

## CHAPTER 2

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# THINGS GET SERIOUS

## The International Safety Committee

19 NOVEMBER

IT'S STILL RAINING, and we are still relentlessly packing. I'm trying to close the company books, but work keeps getting in the way of work. Han has drawn out a large sum in cash. I'm transferring most of the company's money and 2,000 dollars of my own to Hankow. All the employees will be given their full November salary now, so that they can buy food before the last shops close. I can store only one ton of coal and four canisters of petroleum, there's simply no more to be had at present. The servants walk about with large, terrified eyes, because they think I'll be leaving on the *Kutwo* as well. They'll be happy again once I explain straight out that I am definitely staying on in Nanking, come what may.

An International Committee has been formed, made up primarily of American doctors from Kulou Hospital and professors from Nanking University, all missionaries. They want to try to create a refugee camp, or better, a neutral zone inside or outside the city, where noncombatants can take refuge in case the city comes under fire. Since word has got around

that I intend to stay on, I was approached about whether I would like to join the committee. I agreed and at dinner this evening at Professor Smythe's home, I made the acquaintance of a good number of the American members.

Three people from the German embassy are remaining behind for now: Hürter, Dr. Rosen, and Scharffenberg. It's unclear to me why they're keeping Dr. Rosen here. When I learn that he did not volunteer, I ask Frau Trautmann to intercede with the ambassador, who is still here for the moment, to get the order reversed. Frau Trautmann will do what she can. What good to us is someone whose heart is not in this? Dr. Rosen knows nothing about my intervention yet and he never needs to learn. Melchior of Carlowitz & Co. tried to talk me out of my decision to stay. I thanked him, but declined.

I am not walking into this enterprise with my eyes closed. My decision has been made. Don't be angry with me, Dora dear. I cannot do otherwise! By the way, Dr. Hirschberg and his family, as well as Frau von Schuckmann, are all staying on; so is Mr. Hansen, the head of Texas Oil Co. So I'm not the only one risking his hide. Mr. Han is determined to stay by me through thick and thin. I expected no less of him. A fine fellow!

## 20 NOVEMBER

At 6 p.m. an extra edition of a Chinese newspaper announces that the Chinese government has been moved to Chungking. Nanking Broadcasting confirms the news and at the same time declares that Nanking will be defended to the last drop of blood.

## 21 NOVEMBER

I'm worried about my dugout. The water keeps on rising. I'm afraid we won't be able to use it for the next few days, since we don't have time now to bail it out. I'm on the lookout for a better dugout. There really must be several bombproof shelters in the city now. If I could find something for me and my charges, what a fine thing that would be!

Mr. Pai, the manager of the electricity works, asks if he can live at my house. Agreed! And now here comes the first engineer, Mr. Loh Fatsen, who wants to live here, too, along with his wife and servants. Once the Transocean Agency has left on the *Kutwo*, the schoolhouse will be empty and available again.

At 1:30 this afternoon I drove to Chung Shang wharf to check on my baggage, hoping to take the launch scheduled to leave for the *Kutwo* at 2 o'clock. The launch finally arrives at 4. I have only 10 minutes on board the *Kutwo* to race through the baggage room. Much to my satisfaction, I find the last crates that were sent off this morning. After a brief good-bye to the passengers, who are calmly sitting there playing cards and drinking beer, I take the launch, which is honking impatiently now, back to Hsiakwan. My last bridge is burned.

I visit Dr. Baerensprung, the successor to Freiherr von Lamezan, who is currently in charge of the police. I would like a pass to be able to drive my car without being stopped after the second alarm sounds, and after 10 p.m. as well. Baerensprung is likewise leaving for Hankow tomorrow, he has just received his orders from the marshal. He gives me his calling card to present to General Wang Kopang, the chief of police, whom I am supposed to visit tomorrow—that's if he hasn't already left as well.

## 22 NOVEMBER

My neighbor the cobbler can go to hell! Whenever the *ying bao* sounds, he comes running with his wife and children, grandfather and grandmother, and God knows how many other relatives, but now that there's three feet of water to be bailed in the dugout he's nowhere to be seen. Just wait!

A call from Dr. Rosen: We few Germans who have remained behind are to discuss our future at the now empty embassy at ten o'clock. Meanwhile I've drummed together all available hands and backs to bail out the dugout. As for the cobbler, all is forgotten and forgiven. He, his wife, his three children, and a half dozen of his relatives have been busy bailing away. We finally got the pit emptied out, but then discovered that unfortunately part of the dugout, the west wall, has collapsed.

In between two alarms, a conversation with Dr. Rosen at the German embassy. Rosen is staying on after all. My intercession did no good.

Five p.m. meeting of the International Committee for Establishing a Neutral Zone for Noncombatants in Nanking. They elect me chairman. My protests are to no avail. I give in for the sake of a good cause. I hope I prove worthy of the post, which can very well become important. The German ambassador, to whom I introduce Dr. Smythe shortly before he leaves to board his ship, gives his consent to the text of a telegram to be sent to the Japanese ambassador by way of the American consulate general in Shanghai, which has a wireless. We already have the permission of the

English and American ambassadors. The committee decides that the text of the telegram should not be published before the Japanese ambassador in Shanghai has received it. We truly hope our appeal is not in vain. France is not represented on the committee, since there are no French here. The same is true of Italy. The text of the telegram reads in part as follows:

An international committee composed of nationals of Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, desires to suggest to the Chinese and Japanese authorities the establishment of a Safety Zone for Civilian Refugees in the unfortunate event of hostilities at or near Nanking. The International Committee will undertake to secure from the Chinese authorities specific guarantees that the proposed "Safety Zone" will be made free and kept free from military establishments and offices, including those of communications; from the presence of armed men other than civilian police with pistols; and from the passage of soldiers or military officers in any capacity. The International Committee would inspect and observe the Safety Zone to see that these undertakings are satisfactorily carried out. . . .

