

## CHAPTER 5

---

# CHRISTMAS

23 DECEMBER

YESTERDAY EVENING Police Chief Takadama paid me a visit and asked for a list of all damage or loss of property suffered by foreigners here. By today noon, then, a list has to be prepared of all the buildings that are or were occupied by foreigners. Only national embassies can just rattle off that sort of thing. For our committee, it's not an easy job. But we do it. I sit down with Kröger, Sperling, and Hatz, we divide up the various districts and arrive with the list right on time. Going by it, a total of 38 German buildings have been looted and one (Hempel's Hotel) burned down. The Americans have a much longer list of losses. There are about 158 American buildings looted in all.

While I'm waiting for the list to be put in final form, Chang comes running in and tells me that a Japanese soldier has broken in at home, has torn my office apart, and is doing his damndest to crack my safe, in which there are about 23,000 dollars. Kröger and I race home in the car. The intruder had just absconded. He'd been unable to open the safe by himself.

We sit down for *tiffin*,<sup>25</sup> and here come three more soldiers over the wall, whom we chase back with some choice words. My door is simply no longer open to this criminal pack. Kröger says that he is prepared to house-sit for me this afternoon. Shortly before I drive back to headquarters, six more Japanese bandits scale the wall. These fellows have to scam right back over it as well. In toto, I've probably experienced close to 20 such incursions by now.

This afternoon I inform the chief of police that I am going to keep this pest out of my house no matter what and that I will defend the honor of the German flag even if it means risking my life. This does not appear to move him. A shrug, and the problem has been dealt with as far as he is concerned. Unfortunately there are not enough police troops available, he says to his regret, to keep these bad soldiers in line.

I'm driving home at 6 o'clock this evening and discover a whole row of houses going up in flames on this side of the bridge railing on Chung Shan Lu. Luckily the wind is blowing in our favor, the rain of sparks is drifting north. At the same time another building behind the Shanghai Com-Sav Bank bursts into flames. It is no longer a secret that we are dealing here with systematic arson. The four houses next to the bridge railing are inside our Safety Zone.

My refugees stand tightly pressed together in the rain and mutely watch the lovely horrible inferno. If these flames were to reach our house, these poor people would have no idea where to go. I am their last hope.

Chang has decorated four little kerosene lamps, along with the rest of the candles—our entire lighting system at the moment—with evergreens. He also unpacked the red Advent star and tied red silk ribbons to the candles. Tomorrow is 24 December, Christmas Eve, Gretel's birthday.

My neighbor, the cobbler, has resoled my old boots for Christmas; he also made a leather case for my field glasses. I gave him 10 dollars, but he just pressed the money back into my hand, not saying a word. Chang says that the man could not possibly take money from me; he is far too much in my debt as it is, the poor fellow!

The letter that Herr Sindberg brought today from Hsi Sha Shan (Sindberg drives back and forth with no problem between Nanking and the Kiangnan Cement Works, a good 1½ hours away) also included a petition to the Japanese authorities from 17,000 Chinese refugees in Hsi Sha Shan asking to be mercifully protected from the excesses of the Japanese soldiers, who are causing the same havoc there as here in Nanking.



A young boy bayoneted to death



This mother brought her baby, with bayonet wounds and burns, to the hospital for help.



These photographs of burn victims were taken by hospital staff to document the atrocities.



24 DECEMBER

This morning I carefully packed up the red Advent star that we lighted yesterday evening and gave it as a Christmas present, along with a Siemens calendar notebook, to the ladies at Kulou Hospital. Dr. Wilson used the opportunity to show me a few of his patients. The woman who was admitted because of a miscarriage and had the bayonet cuts all over her face is doing fairly well. A sampan owner who was shot in the jaw and burned over most of his body when someone poured gasoline over him and then set him on fire managed to speak a few words, but he will probably die in the course of the day. Almost two-thirds of his skin is burnt. I also went down to the morgue in the basement and had them uncover the bodies that were delivered last night. Among them, a civilian with his eyes burned out and his head totally burned, who had likewise had gasoline poured over him by Japanese soldiers. The body of a little boy, maybe seven years old, had four bayonet wounds in it, one in the belly about as long as your finger. He died two days after being admitted to the hospital without ever once uttering a sound of pain.

