

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

THE FOLLOWING PORTION of this book contains excerpts from the two volumes of John Rabe's diaries, which he assembled during the war by combining selected documents and what he considered the most important entries from the private diary originally written for his wife and family. His experiences in Germany after returning from China have been taken from accounts he wrote for his family and a small manuscript diary from the postwar period.

I have attempted to select passages that show John Rabe in all his many facets and have also included material that he himself might have left out today because the period in which he lived is in so many ways no longer understandable. To those who make an effort to grasp what the conditions of that period were, John Rabe will not appear any weaker for it. Since he wrote his diary for his family, I have occasionally recast careless sentences into more standard language and have omitted entries that concern only his immediate family.

In his diary, Rabe included accounts written by his German helpers, Krischan Kröger and Eduard Sperling, as well as some reports from the German embassy. These have been supplemented with a few accounts by

other eyewitnesses. I have added still other documents taken from the political archives of the German Foreign Ministry, the Federal Archives, and the Military Archives in Freiburg, which, although they express different views of these same events, also complement and confirm what Rabe himself observed and described. In an afterword based on documents of the period, I have attempted to sketch the general political background, various perspectives in Berlin concerning German policy in the Far East, and a summary of what information was available to Rabe himself, in order to make his own position more understandable, particularly his relationship to Hitler and National Socialism as he understood it.

The transcription of Chinese characters has always presented problems. I have generally followed Rabe's spelling of Chinese names, though not without a few minor changes here and there.

Summarizations and remarks by the editor within the text of the diary are set in italics.