

## CHAPTER 8

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# CLOSING DOWN THE SIEMENS NANKING BRANCH

13 JANUARY

THE OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS do not agree with my suggestion that the Zone Committee be transformed into an International Relief Committee for Nanking. In their opinion, the Japanese have given our Zone Committee de facto recognition, and they're afraid that if we voluntarily dissolve the old committee, they could simply ignore us completely. And of course I accede to the majority, for we must absolutely remain united.

By way of the English navy I receive a telegram from Siemens Shanghai, dated 10 January, telling me to wind up business here and for Han and me to come to Shanghai as soon as possible.<sup>37</sup> I'll reply tomorrow, saying that at present neither foreigners nor Chinese are allowed to leave the city. Kröger has tried on various occasions to get Japanese permission to travel to Shanghai and has thus far been regularly turned down.

Dr. Rosen and Kröger were outside the city wall today to inspect

Schmeling's house near the Veterans' Orphanage and Dr. Eckert's house in the vicinity of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Park. Driving back in Dr. Rosen's embassy car, the two gentlemen were halted by Japanese officers in the company of Fukuda. The exchange between Dr. Rosen and the Japanese grew heated when they wanted to know why he was outside the city wall and asked him, "Why don't you obey the Japanese military regulations?"

Dr. Rosen replied he had never promised to obey orders of the Japanese military. He demanded that he be able to pursue his diplomatic duties, particularly since he was busy determining to what extent German property in Nanking had been destroyed by the Japanese. The Japanese demanded and received a statement to that effect from Dr. Rosen, who reported the incident by telegram to Shanghai. I'm anxious to see what comes of it.

4:00 P. M.

At a meeting of the International Red Cross at Kulou Hospital, with John Magee, McCallum, Kröger, Low, and Pastor Chen attending, it was agreed that in the future McCallum should decide whether patients admitted on the recommendation of the Red Cross should be treated gratis or not. John Magee has been admitting too many free patients of late, including one woman who was admitted as penniless, but when someone was changing her bed, 300 dollars were found in it.

Chang's wife has recovered sufficiently to be discharged from the hospital. We bring her home in the car. Chang has given the hospital his last month's salary of 30 dollars, and I shall pay the rest.

*Letter from the Siemens China Co. Central Office to Rabe*

Shanghai, 3 January 1938

Dear Herr Rabe:

First, best wishes for the New Year; you have some troubled times behind you, with all sorts of experiences. I hope you are well. We would have liked to have heard from you whether you intend to remain there much longer. I recently spoke with Dr. Baur (of Carlowitz), and he was of the opinion that there is no longer any real point in your staying on.

We intended for you to leave Nanking at the opportune moment, that is before its fall and proceed to Hankow in order to maintain contacts with governmental agencies there. We telegraphed you three times to that effect. Dr. Probst is in Hong Kong at present. I have asked him

whether it might be advisable to station you in Hong Kong. As soon as I have a reply, I will try to get word to you. I don't know what your current living conditions are, but I would assume that you have already packed your belongings. Might it not be possible to store your things at the embassy if you haven't already?

As for your trip to Shanghai, that won't be an easy matter, but perhaps it can be arranged sooner or later.

We would like to hear news of you if at all possible.

Best regards,  
W. MAIER<sup>38</sup>

### *Letter from Rabe to Siemens Management, Shanghai (Excerpts)*

Nanking, 14 January 1938

Re: Letter from Herr. W. Maier, Director, 3 January 38

This is to confirm receipt today of said letter via the German embassy. Your previous message that I should move on to Hankow came too late. When your telegram arrived, the Germans were already making for Hankow aboard the *Kutwo*. Moreover, I thought it my duty not to desert our Chinese employees, Mr. Han and his family, our fitters, etc., all of whom had fled to join me in the *hong*.<sup>39</sup> As I informed you then in reply to your telegram, I assumed the chairmanship here of an International Committee being organized for establishing a Safety Zone, which would be the last resort for 200,000 Chinese noncombatants. The establishment of the Zone was not easy, particularly since we could not get any clear recognition of the Zone from the Japanese and because high-ranking Chinese military and their staff remained behind until the last moment, that is, remained within the Zone until they fled.

Our committee has thus far succeeded in feeding the city's 200,000 residents packed into our Zone by setting up soup kitchens, distribution centers for rice and flour, etc. An order has now come from the Japanese to close our outlets for selling rice, since care of the refugees is to be taken over by the newly found Autonomous Government Committee. . . . As soon as order is reestablished in the city and I am granted permission by the authorities to leave Nanking, I will join you there. Up till now all such requests have been met with refusal.