The International Committee earnestly hopes that the Japanese authorities may find it possible for humanitarian reasons to respect the civilian character of this Safety Zone. The Committee believes that merciful foresight on behalf of civilians will bring honor to the responsible authorities on both sides. In order that the necessary negotiations with the Chinese authorities may be completed in the shortest possible time, and also in order that adequate preparations may be made for the care of refugees, the Committee would respectfully request a prompt reply from the Japanese authorities to this proposal.

#### LATER

Returning home from the committee meeting, I am asked by our house-boy Chang to find a doctor for his wife. Dr. Hirschberg comes to examine her and determines that Chang's wife must have had a miscarriage about three or four days ago; she must be taken to Kulou Hospital as soon as possible.

#### 23 NOVEMBER

My fifty-fifth birthday—congratulations, Rabe! At first my mood was somewhat gloomy and overcast. We could use some overcast weather, too, right now! I received a telegram from Mutti and a very lovely scarf. Many

thanks! The scarf however has not yet arrived. Frau Trautmann was supposed to bring it with her, but I haven't been able to make much sense of her explanations. Presumably the little package was sent by mail, and it never got through. So that's that!

Around 5 a.m. I was roused from bed by a phone call from Cavalry Captain Lorenz. He is just returning from the front and wants to board the *Kutwo*; but it steamed away yesterday evening. At 7 o'clock Herr Huldermann, editor of the *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*, and Wolf Schenke were at the door. Both have made their way here from Shanghai and want to speak to the ambassador. They take Hürter's car to drive to Wuhu, where they hope to catch up with the *Kutwo*. At 8 o'clock I take Chang's wife to Kulou Hospital. The poor woman is in terrible pain.

A steady stream of wounded men are arriving at Hsiakwan station. Dr. Smythe sends some student volunteers to the station to receive them. I have to lend the students my car.

Mr. Han arrives with some good news. A Chinese friend of his wants to give me two trucks with 100 canisters of gasoline and 200 sacks of flour. Now that's a birthday present! We can do something with that, particularly since the committee will have urgent need of food and vehicles. If only the news turns out to be true!

5 p.m.: Tea party given by Mr. Chang Chun, the former foreign minister and now chief secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to about 50 Americans and Europeans from various countries, the party was attended by: General Tang, who is in charge of the defense of the city, General Wang Kopang, the chief of police, and Mr. Ma, the mayor. The "main idea" is that all of us remaining Europeans and Americans are to gather each evening between eight and nine o'clock at the International Club, so that we can remain in contact with leading Chinese figures or their representatives. A good idea. We had a "roundtable" of that sort in Peking, too, during the world war.

My marvelous birthday present of two trucks plus drivers, gasoline, and flour has turned into one empty truck with no driver, etc. All the rest is supposed to be standing somewhere behind Ho Ping Men, the closed city gate.

### *Wolf Schenke: Nanking's Final Days*<sup>10</sup>

On my return I found remaining behind: three members of the embassy staff who had been assigned to stay at their posts and Herr John H. D. Rabe, in whose house I had always been a welcome guest on earlier visits

to Nanking. Herr Kröger from Carlowitz & Co. and Herr Sperling had likewise remained behind, though I did not have occasion to meet them. Each painted the most dreadful picture of the imminent capture of the city. Each was aware that his remaining behind might well prove to be a matter of life and death. It was less that they feared the shelling of the city by Japanese artillery and airplanes. That danger was really nothing compared to what was to be expected from the flood of retreating Chinese troops. They considered all eventualities, but the results of their deliberations were anything but hopeful. Had not the troops of the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek murdered foreigners and raped foreign women upon their arrival in Nanking in 1927?

They had seen the Szechuan soldiers march to the front, looking like the semibandits they were. In previous wars it had been standard practice for Chinese soldiers, especially those of defeated and retreating armies, to burn, sack, and pillage the local population. They pictured the retreating army, defeated and demoralized by the Japanese, flooding through Nanking. Would not their rage and hate be directed against the whites? The old xenophobia would surely break out anew.

They recalled events that had occurred in Canton a decade before. These included scenes of bestial cruelty beyond the imaginings of a European brain. It is not easy to brazen out that sort of future. But that is what those who remained behind in Nanking did.

Unless I obtained a press card from the Chinese foreign ministry, it would be impossible for me to send press telegrams home. After a long conversation with the remaining staff at the embassy, it was agreed that I should continue on to Hankow.

Herr Scharffenberg quickly scanned the mail I had brought with me (from Shanghai), culled out what was secondary, and put the important items in a new envelope. We wanted to take them on with us to Wuhu, where the German ambassador Dr. Trautmann was on board the *Kutwo*.

Despite our haste, I wanted to say goodbye to Herr Rabe. Hürter turned off the main road toward "Siemens City," as the Germans in Nanking called the grounds of Siemens China Co., where there was a little German school, which owed its foundation primarily to Herr Rabe. Johnny Rabe was sitting at his typewriter in his office, writing his diary. Rabe had not remained in Nanking for business reasons, but in order to erect a zone of refuge for the 200,000 noncombatants of Nanking, similar to that created by Pater Jacquinet in Shanghai.