I have had to look at so many corpses over the last few weeks that I can keep my nerves in check even when viewing these horrible cases. It really doesn't leave you in a "Christmas" mood; but I wanted to see these atrocities with my own eyes, so that I can speak as an eyewitness later. A man cannot be silent about this kind of cruelty!

While I was at the hospital, Fitch kept watch for me. For now, I cannot leave my house unguarded without running the risk that marauding soldiers will break into it. It was my firm belief that about 350 to 400 refugees had found asylum with me. After an exact head count by Mr. Han, it now turns out that a total of 602 people are camping in my garden (with its 5,500 square feet), my office, etc.: 302 males and 300 females, including 126 children under ten years of age. One child is only two months old. Not included in this census are 14 servants and employees of the firm plus their families, so that the total number probably comes to about 650.

Chang is beaming: His wife was released from the hospital this morning; we've just picked her up in the car. She'll be sleeping from now on in the attic with her children; there's no other place left in the house for them.

Everyone's competing to make this a happy Christmas for me. It's really touching! Chang bought some Christmas roses and has decorated the house with them. He even managed to find a little fir tree that he wants to

decorate and he just came in grinning with joy and carrying six very long candles that he rounded up for me somewhere. Everybody likes me suddenly. And it used to be, or so I thought, that no one wanted to have much to do with me, or might I have been wrong there? How strange, my dear Dora, my dear children and grandchildren! I know you're all praying for me today. I feel as if I'm surrounded by loving thoughts. That does a man boundless good after all that I've had to go through these last two weeks. Believe me, I have a prayer in my heart for all of you as well. The terrible crisis that has overtaken us all here has restored our childlike faith. Only a God can protect me from these hordes whose deadly games include rape, murder, and arson.

We've just had news that new troops will be arriving today who will restore the order we've been longing for. From now on, all crimes are to be severely punished at once. Let's hope so! By God it's time there was a turn for the better. We're very near the end of our tether.

I'll close today's entry with this prayer in my heart: May a gracious God keep all of you from ever again having to face a crisis like the one in which we now find ourselves. I do not regret having stayed on here, for my presence has saved many lives, but all the same, my suffering is indescribable.

*Letter from the International Committee  
to the Japanese Embassy*

Nanking, December 25th, 1937.

To the Officers of the Imperial Japanese Embassy, Nanking.

This morning about 10:00, Mr. Riggs found several Japanese soldiers in the house at No. 29 Hankow Road and heard a woman cry. The woman, who was about 25-30 years old, tapped herself and motioned for Mr. Riggs to come. One soldier had her in tow. Other soldiers were in the house. She grabbed Riggs's arm. The other soldiers came out of the house and all of them went on and left the woman with Mr. Riggs. The woman had been out buying things and the soldiers took her. Her husband was taken four days ago and had not returned. She wanted Mr. Riggs to escort her back to the Refugee Camp at the Military College on Hankow Road. So Mr. Riggs escorted her east on Hankow Road and almost to the University Gardens, there they met an inspection officer with two soldiers and an interpreter. The officer grabbed Mr. Riggs hands out of his pockets and grabbed his armband, which had been issued him by the Japanese Embassy. He swatted Mr. Riggs hands when he tried to put them back in his pocket. As near as he could tell, the officer asked Mr.