I herewith request additional permission to remain here until the Zone Committee is dissolved, since the life and welfare of many people are indeed dependent on a few Europeans. In my house and garden alone, over 600 of the poorest refugees found refuge on the night of 12 December in order to avoid being molested or killed by the unchecked

Japanese soldiery. Most people are housed in straw huts in the garden and live from the daily rice ration doled out to them.

With German greetings,  
JOHN RABE

15 JANUARY

As is obvious from the letters that arrived for me yesterday from Shanghai via the German embassy and to which on 14 January I replied to the management of Siemens China Co. in Shanghai, people there have not the vaguest notion of current conditions here.

*Memorandum of Chancellor<sup>40</sup> P. Scharffenberg,  
German Embassy, Nanking Office*

Situation in Nanking as of 13 January 1938

There is no telephone, telegraph, or postal service in Nanking, nor are there any buses, taxis, or rickshas. The waterworks are not operating, electric power is to be had only in the embassy buildings, where all windows above the ground floor must be blacked out. The English embassy has no electricity as yet.

There is no traffic in the streets, since the suburbs were burned down almost in their entirety by the Chinese and the center of the city has largely been burned down by the Japanese. No one lives there now. The rest of the population—circa 200,000—is confined to the Safety Zone, formerly a residential area. People vegetate there in various buildings and their adjoining gardens, where up to 600 people live in straw huts, and no one may leave this Zone. The Zone is controlled by sentries.

The streets outside the Zone are deserted, the ruins a desolate sight. Food is dangerously short. Inside the Safety Zone people have been begun to eat horse and dog meat. Hürter managed to get through once again yesterday and was able to procure a pig and a few chickens for us via Dr. Günther at the cement factory in Hsi Sha Shan. (The English embassy was given some, as a thank-you for taking us on board their gunboats.) We cannot buy anything else.

The committee under John Rabe, and which includes several Americans, has done miraculous work. It is not an exaggeration to say that it has saved tens of thousands of lives.

The water problem is also very serious, the water mains are not functioning, and there is no way to wash clothes, since all the ponds are contaminated by the dead bodies that have been thrown into them.

The new city administration, which is supposed to take over duties that are in fact being carried out by the committee, is getting nowhere because of the actions of the Japanese. One of its new members, the well-known auctioneer Jimmy, has at least shown courage and told the Japanese: "If you are against me, then you'd better shoot me here and now!"

It's best not to say anything about the actions of the Japanese since their arrival; it is all too reminiscent of Genghis Khan: Destroy everything! A first lieutenant on the staff told me that during the march from Shanghai to Nanking, the supply columns never once caught up with the troops, and so it is understandable why soldiers went berserk here, grabbing whatever they could. And I'm quite sure that like the Negroes in 1918 they were promised: If you hold out, you'll each get a pretty girl in Nanking.<sup>41</sup> And things have been very, very bad for all the women who remained behind here. It is best not even to discuss the matter with those gentlemen who have witnessed it, they can only shudder at the bestiality of it all.

It is easy to say that the troops got out of hand. But I don't believe that, because Asian warfare is in fact different from war among us. If the sides were reversed, it would probably not have gone any better, especially not with a little incitement.

The harvest in the city and out in the occupied areas of the country is rotting in the fields, because no one from the city is allowed near it and the rural population has either fled or been slain. Vegetables, potatoes, beets, etc. are going to waste, and hunger is rife here.

SCHARFFENBERG

#### 16 JANUARY

Dinner at the Japanese embassy went off without incident. We were 13 people in all. Besides the officials of the Japanese embassy, nine representatives from our committee showed up: Miss Vautrin, Miss Bauer, Dr. Bates, Mills, Smythe, Dr. Trimmer, Kröger, and I. And after we had sat down to eat, John Magee appeared as well, who always tends to bring up the rear, but is otherwise a fine fellow.

On his arrival Kröger received the good news that he may leave for Shanghai. As glad as I am for Kröger, since he plans to get married soon, I am very worried about filling his slot. Kröger is our treasurer and it will not be easy to find a replacement. The food was excellent. Since I needed to be careful about what I said in my after-dinner speech, I brought along the following written text:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of the International Committee of the Nanking Safety Zone, I would like to express my thanks to our hosts, the officials of the Japanese embassy, for their cordial invitation to join them for dinner. We have, I can assure you, not eaten so well in a long time.

I ask our honored hosts to forgive me for saying a few words about ourselves.

Since most of the members of our committee were active here as missionaries, they felt it was their Christian duty not to desert their Chinese friends in time of war. As a businessman who has lived in this country for 30 years now, I joined them. Having enjoyed the hospitality of this land and its people for so long, I considered it fitting that I not abandon the Chinese in a time of distress.

