The Ecology of War in China

Henan Province, the Yellow River, and Beyond, 1938–1950

This book explores the interplay between war and the environment in Henan Province, a hotly contested frontline territory that endured massive environmental destruction and human disruption during the conflict between China and Japan that raged during World War II. In a desperate attempt to block Japan’s military advance, Chinese Nationalist armies under Chiang Kai-shek broke the Yellow River’s dikes in Henan in June 1938, resulting in devastating floods that persisted until after the end of the war. Greater catastrophe struck Henan in 1942–1943, when famine took some 2 million lives and displaced millions more. Focusing on these war-induced disasters and their aftermath, this book conceptualizes the ecology of war in terms of energy flows through and between militaries, societies, and environments. Ultimately, Micah S. Muscolino argues that efforts to procure and exploit nature’s energy in various forms shaped the choices of generals, the fates of communities, and the trajectory of environmental change in North China.

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M. S. M.
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Abbreviations

AH        Academia Historica
HIA       Hoover Institution Archives
HPA       Henan Provincial Archives
IMH       Institute of Modern History Archives
MHD       Huanghe shuili weiyuanhui, Minguo Huanghe da shiji [Chronology of the Yellow River in the Republican period]
MHS       Minguo Huanghe shi xiezuo xiaozu, Minguo Huanghe shi [History of the Yellow River in the Republican period]
SJZHFZ    Shanhou jiuji zongshu Henan fenshu zhoubao [Weekly report of CNRRA’s Henan branch office]
SPA       Shaanxi Provincial Archives
UN        United Nations Archives and Records Management Section
YRCC      Yellow River Conservancy Commission Archives
ZMA       Zhengzhou Municipal Archives