Riggs who he was, but neither could understand the other. He then hit Mr. Riggs on the chest hard. Mr. Riggs asked him what he meant and that made the officer angry. The officer motioned for his passport but Mr. Riggs did not have it with him. He wanted to know what Riggs was doing. Mr. Riggs told him he was taking this woman home. So the officer hit Riggs again. Mr. Riggs looked to see what armband the officer was wearing and the officer slapped Mr. Riggs in the face hard. The officer then pointed to the ground and grabbed Mr. Riggs' hat so Mr. Riggs thought the officer wanted him to kowtow to him. But Mr. Riggs would not. So the officer gave Mr. Riggs another slap in the face. Then the interpreter explained that the officer wanted a card. Mr. Riggs explained he was taking the woman home because she was afraid. The officer gave an order to the soldiers and they came to either side of Mr. Riggs with guns at attention. Then the interpreter explained that the officer wanted Mr. Riggs to bow to the officer. Mr. Riggs refused because he was an American. The officer finally told Mr. Riggs to go home. Meanwhile, the Chinese woman had been so frightened when she saw Mr. Riggs so treated, she ran off down Hankow Road.

Mr. Riggs explained that he did not touch the officer and simply had his hands in his pockets (of his overcoat) walking down the road, bothering no one. The woman was walking a short distance ahead of him.

We hope that there will speedily be such a restitution of order and discipline among the soldiers that foreign nationals going peacefully about the streets need no longer fear being molested.

Most respectfully yours,  
LEWIS S. C. SMYTHE

25 DECEMBER

While I was writing in my diary yesterday afternoon, our number-one boy Chang and several of his Chinese friends secretly decorated the Christmas tree. Chang has often helped do it before. The tree was a faithful copy *en miniature* of our Christmas trees in years past. They even set up the Nativity scene we always enjoyed so much, with the Holy Family and all the animals, higgledy-piggledy, tame or wild side by side, and then when the middle door to the dining room opened and the glow from our few wretched candles filled the room, I really did feel some trace of a Christmas mood come over me after all.

Kröger and Sperling came to see the tree, the only one in all Nanking. Kröger brought along a bottle of white wine that he had "rescued" from the wreckage of the Scharffenberg house. Unfortunately half of it had

spilled. After first toasting the health of our dear ones at home, we silently drank a glass.

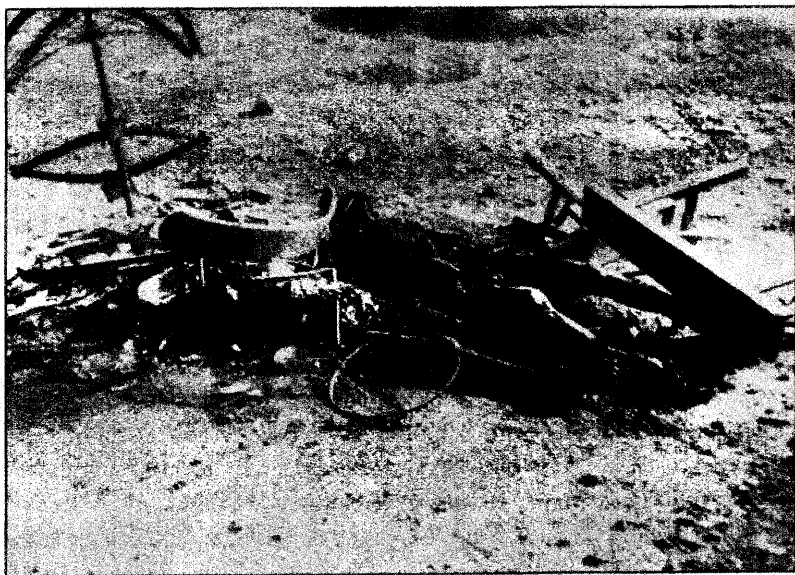
Then Kröger and Sperling went off to Ping Tsiang Hsian, the residence of some Americans who had invited us for "Xmas dinner." I didn't join them, because I couldn't leave my 602 refugees unguarded. We agreed, however, that some gentlemen of the committee would relieve me from duty during the course of the evening, so that I could spend a quarter of an hour or so together with my American companions in adversity. No sooner had Kröger and Sperling left than I was paid a visit by Mr. Fukui, who is currently top man at the Japanese embassy, to whose staff members I had sent several Siemens calendar notebooks for Christmas. Accompanied by Police Chief Takadama, he gave me a box of Havana cigars in return. A pity I don't smoke. Tobacco products have now become rarities: A tin of cigarettes, that used to cost 85 cents, is not to be had for under \$6 now. Both Japanese gentlemen, with whom I shared some wine in celebration of the day, were amazed that I had a Christmas tree and flowers. Since the Japanese are great flower lovers, I shared some of mine with them, which appeared to delight them greatly. I hope to get on something like friendly terms with these gentlemen, in whose hands power now lies, since that may help mitigate the circumstances of my wards.