I was personally very skeptical of the plan, since the committee lacked the authority to maintain law and order and prevent either Chinese or, later on, Japanese soldiers from entering the zone. Rabe said: "Well, after working here for 30 years and spending most of your life here, it's worth taking the risk."

In our brief conversation he still kept his old good humor, but it seemed to me to be more of a gallows humor now. Although I had every good reason to leave Nanking, somehow in the presence of Rabe and Hürter I felt like someone who is saving his own neck while others march toward an almost certain death.

24 NOVEMBER

Reuters has issued a premature report about the International Committee's plans. Dr. Rosen heard on the radio yesterday noon that Tokyo is already protesting on account of the Reuters telegram. They want to know why the American embassy, which has already left Nanking, should have anything to do with such plans. Upon learning this, Dr. Rosen sent the following telegram, via the American Navy, to the German general consulate in Shanghai:

Local international private committee with English, American, Danish, and German members, under chairmanship of German Siemens agent, Herr Rabe, applied to Chinese and Japanese for creation of civilian safety zone should Nanking become directly involved in hostilities. Via general consulate, American ambassador passed suggestion on to Japanese ambassador in Shanghai and to Tokyo. New safety zone to be safe refuge only for noncombatants if needed.

Given German chairmanship, I would ask unofficial, but no less warm support of humanitarian proposals.

Have only phrase book<sup>11</sup> here. Please pass on to Tokyo and send both your response and answer from Tokyo via American Navy.

ROSEN

Dr. J. Henry Liu, chief of staff at the Central Hospital, has departed, and two of the doctors that he left in charge have likewise bolted. If the American missionary doctors don't hold out, I don't know what will become of all the many casualties. Meanwhile, I have got the one truck I was given up and running. Liu, our chauffeur, is driving under a German flag in order to keep it from being commandeered. The Chinese soldiers are now commandeering every truck they come across. I hear from Christian Kröger (who works for Carlowitz) that a *ming lin* has been issued, that is, an order for all the inhabitants of Nanking to leave the city.

25 NOVEMBER

We're worried about the doctor problem. We've telegraphed the Red Cross in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Hankow to send us doctors and medicines. We couldn't ask for foreign doctors because the telegram was sent via the American embassy, which, like all other embassies, has ordered its citizens to leave Nanking.

I never dreamed that I would be called upon once again to save the old Imperial Chinese curio collection,<sup>12</sup> and yet it has come to that. The truck, my birthday vehicle from the I-Ho-Tung Brick Works, after having been used for a while to transport students to care for the wounded, has been placed at the disposal of Dr. Han Liwu,<sup>13</sup> who has assembled a whole parking lot full of trucks in order to take to the harbor, would you believe, 15,000 crates of curios that the government wants to ship to Hankow. They're afraid that if they fall into the hands of the Japanese, they'll be taken to Peking. Where they actually belong!

It was reported yesterday on Shanghai radio that the Japanese command is receptive to our attempts to create a neutral zone here for non-combatants. No official reply has arrived as yet.

Han's dugout has now collapsed as well. He has to build a new one. Besides which, he has been getting a room in the school ready for his family to move into. Frau Ella Gao has sent a number of crates and trunks for me to take care of, among them two wall clocks wrapped in paper and inscribed: "Fragile, Clocks!"

My neighbor, the cobbler, that miserable cobbler, has now become my friend. We are bosom buddies. He and his family have been bailing water from the dugout all day, and on the side he has made me a lovely pair of brown boots for ten dollars. I volunteered an additional dollar to further cement our friendship.

According to the radio, the Japanese have thus far given no definitive answer to the question of a neutral zone for noncombatants. I have decided to telegraph Hitler and Kriebel<sup>14</sup> via the German general consulate in Shanghai and Lahrmann, the national group leader there. I managed to get off the following telegram today:



*German Consulate General Shanghai*

I respectfully ask National Group Leader Lahrmann to send on the following telegram stop

First to the Führer stop

Undersigned Deputy Group Leader Nanking, chairman of local International Committee, asks his Führer kindly to intercede with the Japanese government to grant permission for creation of a neutral zone for noncombatants, since imminent battle for Nanking otherwise endangers the lives of over two hundred thousand people stop

With German greetings Rabe Siemens agent in Nanking stop

Second to General Consul Kriebel stop

Urgently request support of my petition to the Führer for his intercession with the Japanese government concerning creation of a neutral zone for noncombatants, since dreadful bloodbath otherwise inevitable in imminent battle for Nanking stop Heil Hitler!

Rabe Siemens representative and Chairman of International Committee in Nanking stop.

Since I am not sure if Herr Lahrmann may not perhaps be alarmed at the high cost of these telegrams I have asked that the cost be advanced by Siemens China Co. Shanghai against my account.

All bus traffic has been suspended today. All buses, I'm told, have been sent to Hankow. It will probably be somewhat quieter in the streets, although over 200,000 Chinese—noncombatants—are still in the city. By God, I hope Hitler helps us so that we can set up the neutral zone at last.

In answer to my question, Dr. Han Liwu has just told me that we need not worry about the Chinese government's approval for setting up a neutral zone: The generalissimo has personally given his consent.

We have now found a foreign director for our committee, Mr. Fitch of the YMCA, Nanking. All we're waiting for now is Japanese consent.

A telegram for me from the company's main Shanghai office has arrived at the German embassy; it reads:

For Siemens. Local Siemens branch advises: You are free to leave Nanking—Avoid personal danger—Suggest move to Hankow—Telegraph your intentions.

