the National Government for the last fifteen years. If I were to criticize my own Government, I think I could do it much more to the point than some of the criticisms I have read in your publications. However ... the National Government of China serves much better as the starting point for the modernization of China than the Communist regime at Peiping. After all China's fundamental problem is modernization. By modernization I include both democratization and economic development. So far as this is concerned, the other countries of Asia face the same fundamental problem of modernization.

The notes for this speech declared that other governments in Asia would "severely try [U.S.] patience." In the original draft, there is a line reading, "At such times, you will look back upon your experience in China and will say to yourselves that your work in China had met with a measure of governmental and popular cooperation far exceeding what you meet with now."<sup>97</sup> The line is scored out, and it probably did not make it into the final speech, but in it one can read Jiang's weary anger, knowing that his attempt to make the UNRRA/CNRRRA cooperation a building block for a sovereign China, allied to the United States, and an example to Asia more widely, might seem more prophetic in retrospect than it did at the time.

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<sup>95</sup> Hsiao-ting Lin, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), esp. ch. 8.

<sup>96</sup> Jiang, "Problems," 537.

<sup>97</sup> Jiang, "The Asian Half of the World," speech at University of Washington, 16 Feb. 1950, MHD vol. 21, 544.

Abstract: Post-World War II reconstruction in Europe and Asia is a topic of growing interest, but relatively little attention has been paid to the relief and rehabilitation effort in China in the immediate post-1945 period. This article reassesses the postwar program implemented by the Chinese Nationalist (Guomindang) government and the UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), not just in terms of humanitarian relief, but also as part of a process that led to new thinking about the nature of the postwar state in Asia. It focuses on the ideas and actions of Jiang Tingfu (T. F. Tsiang), head of the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration that worked with UNRRA. Chinese ideas for reconstruction in China were simultaneously statist, international, and transnational, and were shaped by high modern ideas drawn from Soviet and American examples. They were also influenced by China's poverty and wartime vulnerability, which made locally directed solutions more relevant in areas such as public hygiene. Success was unlikely because of the incipient Chinese Civil War and the huge demands of reconstruction on a state that was near-destitute, with a destroyed infrastructure. Nonetheless, its characteristics still bear examination as a first, tentative chapter in a longer story of post-imperialist and Cold War state-building that would shape countries in Asia and beyond.

Key words: China, Jiang Tingfu, UNRRA, developmental state, Guomindang, rehabilitation, modernization, relief, postwar Asia, Chinese Civil War