Once the Japanese departed, we retired to the dining room with its festive candlelight and sat down to Christmas dinner: corned beef and cabbage, which tasted like the finest roast.

Mr. Han came over with his family and received an Advent wreath with four candles as a present, while Mrs. Han and the children were each allowed to pick an ornament from the tree: a colorful ball, an elephant, a little Santa Claus. And with that my bag of gifts was empty; but I had not reckoned with Boy Chang, who now arrived with the biggest surprise of all: four gingerbread hearts! I couldn't believe my eyes; four confectionery hearts that Mutti had decorated with a red ribbon and to which Chang had added a fresh sprig of fir. After having been faithfully kept in storage by the servants for one whole year, they were now immediately and enthusiastically devoured by me and my guests. That is—why should I deny it—a piece got stuck in my throat. It wasn't the cake, which was excellent. It must have been something wrong with my throat.

Mutti, everyone's loving thoughts were of you. One person's eyes were even a little red. Then came Mr. Mills to take over guard duty for me. I drove to the Americans in the black of night, passing many of the corpses that have been lying in our streets unburied for twelve days now.





Corpses of Chinese were left for weeks in the streets.

The Americans were sitting together quiet and pensive. They didn't have a tree; a couple of red banners beside the fireplace were the only sign that the servants had wanted to give their employers some small joy. We spoke about the urgent problem of registering the refugees, about which we are all very worried.

The Japanese have decreed that every refugee must be registered. This has to be completed within the next ten days. No easy matter, what with 200,000 people.

And we're already hearing complaints. A good number of healthy robust civilians have already been "selected," meaning that their fate is either forced labor or execution. And a good number of young girls have also been selected, because the Japanese want to set up a large military bordello. There's no merry Christmas when hard measures like that are being taken.

After only half an hour I drive home through pestilential streets. In my garden camp peace and quiet reign, with only the twelve guards prowling along the walls, whispering to each other—just a few signals, low disjointed cries, so as not to disturb their fellow sufferers. Mills drives home, and I can lie down to rest, though still in my boots and spurs, as always; for I have to be ready to throw out intruders at a moment's notice. But thank God everything is quiet and peaceful. For a long while I listen to the heavy

breathing and snoring all about me, broken now and then by the cough of one of the many who are ill.

26 DECEMBER, 5:00 P.M.

I've just received a Christmas present better than any I could have wished. I have been given 600 human lives. The newly founded Japanese committee was here to investigate prior to registering my refugees. Each man was called out individually. They all had to form ranks, women and children on the left, men on the right. There was an awful lot of pushing and shoving; but everything went fine. No one was led away, as happened at nearby Ginning Middle School, where they had to hand over more than 20 men: They were to be shot as suspected ex-Chinese soldiers. My Chinese are all very happy, and I thank my Creator with all my heart that everything went smoothly. Four Japanese soldiers are now filling out passes in the garden. They probably won't finish the job today, but that doesn't mean anything. A Japanese officer has made his decision, and there'll be no altering that.

While I'm busy providing him with cigars and Siemens calendar notebooks, a thick cloud of smoke rises above a building of the Pei-Tze Ting. A shower of ashes falls on my garden. The Japanese officer gazes somewhat thoughtfully at my refugees' endangered straw huts and then ingenuously remarks: "*Il y a des soldats Japonais qui sont très mauvais.*"<sup>26</sup> And he's not all wrong there!