I told the embassy to reply:

For Siemens Shanghai from Rabe stop Thank you for your telegram of 25 November—have decided to remain in Nanking—have accepted chairmanship of International Committee for creation of neutral zone to protect over two hundred thousand noncombatants.

Mr. Han has managed to fetch the 100 canisters of gasoline from the I-Ho-Tung Brick Works, as well as 20 sacks of flour. They are working to build a new dugout in the garden. I'll have to find somewhere else to store the gasoline. One hundred canisters in the garden seems somewhat too risky even to me.

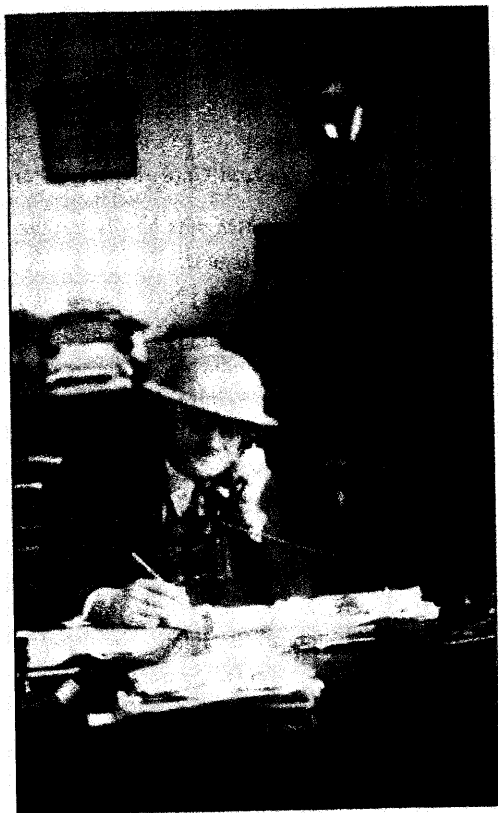
Dr. Smythe telephones that a Tokyo newspaper has suggested that a neutral zone in Nanking would make it more difficult to take the city, and/or delay its being taken. . . . What are we to do if the plan doesn't work. The danger is truly great. My hope is Hitler.

Rosen is very concerned that if the city is bombarded we shall all still be able to get away in time on the *Hulk*, a Jardines lines steamer that, if need be, the Hirschbergs plan to flee with as well. That's all very reasonable of course, but it's so discouraging when all you think or hear about is getting out. The Chinese around me are so calm and composed. To them the main thing is that the master doesn't cut and run, everything else will take care of itself. And I can't rid myself of the feeling that I simply and absolutely must hold out. Except, I admit, I would indeed like to be somewhere a little safer than this house.

Perhaps I can find another place to live. Dr. Rosen has been offered the house of Minister Chang Chun, which has a marvelous shelter. I need to go over and have a look at the fortress, and then the big question will be: Move or not? I can't take along all the people that have gathered here around me. But I can't be in two houses at once, either, and ultimately it's my poor presence that counts.

#### 27 NOVEMBER

Tsao the cook is still sick. He had a prescription for Jacopral, but couldn't find any, since the pharmacists have all scattered. Today, five days later, it suddenly occurs to people to tell me. For now, I've given him some from my own small supply. Moreover, the man's been sleeping in an unheated room for a week (just to save money, I'm sure). So I lend him a kerosene stove. When I ask why he hasn't bought a coal-burning stove, he replies: There are no more stovepipes to be had, the tinsmiths have all closed shop.



A great lover of jokes,  
John Rabe sits at his desk with  
helmet and field glasses.

I think that's a white lie, but I'll have to check on it. Our good Tsao has not made himself very popular with the rest of the staff—which is why they let him get into this state and that, of course, can't be permitted.

It's touching how Dr. Rosen worries about me. Of all the Germans who have stayed behind, I am his biggest problem child. He is quite rightly afraid that I'll remain here and not want to flee with him and the other Germans and English, etc. on board the *Hulk*. He personally handed me a pass that was issued by Prideaux-Brune, the English consul, and that permits me to board the *Hulk*, which is to be tugged upstream shortly. He has also arranged to pass the house of ex-minister Chang Chun on to me, just in case—no matter whether I can use it or not. In short—he does everything he possibly can! We had a long conversation yesterday afternoon, that is to say, he told me about his life. His grandfather<sup>15</sup> was a friend of Beethoven's. He showed me a letter Beethoven wrote his grandfather. His family has

been in diplomatic service for almost a hundred years. His father was once foreign minister, but he will probably stay a legation secretary all his life—a Jewish grandmother in his family has ruined his career. A tragic fate!