Those are the reasons that led us who are strangers to this land to remain behind and make some attempt to stand beside those of the poorest Chinese, who in their need lacked the means to leave the city and did not know where to turn.

I do not wish to speak of the work and hardship that we took upon ourselves. They are known to you all.

We appeal to the noble sentiments of the Japanese, to the spirit of the samurai, about whom we foreigners have heard and read so much and who fought so bravely for their land in countless battles, yet never denied clemency to a foe who could not defend himself.

You, the gentlemen of the Japanese embassy, have patiently heard our requests and complaints, and there were many, and have always lent us a willing ear. You have also, to the extent that you could, done your best to help us. And for this much-appreciated help, I would like, in the name of the International Committee, to hereby express my thanks.

I don't know what the Americans thought of my speech. I am aware that I spoke a little against my own conscience, but I thought it useful for our cause and followed the Jesuit principle: "The ends justify the means."

There is no denying that it was the officials of the Japanese embassy who helped us to some extent—were the only ones who could help us by passing on our reports to the Japanese military and interceding for us a bit. That they did not have the success we wished surely lies in the fact that diplomats in Japan must defer to the military, who have the first and last word in the Japanese government. The embassy personnel, Fukui, Tanaka, and Fukuda, could therefore rightly be praised a little if one was to praise at all, which after our bitter experiences was indeed hard enough to do.

Shortly before we left for home, Fukuda also let it be known that the Japanese embassy was very distressed by the "Dr. Rosen affair." It would please him if I would act as a go-between and bring Dr. Rosen to make some sort of conciliatory gesture. Perhaps a visit to the Japanese embassy and a few friendly words—there was no mention of an apology. I shall cautiously feel Dr. Rosen out on this, although I fear that my attempts will meet with no success whatever.

#### 17 JANUARY

As I learned from a conference with Dr. Rosen, Okazaki, the Japanese consul general, has already tried to put the recent altercation to rest. If Berlin and Tokyo demand no other settlement, the file on this dispute can be closed, which I would prefer, since we have to get along peaceably with the Japanese here somehow.

Yesterday I drove through the city on a longer tour with Dr. Rosen, and returned home very depressed. The devastation the Japanese have wreaked here is almost beyond description. To my mind there is no possibility that



The city of Nanking was almost totally destroyed—by both fire and bombardment—by the Japanese army.

the city can be brought back to life anytime soon. Taiping Lu, the pride of Nanking, which was the main business street before and whose lights at night were equal to those on Nanking Road in Shanghai, is totally ruined, everything burned down. There is not one building left intact, just fields of rubble left and right. Fu Tze-Miao, the former amusement district, with its tea houses and big market, is likewise totally destroyed. As far as the eye can see—nothing but rubble! Who's going to rebuild it all? On the way back we visited what fire had left behind of the State Theater and the great bazaar. There, too, everything burned down. I'm afraid I grossly miscalculated when I wrote that a third of the city had been put to the torch by the Japanese. If the East City, which I've not visited to any extent, was dealt with in the same fashion, then more than half the city lies in ruins.

I also have the impression that instead of emptying out as the Japanese have demanded, our Zone is still filling up. You risk your life in the press of people on Shanghai Lu, particularly now that both sides of the street are filled with market booths built of poles and planks, where all sorts of food and clothes and even some stolen curios are peddled. Estimates of the total population of the Zone are now around 250,000. The increase of about 50,000 comes from the ruined parts of the city. People simply don't know where to stay.

#### 18 JANUARY

You can see columns of smoke in several directions. Fires are still merrily being set. At 9 a.m., a meeting of the managers of various refugee camps is to be held at our headquarters. We would not be surprised if the Japanese disrupt the meeting or even forbid it. I've placed sentries outside the walls, who are to inform the German embassy at once if our building is surrounded by the Japanese military police, as happened last time. To my delight, Dr. Rosen, Kröger, and Sperling show up. We are all anxiously waiting to see if the Japanese are going to permit some sort of incursion. But the meeting proceeds normally and calmly.

This afternoon Dr. Smythe and Fitch arrive with news that we may not move rice or any other foodstuff into the city, or fetch it from stores within the city, or import it from Shanghai. It appears the Japanese intend to let the refugees starve. This must be prevented. We therefore send the following telegram to Shanghai:



*Boyton, National Christian Council, Shanghai (Excerpt)*

Food question more serious because no regular supply available civilian population. . . .

We are feeding fifty thousand daily free rice. Request to truck in rice wheat purchased here and request for necessary passes to ship six hundred tons foodstuffs from Shanghai turned down. Please try negotiations Shanghai. If you can buy Chinese green beans Shanghai get permission to ship one hundred tons as soon as possible. Go ahead raising funds. We will find way to use them.