LATER

There have been no break-ins here by Japanese soldiers since yesterday. The first time in two weeks. It looks as if things are finally getting better. The registration of my refugees was completed by noon, and they were even generous enough to give a *mingto*<sup>27</sup> to 20 more new people who have smuggled themselves in here.

Liu and one of his children are sick. I drive them to Kulou Hospital to see Dr. Wilson, who is running the whole show there by himself now because Dr. Trimmer has been taken ill as well. Wilson shows me a new instance of the insane brutality of Japanese soldiers: A middle-aged woman who was unable to provide soldiers with young girls was grazed by shots across her abdomen, taking about three handbreadths of flesh with them. She's not expected to recover.

Registration is also being carried out at our Safety Zone headquarters.

It is being done here by Mr. Kikuchi, whom we all like because he's a kind man. The population from other neighborhoods in our Zone is being rounded up by the hundreds and led to the registration offices. About 20,000 people, so I've heard, have been arrested, some of whom are being forced into labor. The rest are to be shot. We shrug in silence at these barbaric measures. But sad to say, we are totally powerless.

I have supplied Police Chief Takadama with a car—a rental! True, he has promised me a receipt, but I don't expect to get the car back.

If only they would remove the corpses from the streets. Ten days ago, just a few steps outside our residence, I found a soldier who had been shot and killed while tied to a bamboo bed, and the body still hasn't been removed. No one dares approach the corpse, not even the Red Swastika Society, because it's that of a Chinese soldier.

Takadama demands that I give him a complete list of all European buildings, together with a list of what has been stolen from them. I decline, because that's a job for the embassies. I have no desire to get my fingers burned on a hot potato like that. I can't even determine whether, and if so, which buildings have in fact been spared.

Today, the second day of Christmas, I've remained at home guarding my refugees; tomorrow, however, I shall have to return to my job at Safety Zone headquarters.

It's getting more and more difficult to feed the 200,000 people in our Zone. Dr. Smythe estimates our rice reserves will last for another week. I'm not that pessimistic.

Our various petitions to Japanese authorities to let us search the city for more stores of rice and then bring them to the Zone have remained unanswered. The Japanese want the Chinese to leave the Zone and return to their homes. In answer to my question as to when train service and shipping between here and Shanghai will be reestablished, all I get from the Japanese are shrugs. They don't know themselves. The river is so full of mines that it will be some time before regular traffic is even thinkable.

I am constantly amazed at how our boys and cooks are still able to find food for us. Especially at my house, it borders on the miraculous. I have three permanent Chinese guests who have been gnawing away at my reserves for two weeks now, and happily there's still enough to go around. Perhaps the refugees, who for now at least have taken me to their hearts, bring items back for me when they go foraging for food. I get fried eggs every day, and there are people who can barely remember what an egg looks like.

Miss Minnie Vautrin, our American Minnie, a proper lady to the core—

I really don't know quite rightly who she is. It would appear that she's a teacher who's now in charge of Ginling Girls College, because at first she fought tooth and nail against allowing male refugees to be housed in the college halls entrusted to her, until someone finally convinced her to let the men be quartered on one floor and the women on another.