#### *From Georg Rosen's Personal File*

*Because of his fate, which was hardly unique in those days, Georg Rosen deserves a more detailed account:*

*Georg Rosen, Dr. jur., was born in Teheran in 1895. His father and his grandfather Rosen had been important Orientalists, both having also worked for the Foreign Service, the grandfather in the service of Prussia, the North German Confederation, and the Empire. His father, Friedrich Rosen, was foreign minister from May to October 1921.*

*Both of Georg Rosen's grandfathers had married daughters of the pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles, one of Beethoven's pupils and confidants late in life.*

*"Beethoven's last letter," Georg Rosen wrote in an account of his life, "was to him, as were the letters of those who were at Beethoven's bedside as he lay dying. Everything posterity knows about Beethoven's final hours comes from a letter he wrote to my great grandfather (Ignaz Moscheles), who was living in London at the time."*

*Georg Rosen entered the foreign service in 1921. After Hitler assumed power, he was considered "related to Jews." For the moment, however, he was allowed to remain in service, since in 1917 he had voluntarily left Portugal to serve in the war for Germany and had fought on the western front; he was never promoted, however, and was left in entry-level positions until he resigned.*

*From 1933 to 1938, he was legation secretary at the embassy, first in Peking, then, after it moved, in Nanking in 1936 and finally Hankow in 1937. Rosen was temporarily charged with consular duties. But in 1938 he was placed on the inactive list; because of his wartime service in 1917-18, however, he was not released from the civil service, so that he continued to receive moneys owed him. With the official approval of the Foreign Ministry, he moved to London in 1938. At the start of the war, he was first detained there, but in 1940 was able to move to the United States, where he taught at various universities during the war. His wife and children, whom he had left behind in Germany, lived from his pension; when Frau Rosen was killed in an air raid, the money was then transferred to the children's guardian. Apparently the Foreign Ministry used every legal means available to ease his circumstances.*

*He returned at the end of the war and entered the Foreign Service for the Federal Republic of Germany; he first became secretary of the embassy in London and was then ambassador to Uruguay until his retirement in 1960. He died one year later.*

*Georg Rosen was a German nationalist with right-wing views. He often spoke his mind candidly, could be touchy, and also short-tempered on occasion; he did not believe in compromise. He approached the Japanese in Nanking with head held high and, in contrast to the more diplomatic John Rabe, was sometimes very blunt as well. He was greatly hurt by the discrimination he suffered under Hitler's race laws and shared his sorrow with Rabe.*

*"A tragic fate," John Rabe wrote. On the day when he spoke to Rabe, 27 November 1937, did Rosen know that only three days before a telegram had been signed by the director of personnel at the Foreign Ministry and sent to the embassy in Hankow? It read:*

### Telegram

(In secret code)

For the ambassador only.

Please tactfully inform Rosen that there can be no question of his returning after vacation and that due to his non-Aryan ancestry he will be placed on the inactive list.

PRÜFER

27 NOVEMBER, EVENING

A meeting at 69 Peking Road at 6 p.m., General Tang, the city commandant, is present and gives a speech. He points out that some disorder may arise among his troops during the impending battle to defend the city. To the extent that it is within his power he will provide protection to all foreigners. The gates of the city are closed, but until the very last moment we foreigners will have the chance to pass through them.

Dr. Rosen, Prideaux-Brune, the British consul, and Atchinson, secretary of the American embassy, are with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek this afternoon. They want to hear the unvarnished truth about plans to defend the city. A very good idea!

Since our International Committee has not yet received an answer from any Japanese officials, another telegraph message was sent today to the

Japanese ambassador in Shanghai by way of the American embassy. There is, of course, no telling whether my telegrams to Hitler and Kriebel did any good. But they should be in Berlin by now I think.

We have scheduled a meeting of the International Committee for 2 p.m. tomorrow. Even if we do not receive any answer from the Japanese, we must make some arrangements, at least draw up plans for insuring the general safety.

#### 28 NOVEMBER

Dr. Rosen shared with me the following results of yesterday's conference with the generalissimo:

Question: "Will the defense be limited to areas outside the city or will the battle continue inside the city walls?" Answer: "We are prepared for both."

Another question: "Who will be responsible for order if worst comes to worst, that is who will remain behind as the last administrative official in the city and see to it that the power of the police is used to prevent mob violence?" To which the marshal, or maybe General Tang, replied: "In such a case the Japanese will have to establish order."

In other words: No administrative official will remain here. No one is going to sacrifice himself for the welfare of hundreds of thousands of inhabitants! What a prospect! Good God, if only Hitler would help! The misery that a full-fledged bombardment will bring upon this city is unimaginable.

I also hear from Dr. Rosen that the ambassador is said to have asked from Hankow who the German was that telegraphed the Führer. In the meantime, Dr. Trautmann has likewise received the letter Dr. Rosen wrote him. . . . No mention of the neutral zone on the radio at noon.

Sperling picks me up for the 3 o'clock meeting of the committee at Dr. Smythe's, at which Mr. Fitch is officially named the director and Dr. Han Liwu the Chinese codirector. We agree to take no further steps until we receive official word from the Japanese.

Reverend Mills suggests we attempt as soon as possible to inform the highest Chinese dignitaries—the generalissimo and General Tang—that from a military point of view any defense of Nanking is absurd, and that we ought to consider whether it wouldn't be better to surrender the city peacefully. Dr. Han Liwu replies that this is not the appropriate moment

for such an action. We should wait until we have received a positive answer from Japanese officials that a Safety Zone is possible.

We adjourn at 4:30 without having accomplished much, precisely because things are still up in the air. At 6 o'clock, a meeting at the British Cultural Association. Postal Commissioner Ritchie informs us that the post office is officially closed. You can still put letters in the mailbox, which will occasionally be emptied. Mr. Ritchie appears a little nervous. His entire vast staff, which has functioned well up till now, is drifting away.

There is talk that the Japanese are about 40 miles from Wuhu and could be here in three days. Something fishy about that; I'd say it's not possible.

At the meeting we are also given large handbills printed in Chinese that we're to paste on the front door so that we won't be bothered by Chinese soldiers. Soldiers are said to have paid a visit to the house of a German military advisor in the city today. But the problem was quickly resolved.

