Japan’s Dilemma Is Our Dilemma

T. M. Bushnell

American agronomists and soil scientists should have, and do have, a real interest in Japan: firstly, because American affairs are definitely entwined with the past, present, and future of Japan, secondly, because our field of agriculture is such an important element in a broad picture of that country. Therefore, both as Americans and as scientists, we can truly say that Japan’s problems are now ours. If she does have a “dilemma,” we too must face it as our own because of the obligations inherent in the Allied Occupation of Japan and American interests in the outcome.

Agricultural matters will be discussed in more detail later on after preliminary references to some general aspects of the situation. For instance, what may be said about the application of the doctrines of the Atlantic Charter in Japan today?

The Four Freedoms in Japan

To an amateur observer, it appears that the Japanese already have considerable freedom of religion. For instance, Shinto shrines, Buddhist temples, and Christian churches are intermingled, and it seems that a Japanese individual may even mix different kinds of religions in his personal life.

Freedom of speech under Imperial Japan was limited, but, under the Occupation, politicians with electric loudspeakers are a common sight on the streets of Japanese cities and are apparently unrestricted. It is not obvious what censorship of the press may or may not exist other than the regulations imposed by SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers).

Freedom from fear of either internal police oppression or of external foreign aggression might be said to prevail in Japan under the Occupation. That is, when the sun sets over the Imperial Palace grounds in Tokyo, the Emperor may know that Allied sentries guard the approaches to the palace. The Allied troops which parade before the palace should defend Japan from further outside attack, hence no Japanese military establishment is needed for that purpose. Some Japanese say, “America defeated us—America will now defend us.”

It cannot be said that there is freedom from want in a land as poor as Japan is, but, under the Occupation, food and other materials have been supplied at critical times since V-J Day. This matter of Japanese “wants” is a major, complex question which will be elaborated in several ways.

One version of the problems of Japanese existence was cleverly presented by their English language propaganda. Japan stated that (1) her home agricultural industry is too small to feed her people; (2) the family size was not their policy, and birth control would not have been possible anyway in 1938 to change the facts by birth control; (3) that restrictions prevent emigration of excess population; and (4) that the best means to balance their economy was through industrialization.

RISE AND FALL OF JAPAN

It is a historical fact that Japan did claim and occupy industries, electric power, shipping, and other resources. However, foreign reaction against the new goods made in Japan led to the erection of barriers. This fact was Japan’s excuse for the war in China, as the outlet for her trade as well as a market which was natural and convenient. Japan’s relationship could be of mutual benefit in the phrase, “Greater East Asia Sphere.” The fact that China did not concur did not deter the Japanese, who forced China and the Chinese. They defended their method as being no worse than the ways in which other countries had managed.

It is well known how Japan persisted until she not only had overrun much of China, but also after Pearl Harbor, she quickly won control of vast areas of land and water in the Eastern hemisphere.

It is also well known how completely the economic bubble was burst and how almost the entire Japanese race, once scattered over wide areas, was crowded back into little more than the four main home islands.

The “Realities” of Our Dilemma

Since Japan is now our ward, we have to “face the realities,” whatever they may be. Let us now examine the 1938 Japanese propaganda statements about actual problems and determine what may be done to solve them on the basis of 1948 facts.

What about the point of population pressure? In spite of Japan’s war losses, it is undoubtedly greater now than ever before, due to both natural increase and repatriation of 8 or 9 million Japanese from other regions. It is obviously too late to relieve the situation by birth control or emigration because of the obliga-

One of the problems of Japanese existence was cleverly presented by their English language propaganda. Japan stated that (1) her home agricultural industry is too small to feed her people; (2) the family size was not their policy, and birth control would not have been possible anyway in 1938 to change the facts by birth control; (3) that restrictions prevent emigration of excess population; and (4) that the best means to balance their economy was through industrialization.

RISE AND FALL OF JAPAN

It is a historical fact that Japan did claim and occupy territories, electric power, shipping, and other resources. However, foreign reaction against the new goods made in Japan led to the erection of barriers. This fact was Japan’s excuse for the war in China, as the outlet for her trade as well as a market which was natural and convenient. Japan’s relationship could be of mutual benefit in the phrase, “Greater East Asia Sphere.” The fact that China did not concur did not deter the Japanese, who forced China and the Chinese. They defended their method as being no worse than the ways in which other countries had managed.

It is well known how Japan persisted until she not only had overrun much of China, but also after Pearl Harbor, she quickly won control of vast areas of land and water in the Eastern hemisphere.

It is also well known how completely the economic bubble was burst and how almost the entire Japanese race, once scattered over wide areas, was crowded back into little more than the four main home islands.

The “Realities” of Our Dilemma

Since Japan is now our ward, we have to “face the realities,” whatever they may be. Let us now examine the 1938 Japanese propaganda statements about actual problems and determine what may be done to solve them on the basis of 1948 facts.

What about the point of population pressure? In spite of Japan’s war losses, it is undoubtedly greater now than ever before, due to both natural increase and repatriation of 8 or 9 million Japanese from other regions. It is obviously too late to relieve the situation by birth control or emigration because of the obliga-