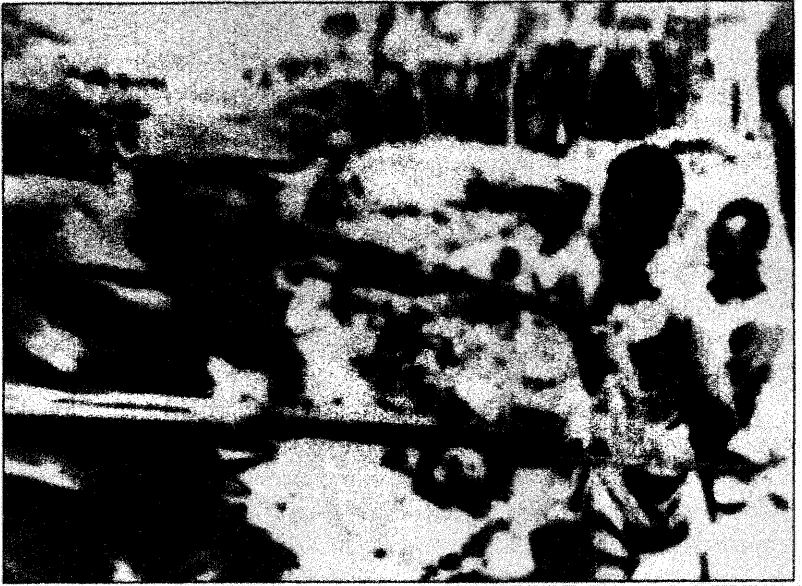
And something terrible has happened to our Minnie. She believes in her girls and guards them the way a hen guards her chicks. During the period when Japanese outrages were at their worst, I have seen her with my own eyes leading a procession of 400 female refugees through the Zone on their way to her college camp.

And now the Japanese authorities have come up with the fabulous idea of erecting a military bordello, and with hands clenched in horror, Minnie is forced to watch as authorized underlings force their way into her Girls Assembly Hall filled with hundreds of *gunyangs*.<sup>28</sup> She is not going to hand over even one of them willingly. She would rather die on the spot; but then something unexpected happens. A respectable member of the Red Swastika Society, someone whom we all know, but would never have suspected had any knowledge of the underworld, calls out a few friendly words into the hall—and lo and behold! A considerable number of young refugee girls step forward. Evidently former prostitutes, who are not at all sad to find work in a new bordello. Minnie is speechless!

#### 27 DECEMBER

I've just returned from playing Santa Claus, that is, I tried to give each of the 126 children in my garden a 20-cent piece. It didn't go well. They almost tore me to pieces, and when I saw that fathers holding babies were in danger of being crushed, I had to give up trying to distribute the money. Only about 80 or 90 children received their gift; I'll have to search out the rest of the *xiao haitze*<sup>29</sup> as opportunity arises. I did a little housecleaning at headquarters today. Too many lazy coolies with no business there had made themselves at home. In 20 minutes the whole house was clean and looking respectable again.

A man who had been bayoneted 5 times was admitted to Kulou Hospital today. He reports that he was one of about 200 ex-soldiers who had taken refuge at Ginling Middle College and were then "selected." Instead of being shot, they were all bayoneted. This is now the preferred method, since we foreigners prick up our ears at the sound of machine-gun fire and then inquire about the reason for the shooting.



The Japanese both bayoneted Chinese prisoners and used them as live targets for sword practice.



Chang and Han came today to tell me that at Hsin Chieh Kou (we call it "Potsdamer Platz") a Japanese-Chinese store has opened up where you can buy food of every sort. I immediately drive over with Han to determine if the report is true, and we arrive just in time to witness the building being torched. They want the city in ruins!

## 28 DECEMBER

Fires are still being set, everywhere, over and over. You feel like a seriously ill patient fearfully watching the hour hand inch forward. All the refugees are afraid of the New Year, because they expect the Japanese soldiers to get drunk and then commit more atrocities. We try to comfort them, but we have only feeble words of comfort. We don't even believe them ourselves.

Someone has been spreading the rumor that today is the last day of registration. As a result, several tens of thousands of people have been thronging the registration office. The streets of the Zone are so overcrowded that you can't even get through on foot. The German flag on my car opens a path, though with great difficulty, through this sea of human bodies. Everyone in the Zone recognizes my car with its swastika flag. They push and shove trying to create a space for the car to slip through. I move slowly toward my goal. The opening instantly closes again behind me. If we should be brought to a halt, I won't easily get out of this crush again, that's certain.