I had my nameplate and the German flag put up at my new house at Ninhai Lu 5 today. But the palace will be only my token residence. They're now hard at work building the third dugout in my garden.

The second one had to be abandoned because the excavation pit was completely flooded. Wang Kopang, the chief of police, has repeatedly declared that 200,000 Chinese are still living in the city. In response to my question whether he'll be remaining in the city himself, he replied as expected: As long as I can. Which means, he'll decamp!

#### 29 NOVEMBER

Sperling calls to tell me that Wang Kopang has stepped down and that a new man has been named in his place. Dr. Smythe reports that the new man will stay, that he and his police force won't run away. A bit of good news at last. A meeting of the committee at 4 o'clock. We have to make some progress, even if the Japanese don't recognize the neutral zone.

Dr. Rosen calls to say that according to a report from Tokyo the Japanese are still considering whether or not to accept our proposal of a neutral zone.

I have the feeling that perhaps some action has already been taken by Germany in our favor, but that speeches like those of General Tang (saying Nanking must be defended no matter what) only damage our cause. He's a general, of course, and so has to make warlike noises; but it's not appropriate in the present case, especially since the city cannot be effec-

tively defended. Sitting in this crook in the Yangtze is like sitting in a mousetrap.

Straightening things up, I chance on a picture of the Führer, with the following poem by Baldur von Schirach, head of the Reich Youth Organization:

Our Führer's greatness does not simply lie  
in leading us as hero of each heart,  
but in himself: firm will and steady eye  
are rooted deep within our world, they start  
inside a soul that reaches to the sky.  
And is a man, the same as you and I.

That gave me courage again. I continue to hope that Hitler will help us. A *man of firm will and steady eye—the same as you and I*—has deep sympathy not only for the distress of his own people, but for the anguish of the Chinese as well. There is not a German, or any other foreigner here, who is not convinced that a single word from Hitler, and only from him, would have the greatest possible effect on the Japanese in helping establish our proposed neutral zone, and he will speak that word!

At 6 o'clock the regular meeting at the British Cultural Club. The mayor formally announces the formation of the International Committee. I report that we have the moral support of all embassies, that with the assistance of the American embassy we have already sent two telegrams to the Japanese ambassador in Shanghai, and that I personally have telegraphed both Hitler and Kriebel. I add that no direct answer from Hitler is to be expected, since these matters of high diplomacy are handled in other ways. I state, however, that I am firmly convinced that the Führer will not refuse to help. I ask those gathered to be patient for another day or two, since we ought not yet abandon hope that the Japanese officials will give their permission.

The generalissimo has placed 100,000 dollars at the committee's disposal. I nominate Kröger as treasurer. The others concur and with no hesitation he accepts the job. I've asked Kröger to move into my new house (Ninhai Lu 5), and he has agreed.

Despite a German flag, my truck has been taken over by soldiers guarding the Interior Ministry. I call up Colonel Lung, General Tang's deputy, and get my truck back at eleven p.m.



30 NOVEMBER

I've ordered Mr. Han to move his family in with me. He's living in a few rooms at the school where he had a kitchen and bathroom installed. His friend Sung, the proprietor of the I-Ho-Tung Brick Works and my benefactor, is moving in with me as well. The new dugout is not yet finished. We're working at top speed. In addition to a wall of loose bricks—we have no cement—supported by wooden boards on both sides, we've also used steel plates for the dugout. I don't know who commandeered them. They were suddenly just there, like so many other things. My garden is a sight to behold. I sent the truck to fetch another large water tank because I'm afraid water from the city waterworks will be cut off; we also have a supply of candles. And our coal reserves will last about a month.



Han Hsianglin, John Rabe's able and devoted assistant at Siemens

Last night I sterilized the reserve instruments for my insulin injections. I always carry with me one set of instruments and three vials of insulin. Chang's wife is still in the hospital, the cook as well, but he's doing a little better. He swallows his Jacopral and thinks it helps because it tastes so awful.

Dr. Brown, who is a physician, and a French monk have arrived from Wuhu. They want to set up a neutral zone in Wuhu as well and are seeking our advice. When we're pretty much out of good ideas ourselves.

I am trying to obtain more precise data about the number of inhabitants left behind. There is now a rumor that the man who wanted to provide me "very precise" data, Mr. Wang Kopang—the ex-chief of police who resigned because he was not a military man and felt unequal to the task—has been arrested.

Dr. Smythe calls to tell me that we have 60,000 sacks of rice in the city and another 34,000 sacks in Hsiakwan. That may well be enough. What we don't have are mats for our temporary housing—thatched huts. The populace must be sheltered from the cold somehow.

Here is an overview of the problems that the International Committee has to tackle:

1. Finances
2. Police
  - Control of entrances
  - Boundaries
  - Number and location
3. Soldiers and Military elements
  - Removal orders and inspection
  - Anticipation of flight
  - Wounded
4. Food
  - Quantity
  - Location and distribution
5. Transportation
6. Housing
  - Survey
  - Use and management of buildings
    - (a) public
    - (b) institutional
    - (c) vacant residential
  - Mat sheds

- 7. Utilities
  - Water
  - Light
  - Telephone
- 8. Sanitation and Health
  - Extra latrines: disposal
  - Garbage and refuse collection
  - Medical

The following is a list of members of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone: \*