18 January 1938

FITCH

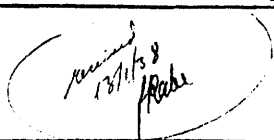
## LATER

The American embassy was able to cable another "incident" to the State Department in Washington. The local American school was looted again today, and in fact they broke a large hole in the outer wall in order to take away the piano. Unfortunately the American officials arrived a little too late to catch the Japanese soldiers at their thievery. You would think it impossible for the Japanese military to compromise itself like that, now that there is an American embassy in the city again.

I'm wracking my brains about how I should go about "winding up business" here as they put it in their telegram. There are no crates to be had at the moment, no craftsmen, and no porters. How I am supposed to pack things? You can't just leave everything lying here—that would be tantamount to losing it all. What would become of my compound here, if I were to just cut and run, meaning go to Shanghai? The Japanese will probably give me a pass to leave at some point; I even have the feeling they would be happy to be rid of me. But what would become of the 650 refugees on the grounds? *What a bitter ending to all our labors!*

## 19 JANUARY

The radio reports that a Berlin newspaper has warned Japan to refrain from advancing any farther into the interior of China. At the same time the newspaper is said to have recommended that China be offered an honorable peace. That would be "too good to be true." No one here believes that Japan will follow such good advice.

S. 1320b.		<b>NAVAL MESSAGE.</b>		Revised December, 15	
For use in Signal Department only					
Originator's Instructions: (Indication of Priority, Intercept Group, etc.)				No. of Groups:	
TO:		SNO N/C		FROM: C/Sher	
Write Across	Following for German Embassy begins				
	Siemens for RABE wind up business				10
	yourself and Han. return Shanghai				15
	soonest Fischer ends				20
	1530/10 Phillips				25
Cab. No.		System Φ/na	P.O.	Time of Receipt 1838	Operator
					Time of Despatch
					Date 10/1

The telegram sent to Rabe via the American naval station: "Following for German Embassy begins Siemens for RABE wind up business yourself and Han return Shanghai soonest Fischer ends Phillips."

There will soon be major battles along the Lunghai Railway. The Chinese army has about 40,000 drawn up there and appears to have regrouped, or so at least the radio report claims. All incompetent officers are said to have been eliminated. We haven't the least hope, sad to say, that China will emerge victorious from those battles.

Meanwhile Tsingtao has been taken by the Japanese, the same goes for Tsinanfu. Word is that the police have revolted and are looting in Cheefoo—according to Japanese reports.

On orders of Chiang Kai-shek, Han Fuchün, the governor of Shandong, and two other generals have been court-martialed for not offering adequate resistance to the enemy. Word is that Han Fuchün put all his cash into Japanese banks. There's little doubt of it, since it's probably the Japanese who are making this claim.

There was also news today that Chang Hsueliang, son of Chang Tsolin



As photographs make clear, the Japanese took pleasure in the killing of their victims. They often posed for snapshots, which were saved as mementos.

and leader of the Sian rebellion, has been shot, the same man who arrested and imprisoned Chiang Kai-shek in Sian about a year ago.<sup>42</sup>

These purges on Hankow's part have all come much too late; people doubt if they will be of any use.

I gave written notice to our Siemens employees today, telling them that on orders from the central office in Shanghai, I am to close our office here; for I see no other possible interpretation of Shanghai's message to "wind up business." I'll pay people their January salaries in full, but no New Year's bonus. That's damned hard, I know, because the Chinese New Year, which begins on 1 February, is at hand and there's been an extraordinary rise in the price of food, that is if you can find any. But hundreds of thousands of people here are just as badly off. The employees all have a roof over their heads as long as I'm still here. And when I run out of money for food, then they'll have to take advantage of the International Committee's soup kitchen, which is already feeding most of the 650 refugees in my house. Two sacks of rice a day.

My landlord's agents have fled, along with the landlord. All the same, I'll write a letter giving him notice, since by contract I can abandon the house if the firm recalls me.

*Letter from John Rabe to the Siemens Central Office*

19 January 1938

Re: Closing the Nanking Office

This is to inform you that, as per your telegram of 10 January, in which you order me to close the local office, I am giving the local Chinese employees written notice that due to the state of war, their positions with our firm was terminated as of the end of this month. Could you please inform me if, in addition to their January salary, I can pay them a New Year's bonus or provide some other monetary gratification. Since food prices here have risen considerably and none of our Chinese employees has any savings from which a family could live for any length of time, I would most heartily recommend a positive answer in this matter. In hope of a reply telegraphed to me as quickly as possible, I remain

Very truly yours,  
JOHN RABE

*John Rabe's Letter of Termination to Han Hsianglin,  
His Chinese Assistant of Some Years*

Nanking, 19 January 1938

Dear Sir,

Since all business has come to a standstill on account of the war, we regret to inform you that following instruction from our head office, the Nanking office of Siemens China Co. has to be closed.