The reports we are hearing from all sides today are so hair-raising that I can hardly bring myself to put them to paper. Before registration began at some of the schools where refugees are camped out, the Japanese first demanded that any former Chinese soldiers in the crowd step forward voluntarily. They were given promises of protection. They were merely to be put into labor crews. At that, a good number of refugees stepped forward. In one case, about 50 people. They were led off at once. As we learned from one of the survivors, they were taken to a vacant house, robbed of all valuables and clothes, and when completely naked, tied up together in groups of five. Then the Japanese built a large bonfire in the courtyard, led the groups out one by one, bayoneted the men and tossed them still alive on the fire. Ten of these men were able to slip free of their ropes, leap over the courtyard wall, and vanish into the crowd, who gladly found clothes for them.

This news has come to us in much the same form from three different sides. Another group, larger than the first, is said to have been bayoneted in the graveyards in the West City. Dr. Bates is at present trying to get more

detailed information about these groups. We have to be very careful what we say about such incidents in order not to put the person providing the information at risk.

Mr. Fitch has received a letter from Shanghai in which the Rotary Club informs him that they have collected 35,000 dollars for us. Money is of no use to us. What we need are people, *foreigners*, to come and help us; but the Japanese are letting no one into Nanking.

The officials at the Japanese embassy appear willing to make our situation more tolerable, but they also seem unable to make any headway with their fellow countrymen who happen to be in the military. We have heard that the military command here does not want to recognize the Japanese-Chinese Committee that the Japanese embassy has put together—one similar to our committee for the Safety Zone. It now turns out that Mr. Fukuda was right when on his very first day here he told us: "The military people want to make it very bad for the town, but we, the embassy, will try to avoid it."



The Japanese major Yoshiro Oka in a caricature drawn by a well-known artist in Shanghai who worked under the name Sapajou

Unfortunately neither Mr. Fukuda, nor Mr. Tanaka, nor Mr. Fukui has succeeded in changing the military's mind.

*Letter from the Missionary E. H. Forster to George Fitch*

Dear George!

In the vicinity of the Sin Ku Sze (a big temple) near #17 Sang Ya Street, are the bodies of about 50 men who have been executed as soldier suspects. They've been there almost two weeks now and are getting into a state where burial is imperative. I have a group of men who are willing to undertake this, but are afraid to act unless they have proper authority to do so. Is the latter necessary? If so, can you get it for me?

Thank you.

L A T E R

This letter from Forster to Fitch throws the harsh light of day on current conditions here. In addition to the 50 corpses mentioned, there are still more in a pond not far from our headquarters. We have asked on numerous occasions to be allowed to bury the bodies, but have always been refused. How this all will end is a mystery to us, particularly since rain and snow have fallen now, which only accelerates the decomposition.

Dr. Smythe and I had a two-hour discussion at the Japanese embassy with Mr. Fukui and a Japanese Major Oka. The latter informed us that he had been asked by Dr. Trautmann, the German ambassador, to insure our safety. He demands that all Germans—a total of five men—move into one house, where he can then offer better protection. If I disagree with the suggestion, I am to write Mr. Oka a letter declaring I waive all claims to such protection. I was not about to mince words, so I declared that I demanded no other protection for my own person than that which the Japanese army had promised the Chinese here in the city. If I wanted to leave the Chinese in the lurch, I could have joined Dr. Trautmann and the other Germans on board the *Kutwo* long ago.

I have been assigned to safeguard your life, Major Oka declares. If there is proof that property has been stolen or destroyed by Japanese soldiers, it can be compensated for or replaced by the Japanese government. I can only reply that along with a number of American members of our committee I made a tour of the city on 14 December and found, for example, that all German property was intact *after* the fall of Nanking. Only with the entry





John Rabe and the other members of the Safety Committee were refused permission to bury the bodies of victims left floating in ponds and ditches.

of Japanese troops into the city did the looting and arson, the murder, rape, and mayhem begin. We were all prepared to swear to that. The few buildings that had been looted by the retreating Chinese troops were on Taiping Lu. No houses belonging to foreigners were among them.