NAME	NATIONALITY	ADDRESS
John Rabe, Chairman	German	Siemens China Co.
Lewis S. C. Smythe, Secretary	American	University of Nanking
P. H. Munro-Faure	British	Asiatic Petroleum Co.
Rev. John Magee	American	American Church Mission
<i>P. R. Shields</i>	<i>British</i>	<i>International Export Co.</i>
<i>J. M. Hansen</i>	<i>Danish</i>	<i>Texaco</i>
<i>G. Schultze-Pantin</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Shingming Trading Co.</i>
<i>Iver Mackay</i>	<i>British</i>	<i>Butterfield &amp; Swire</i>
<i>J. V. Pickering</i>	<i>American</i>	<i>Standard Oil Co.</i>
Eduard Sperling	German	Shanghai Insurance
Dr. M. S. Bates	American	University of Nanking
Rev. W. P. Mills	American	Presbyterian Mission
<i>J. Lean</i>	<i>British</i>	<i>Asiatic Petroleum Co.</i>
Dr. C. S. Trimmer	American	University of Nanking
Christian Kröger	German	Carlowitz of Nanking
George Fitch	American	YMCA

The gentlemen whose names are in italics left Nanking before the siege.

I DECEMBER

At 9:30 this morning I drive with Kröger and Sperling to the Ping Tsan Hsian, where the committee has gathered. We assign various tasks and put together a list of the people involved. Mayor Ma appears with his staff at the meeting and promises us 30,000 sacks of rice and 10,000 sacks of flour. Unfortunately we have no trucks for delivering these rations to the refugee zone. We can sell the rice and flour, but we have to fix the price. We will set up soup kitchens.

Dugout No. 3 in our garden is finished, with iron plating for a roof and brickwork exits. This afternoon I receive 20,000 dollars from Garrison



John Rabe's house in Nanking



The office or "headquarters" of the International Safety Zone Committee in Nanking, Ninhai Lu 5, formerly the home of Minister Chang Chun, who made the house available to the German embassy, which then turned it over to John Rabe for his committee. The Chinese people in front are waiting for food or small sums of money distributed to the poor.



Members of the International Safety Zone Committee

Headquarters as the first payment of the generalissimo's promised 100,000-dollar donation. The answer to my question about when I can expect the rest: shrugs.

Messrs. Fitch, Kröger, Dr. Smythe, Wang from the YMCA, and Riggs visit me in my new house at Ninhai Lu 5, where we want to open Committee Headquarters tomorrow. Dr. Smythe is so taken by the beauty of the house and its splendid furnishings, plus a shelter valued at 17,500 dollars, that he says that in the future he plans to call me simply Mr. John H. D. Rabe-Rockefeller.

6 p.m. committee meeting. We will bear a tremendous responsibility if we first order the remaining populace of Nanking into the neutral zone and then later are turned down flat by the Japanese. A vote is taken, revealing that the majority of the members are in favor of going forward. The text of the announcement for people to move into the zone must be very carefully worded. We first want to ask the Chinese news agencies how many inhabitants are still left, meaning, we want to measure the barometric pressure of the Chinese mood.

Dr. Rosen has received news via the Americans that National Group

Leader and Party-Comrade Lahrmann did forward my telegrams to Hitler and Kriebel. Thank God! I'm certain now that help will come. The Führer won't leave me in the lurch.

Dr. Rosen asks the Germans to meet and discuss when people will have to board the *Hulk*. Herr Kröger, Herr Sperling, young Hirschberg, and Hatz, an Austrian engineer, all want to remain here to help me. Those under consideration for the *Hulk* include: Frau Hirschberg and daughter, who are already on board; plus Dr. Rosen, Hürter, and Scharffenberg, all three from the embassy; two sales clerks, Fräulein Neumann and a Russian woman whose name I don't know; and the bookkeeper at Café Kiessling.

Dr. Hirschberg has taken the ailing Chang Chun to Hankow, after I gave him some of my insulin supply. Dr. Hirschberg wants to return by airplane, he says, because we are in urgent need of doctors. I name (our Siemens assistant) Han, along with his friend Sung from the I-Ho-Tung Brick Works, to be food commissioner. Han simply beams: He's never held such a high-ranking job in his whole life.

## 2 DECEMBER

Through the good offices of Pater Jacquinot<sup>16</sup> we have received the following telegram (in translation) from the Japanese officials:

### *Telegram to Embassy<sup>17</sup> Nanking, 1 December 1937*

Your November 30th.

Following for Nanking Safety Zone Committee:

Japanese authorities have duly noted request for safety zone but regret cannot grant it. In the event of Chinese forces misbehavior towards civilians and or property cannot assume responsibility, but they themselves will endeavor to respect the district as far as consistent with military necessity.

JACQUINOT

According to radio reports, London regards this reply as a flat-out refusal. We are of a different opinion here. The answer is cleverly couched in diplomatic terms, leaving a backdoor open, but is generally favorable. We certainly do not expect the Japanese to assume responsibility for "misbehavior by Chinese forces." The telegram's last sentence: "The latter will attempt to respect the district . . . etc." is very satisfactory.

The following reply was telegraphed via the American embassy:

Please transmit to Father Jacquinot Shanghai following message from International Committee for Nanking Safety Zone: Cordial thanks for your services. Committee appreciates Japanese assurance of endeavor to respect the district as far as consistent with military necessity. We have secured full agreement from Chinese military authorities for exact compliance with original proposal. Committee is therefore proceeding with work of organization and administration in safety zone and informs you refugees already entering. At proper time and after inspection Committee will formally notify both Chinese and Japanese authorities that Zone is in operation.