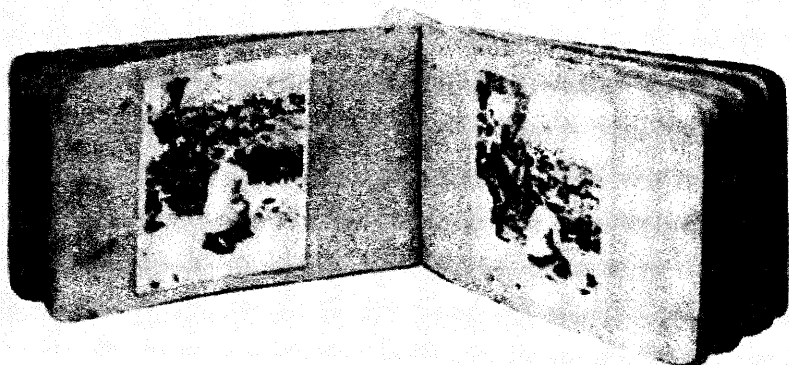
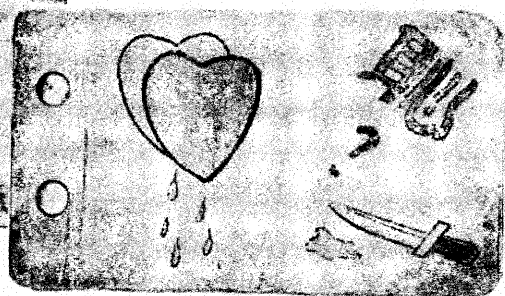
Please note that this will—much to our regret—also terminate your engagement with our firm. We shall be pleased to reengage you after the war, if conditions permit, and ask you to kindly let us know your future address to enable us to keep you informed.

We take this opportunity to express to you our gratitude and appreciation for your faithful service rendered to our firm during the last six years, and beg to remain very truly yours,

JOHN RABE  
Representative Nanking, Siemens China Co.



This sequence of photographs records Chinese being beheaded. When the Japanese soldier took the film to be developed, a Chinese boy working in the shop secretly made copies, at the risk of his life, and glued them into a scrapbook documenting the atrocities. He decorated its cover himself and kept it hidden until the end of the war.



20 JANUARY

Snow storm! The refugees are in an extraordinarily wretched state. You really don't have to be softhearted to feel pity for these poor people here. The camp in my garden has become one huge puddle of mud. Little channels have been dug around the tents and straw huts to let some of the snow water run off. More than once I've just closed my eyes when I've spotted open fires under those low straw roofs. In the driving wind and snow, fires are impossible outside. So if people are to have any warmth at all, we simply have to run the risk. When I look at the misery out in my garden, I'm reminded of two books by Dwinger,<sup>43</sup> *Army behind Barbed Wire* and *Between Red and White*.

Recently we pilfered a few thousand bricks from a half-finished house in the neighborhood and laid narrow footpaths between the tents and huts to keep people from sinking completely into the muck.

We've also built a brick wall around the latrines to make the camp look a bit more respectable. These improvements don't help much, of course. The whole thing is and will remain an incredible swamp. No wonder everyone is coughing and spitting. My worst fear is that an epidemic will break out.

Pastor John Magee, the chairman of our International Red Cross Society, has passed on the report of a Chinese nurse from the Red Cross Hospital for wounded soldiers located in the Foreign Ministry, which we foreigners are forbidden to visit, whereas its staff occasionally receives permission to go out shopping. And they use the opportunity to visit us and tell us things:

One of the wounded Chinese soldiers complained that he was not getting enough to eat. The daily ration, she says, is just three little bowls of rice broth. The patient was beaten, and when he asked, once the beating was over, if they had beaten him because he was hungry, the Japanese took him out into the courtyard and bayoneted him. The nurses watched this execution from the windows.

None of the refugees want to leave the Zone now, not after a number of people who tried to return to their homes were driven off by Japanese soldiers throwing stones or were mistreated even worse. And yet everywhere in the city you find big Japanese posters that proclaim: "Return to your homes! We will provide food. Trust the Japanese army! It will help you!"

*From a Report by Christian Kröger,  
Treasurer of the Zone Committee (Excerpt)*

Nanking, 13 January 1938

On the afternoon of 13 December 1937, I took over the Waichiaopu<sup>44</sup> to use as a hospital. To the shame of the Chinese troops, it must be said that conditions there were beyond description, with wounded men left lying without care for two to three days. All the doctors and staff had run off, no one cared about these wretches. In a most commendable fashion, the Chinese Red Cross took over these wounded men and provided male and female nurses; there were, however, too few doctors, but I hoped things would improve once the city was finally occupied.