At 7:30 p.m. a noncommissioned officer arrives with my guard of honor: two strapping soldiers with bayonets fixed and horribly muddy standard-issue boots, who are ruining all my carpets and are supposed to protect me. They are immediately sent back outside and told to march back and forth in the snow and rain. Actually I feel a little sorry for them because the weather is so rotten.

At 9 o'clock this evening two Japanese soldier-bandits suddenly climb over my back garden wall without anyone noticing, and on my way outside I discover them in the pantry. I try to hold them there. Kröger is sent to fetch the men on guard; but they have both vanished! And when Kröger tells me that, the two intruders hastily swing themselves back up over the wall as well.

Mr. Fukui pleads with me not to write Shanghai anything about Nanking, that is, not to describe facts that the Japanese embassy finds unpleasant. I have promised him. What choice do I have? Since my letters can

be forwarded only through the Japanese embassy, if I want them sent at all, I have to comply. One fine day the truth will out. I used the opportunity to ask Mr. Fukuda to see to it that the body of the Chinese soldier shot on 13 December be taken away at last. Fukui promises to deal with the matter.

He also informs me that our Zone has now been surrounded by Japanese guards, who will see to it that no prowling soldiers are allowed into the Zone. I've now had a better look at these guards and discovered that they did not stop and interrogate a single Japanese soldier. I even saw soldiers carrying looted items out of the Zone, and with absolutely no questions asked by the guards. What sort of protection is that?

*Letter from John Rabe to His Wife in Shanghai*

Nanking, 30 December 1937

My dear Dora,

Yesterday, 29 December, I received by way of the Japanese embassy here your sweet letters from 6, 12, 15, and 22 December. I cannot at present describe to you the details of my experiences here, but I can assure you that we 22 Europeans, as well as Mr. Han and his family, are all right. I still have a supply of insulin. You needn't worry about that. What has become of my baggage on board the *Kutwo*? Do you know anything about it? Let's hope nothing has been lost. All my books are packed up in it, too.

There is much to do here. I would not be at all unhappy if I were soon relieved of my post as "mayor." Physically we are all, as noted, in good shape, but psychologically each of us could probably use a nice vacation. I hope we shall see each other soon.

Greetings and kisses (despite what the censor thinks!)  
from Your JOHN Y

30 DECEMBER

The newly organized Autonomous Government Committee has ordered lots of flags made displaying five stripes. We're expecting a big public ceremony on 1 January when the new flags are to be waved. This Autonomous Government Committee is to be our replacement. We have nothing against their taking over our work, but it looks to us as if they simply want to take over our money.

I'll not voluntarily hand over anything. I'll yield only under greatest pressure, and then only under loud protest. I've already noticed that the

Japanese diplomats are ashamed of the Japanese army's method of operation. They would love to exonerate themselves of the fact that 40 buildings flying the German flag have been looted and some of them even burned down.

Over the last two nights, here in the straw huts, in the muck and mud of my refugee camp, the so-called Siemens Camp, two children were born, a boy and girl. I am ashamed that I cannot provide these new mothers some other lodging. No doctor, no midwife, no nurse to help. There aren't even any bandages or diapers. A few wretched dirty rags were all that the parents had for their newborn infants. I gave each couple ten dollars. In return, they named the girl "Dora" and the little boy "Johny." Great fun!

I have bought two lovely dwarf pines in shallow porcelain bowls to give as New Year's presents to Mr. Fukui of the Japanese embassy and Major General Sasaki, commandant of the Nanking garrison. The little trees are so pretty that I find it hard to part with them; but the Japanese come first these days. Moreover, I've made some New Year's cards with my own original design: the coat of arms of our Safety Zone and my signature on the front, and the signatures of all 22 Europeans and Americans still in Nanking on the back.