Committee would ask you kindly to confer again with Japanese authorities pointing out that direct assurances from them to us would go still further to lessen the anxieties of distressed civilians, and respectfully requesting them to give us early notification to that effect.

JOHN RABE, Chairman

The return from Hankow of the German ambassador, Dr. Trautmann, and Dr. Lautenschlager, the secretary of the legation,<sup>18</sup> is cause for great surprise. When asked, Dr. Rosen explains that it has nothing to do with the work of the committee. In confidence, Dr. Rosen informs me that the ambassador did not fully agree with my telegrams to the Führer and Kriebel: In his opinion they were unnecessary! I will go see Dr. Trautmann tomorrow, since I have no time today. I assume his return has something to do with Germany's attempt to be a mediator.

We're having great difficulty finding vehicles to transport the rice and flour placed at our disposal, some of which is stored outside the Safety Zone without anyone guarding it. We're told that large quantities have already been removed by military authorities. Allegedly only 15,000 sacks of rice are still left of the 30,000 given us.

Mayor Ma denies that the police have been instructed to leave the city with the military, as Dr. Rosen informed me after having overheard some remarks by the embassy police. At 8 p.m. a farewell dinner for Dr. Han Liwu. He is leaving for Hankow this evening with 14,000 crates of curios. He has to leave 1,000 crates behind because of insufficient cargo space. We are very sorry to see him go, for he is an extraordinarily competent man and a great help to us.

3 DECEMBER

Dr. Rosen called on me to extend greetings from Dr. Trautmann, who returned to Hankow yesterday evening on the same customs cruiser that brought him here. The ambassador has in fact been to see the generalissimo with peace proposals, as Dr. Rosen admits after some hesitation. Understandably enough, I cannot get any details of these proposals out of Rosen, and won't attempt to do so again. It suffices for me to know that such steps have indeed been taken. May they lead to good results! Dr. Rosen shows me another telegram that is actually intended for the ambassador, and reads as follows:

Diplogerma Nanking

from Hankow 2.12.—to Nanking 3.12.37

Tokyo wires 30. 11. 37: To whatever extent possible, Japanese wish to spare the city, national government, lives, property, foreigners, as well as a peaceful Chinese populace. Japan hopes the Chinese government will act on the advice of the Great Powers and spare its capital the horrors of war. For military reasons a special Safety Zone for Nanking or its fortified area cannot be granted. The Japanese will issue an official explanation in this regard.

SAUKEN

Dr. Rosen has learned that no other embassies here received telegrams with similar contents. It is up to the committee to make use of this information without betraying who sent it. Rosen recommends that we approach Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

Although General Tang, who is in charge of defending the city, promised us that all military personnel and installations would be kept out of the refugee zone, we now learn that three new trenches and/or foundations for anti-aircraft batteries are being dug in the Zone. I inform General Tang's emissaries that I will resign my office and disband the International Committee if work is not stopped at once. Written promises to respect my wishes are provided, but I am informed that carrying them out may take some time.



## 4 DECEMBER

Soldiers continue to build new trenches and install military telephones inside the Safety Zone. Air raids lasting for hours have begun again. My friend Kröger had business at the airport and was almost killed when several bombs landed not a hundred yards from him.

The refugees have slowly begun to move into the Safety Zone. One small newspaper has repeatedly told the Chinese not to move into the "foreigners" refugee zone. These extortionists write that it's the duty of every Chinese to face the dangers that a bombardment of the city may bring with it.

## 5 DECEMBER

By 8 a.m. there's already trouble to disturb a lovely bright Sunday. My driver has left me in the lurch; first he has to be fetched, is given a dreadful dressing-down, answers back, is fired, apologizes, and is rehired. I believe this is the twenty-fifth time I've thrown him out and then rehired him!



This pass permitted John Rabe to drive his car through the city.

When I'm finally sitting in the car, the alarm sounds and bombs start dropping, but I have a pass that lets me drive around even after the second alarm. Besides which, there's so much to do that you can hardly worry about bombs. That sounds very heroic, but luckily the bombs kept landing somewhere else.

With the help of the American embassy we have finally received an official answer from Tokyo. The answer is somewhat more detailed, but is not all that much different from the reply wired to us several days ago by Pater Jacquinot, which is to say the Japanese refuse our proposal once again, but promise to respect the Zone if possible.

Together with Dr. Bates and Sperling I pay a call on General Tang, who is in charge of the city's defense, in order to get his consent to have all military personnel and establishments removed from the Zone at once. Imagine our amazement when General Tang tells us that this is quite impossible, that at best it will be another two weeks before the military can vacate the Zone. A nasty blow. It means that the Japanese condition that no Chinese soldiers are to be allowed in the Zone will not be fulfilled. For now at least we cannot even think of claiming to have a "Safety Zone," at most it's a "refugee zone." The matter is discussed at a long committee meeting and a text prepared for release to the press, because if we don't want to see our work destroyed, we dare not let the press learn the whole truth yet. . . .

Meanwhile one bomb after another is falling. When it all gets too noisy, we pull our chairs away from the window. The city gates have been walled up; of the three gates only one half-panel is still open.

We are feverishly trying to get rice and flour into the Zone. Flags marking its borders are being prepared, as well as wall posters intended to explain the Zone to those poor people outside, whose safety we unfortunately cannot guarantee.

Dr. Rosen curses the Chinese military roundly for, as he describes it, having slunk into our Zone, because it's safer next to all those vacant houses with German flags than it is outside the Zone. I can't swear that it's true. But the fact is that General Tang himself received us today in a house inside the refugee zone.