By the next afternoon the Japanese attitude had changed entirely. I had persuaded four doctors to come to the hospital. But I was forbidden to enter it. By now the city was completely in Japanese hands, all public buildings were occupied, but we were forbidden to enter any of them, even those in which we had set up large refugee camps. I was told that the Japanese military would take care of the living, and we could bury the dead. To this day, we have been able to get rice into the hospital, but no nurses, no medical supplies, no doctors.

From 14 December on, the situation deteriorated rapidly. Battle-weary Japanese troops, who had been inadequately supplied during their advance, were let loose on the city and behaved in ways no one had thought possible, especially in their treatment of the poorest and most innocent Chinese. They took rice from the refugees, the poorest of the poor, took whatever supplies they could find, warm wool blankets, clothes, watches, bracelets, in short anything that appeared to be of value. Anyone who hesitated to hand something over was immediately slashed with a bayonet, and many people were subjected to such rough treatment for no reason at all. The victims numbered in the thousands, and these brutish soldiers kept coming back to the Zone, its houses packed with refugees, and each time would take what their predecessors had disdained.

Our only defense for protecting our own property and servants was to strike a vigorous pose and point to the German flag, often while being threatened by Japanese officers and soldiers. Once, while I was negotiating with Japanese officers, my car was stolen from the garage, even though both front tires had been removed. Under the threat of bayonets, servants were forced to open doors and hand over everything.

Evidently vehicles of any sort were of special interest, because cars



and bicycles were in great demand and stolen everywhere. Where there was no vehicle to be had, the servants or the refugees in a house were forced to carry the looted goods, and you often saw a soldier with weapon in hand driving four coolies before him loaded down with his booty. Children's wagons were used, wheelbarrows, asses, mules, in short, anything that could be found.

This organized robbery lasted for over two weeks, and even now no house is safe from some group on a "commandeering" expedition. When valuables began to run out, carpets, doors, and window frames were next, if only to be burned as fuel. The army had even brought its own safe-crackers, although many a safe was opened simply with a few shots or a hand grenade.

When an individual soldier didn't suffice, units in trucks would appear and under the command of an officer empty a house of anything worth taking and then set it afire. By now, the entire South City has been looted and torched in this fashion.

The systematic burning began 20 December, and there has not been an evening since when the sky has not turned red. They are meticulously returning to buildings that were somehow forgotten or passed over, so that by now I would guess that roughly 50-60 percent of the city has been burned down.

On 14 December, with the city under total occupation, an immediate and rigorous search of the city and especially of the refugee camps began. These searches of the camps were totally arbitrary, and over the course of a few days, although not a single shot was fired by the civilian population and no military courts had been set up, approximately 5,000 people were shot, usually on the riverbank, so that there was no need for burial. That number is probably too low an estimate. Even today, when every person has to be registered, this senseless "selection" continues, even if it is still applied only in individual cases.

On a trip to Hsiakwan on 16 December, I literally drove over bodies in the vicinity of the Navy Office, where rows of executed men lay tied together. It took until 29 December to remove the bodies from the city. Day after day, you had to drive past the dead, who appeared even in my dreams. Three bodies and a dead horse lay outside our house. We were forbidden to clear them away ourselves; I was finally able to arrange only for the horse to be buried, which was still lying there on 9 January. My first trip to Hsi Sha Shan on 28 December came as a shock. We were strictly forbidden to leave the city, but since I needed food, I went in my car anyway. The retreating Chinese army had already burned down villages and farms. The Japanese troops, however, were not to be outdone, and continued to set fire to things on a grand scale, indiscriminately shooting farmers, women, and children out in the fields, all under the

motto: "Find the evil Chinese soldiers!" In the fields and beside the highway lay a lot of dead water buffalo, horses, and mules, already badly eaten by dogs, crows, and magpies. By day the farmers flee to the mountains with their few possessions, and only the old women and men remain behind. Even their lives are in danger: For an hour's drive I did not see a single live human being, not even in the larger villages. Everything has been burned down or is dead or flees the moment a car comes into view. At Thousand Buddha Mountain a large refugee camp had formed with over 10,000 people, all farmers from the vicinity.

The Japanese soldiery doesn't let that stop them, either. Even here they randomly select young boys to be shot, rape the girls, and drunken Japanese soldiers make a sport of using bayonets to skewer or slash whomever they take a dislike to, especially where there is no medical help to be had. Temple images are stolen or destroyed, and even monks are in no way safe from such mistreatment.

Confronted by two Europeans—a German, Dr. Günther, and a Dane—the terror has more or less come to halt outside the cement works. There, too, about 4,000 refugees have settled, bringing what they could carry.

According to Chinese reports, the entire countryside from Shanghai to Nanking and Wuhu has been ravaged in this same fashion. It is hard to see how without so much as a plow or a water buffalo, farmers are going to tend their fields and plant the rice so sorely needed.

*From a Report from the Nanking Office of the German Embassy  
(Rosen) to the Foreign Ministry (Excerpt)*

20 January 1938

While we were aboard the British gunboat *Bee*, anchored outside Nanking from 18 to 20 December, the Japanese rear-admiral Kondo declared to Holt, the British admiral, that on a large island downstream from Nanking there were still 30,000 Chinese soldiers who would have to be removed. This removal or "mopping up," as it was called in Japanese communiqués, consists of murdering what are now defenseless enemies and is contrary to fundamental principles of humane warfare. Besides mass executions by machine gun fire, other more individual methods of killing were employed as well, such as pouring gasoline over a victim and setting him afire.

Since a large number of Chinese soldiers—some of them disarmed, but in any case defenseless—had fled into the Safety Zone, something that the few policemen were unable to prevent, the Japanese undertook large-scale raids during which any civilian male might be suspected of

being a soldier and be dragged off. Generally they looked for some indication of a man's having been a soldier—the circular marking of a helmet on the head, indentations on the shoulder from a weapon or on the back from a kit bag, etc. Foreign eyewitnesses have also attested that the Japanese lured a good number of Chinese soldiers out of the Safety Zone by promising they would not be harmed and even given work, only then to execute them. No trials by military tribunal or anything of that sort were to be seen anywhere, and they would have been out of place amidst practices that made a mockery of all the rules of warfare and civilized behavior. The first Japanese patrols were sighted inside the city on 13 December. They had apparently entered the city from the south, through the Kuanghua Gate. Reports have already been filed concerning the reign of terror which then began and has continued for weeks now, but I would like to add one more example of how the Japanese conducted themselves: e.g., of the 54 workers at the municipal electricity plant who reported for work, 43 were slain by the Japanese, under the pretext that that the plant was a state enterprise!

By some strange arrangement of Nature, wherever the Japanese advance with fire and sword, the popular soul spontaneously erupts in the form of autonomous governments kindly disposed toward the Japanese. And so on New Year's Day, an autonomous government arose in Nanking under the chairmanship of the president of the Red Swastika Society, Tao Hsi-san. This society is a charitable organization similar to the Red Cross. Little is known about the other members of the "government," except that a Dr. Hsü of the same charitable society and a certain Wang Changtien are "advisors" to it. This Wang, who is also known in Nanking under the name Jimmy, is at any rate the most active member of the new system, whose five-colored flag, the old flag of the First Chinese Republic, can be seen flying here and there above buildings in Nanking, but is hardly noticeable for all the Japanese flags.

Among Jimmy's first official acts was the establishment of bordellos, for which he was able to recruit the necessary workers among those females still residing in the old amusement district around the Confucius Temple. It is said that he provided the requisite furniture free of charge from his own inventories, but is demanding payment for furnishing similar institutions that are to be outfitted with Japanese ladies who have been brought in. At any rate Jimmy has done a great service to his fellow Chinese in providing a less perilous means by which to satisfy the amorous needs of the Japanese soldiery, which up until now has employed the Erl-King's method of abducting the honest women of Nanking.

As nearly as I can tell thus far from my conversations with my Japanese colleagues, the new Nanking government is not taken seriously. It is

also already having its problems with the Japanese, especially as regards the increasingly grave issue of supplying the population with food.

It is not only in this matter that the greatest confusion about future political arrangements seems to reign, even among the Japanese themselves. It should indeed be clear to the Japanese that even those Chinese of some repute who are well disposed toward Japan will not volunteer to govern without strong reservations and assurances, particularly in view of what like-minded fellow countrymen have experienced in Manchuria. Or does the Japanese military believe that it can continue to depend on the same makeshift imperial policies with which it has begun to corrupt China so successfully in the north: encouragement of smuggling, establishment of numerous Korean bordellos, and support for the narcotics trade emanating from the Japanese concession in Tientsin—all without even bothering to provide much window-dressing? Because of the difficulties of sending mail by way of Hankow, this report is being presented directly to the Foreign Ministry. The ambassador in Hankow, the German general consul in Shanghai, and the German ambassador in Tokyo will be provided carbon copies of this report by secured post.

ROSEN

#### 21 JANUARY

Krischan Kröger must postpone his departure for a few days yet. He may not leave till Sunday, although he may now go by train; in addition to which he will be guarded by some hulk of a soldier, just to make sure he doesn't jump off on the way. I intend to make more vigorous attempts to obtain a pass myself now, because I would like to try to get to Mutti in Shanghai, if only for a visit. And for me there is only one way out: to tell the truth and say that the company "has no more money." They'll probably give me a funny look—I'm a Siemens manager after all—but that won't bother me. I've already had to hit Krischan Kröger up for 500 dollars just to scrape enough together for January salaries.

#### 22 JANUARY

I've written several times in this diary about the body of the Chinese soldier who was shot while tied to his bamboo bed and who is still lying unburied near my house. My protests and pleas to the Japanese embassy finally to get this corpse buried, or give me permission to bury it, have thus far been fruitless. The body is still lying in the same spot as before, except

that the ropes have been cut and the bamboo bed is now lying about two yards away. I am totally puzzled by the conduct of the Japanese in this matter. On the one hand, they want to be recognized and treated as a great power on a par with European powers, on the other, they are currently displaying a crudity, brutality, and bestiality that bears no comparison except with the hordes of Genghis Khan. I have stopped trying to get the poor devil buried, but I hereby record that he, though very dead, still lies above the earth!

Pastor John Magee accompanied me this morning, along with Cola, who speaks a little Japanese, to return a call by Dr. Hirai, the chief army surgeon. We used the occasion to ask Dr. Hirai for permission to visit the Red Cross Hospital set up in the Foreign Ministry; we have been delivering rice this whole time, but we have been unable to enter since the fall of Nanking, when the Japanese took over its administration. Dr. Hirai seemed dubious about our request, but he promised to present the matter to the general staff. He appears to be a very kindly, genial old gentleman. When we visited him today, he was sitting in an armchair in full uniform and having his portrait done by a Japanese painter.

Magee has been gathering more ugly reports again. The Japanese soldiers are grabbing up every slaughterable animal they can get hold of. Of



One of the victims referred to by Dr. Rosen in his report of 20 January 1938



Japanese patrols rounding up Chinese for execution

late they have been making Chinese boys chase pigs. A couple of the boys who weren't quick enough, or had no success, were bayoneted. The bowels of one of these bayoneted victims are hanging out of his body.

It makes you sick just to hear these sorts of stories from eyewitnesses. One might well believe the Japanese army is made up of ex-convicts. Normal people do not behave this way.

Today we saw a truck full of Chinese soldiers coming from the south and heading toward Hsiakwan. I assume that these were prisoners of war who had been captured between here and Wuhu and were to be executed on the banks of the Yangtze.

Takadama-san paid me a visit. He is the chief of consular police and as such is attached to the Japanese embassy. I got him a car, in the hope of receiving a receipt of requisition in return. Instead of signing the receipt, he stuck it in his pocket without a word, and I was left holding the bag.

Whereas before he has always shown up in a well-fitting blue uniform, he is wearing civilian clothes today. At the moment he's looking for photographs taken of the air war and of Japanese planes that crashed here in Nanking. A good number of the photos were taken by a semiofficial Chinese photo agency. Among the pictures that you could buy from them at a

dollar apiece was a photograph of 16 Japanese fliers who had crashed and ended up as prisoners of war, but whom the Chinese took special care of and treated quite well.

Takadama claims he has a friend who was one of these prisoners, none of whose names is known to us. He's evidently greatly interested in the fate of this captured Japanese pilot and would like to learn more about him from us.

We cannot give him any information because we in fact know nothing. And even if we did, we would still be very careful about the information we supplied; for I've already learned from Fukuda-san, the embassy secretary, that a Japanese officer—and there were several among these pilots—is supposed to commit hara-kiri if he is captured. A Japanese officer dare not be a prisoner of war. So I won't offer any help or information, although I wouldn't mind if a goodly number of Japanese who have committed atrocities here were to commit hara-kiri.

Papa Sperling, or better, Mr. Sperling, inspector general of the Committee Police, has noticed that we're all writing reports. That has awakened an ambition that until now only slumbered deep in his heart, and he cannot rest until he, too, has managed to write a report. Sperling—honor to whom honor is due—saved many people's lives and has probably been through more than any of us. But he is a simple soul, and his report reflects as much. None of us is a born author, but there's really something very funny about what Sperling has managed. He showed me the first draft. I didn't have the heart to try to persuade him to leave out the wonderful descriptions. So let him go ahead and report about the babe at its mother's quivering breast and the naked soldier and his girl!

### *Eduard Sperling's Report*

To the German Embassy

Attn.: Dr. Rosen

The undersigned, along with other gentlemen, remained in Nanking at his own peril during this time of war and at the founding of the International Committee was named inspector general for the Nanking Safety Zone. As such and in the course of my tours of inspection, I observed many things with my own eyes, the good as well as the bad, but more of the latter. My field work was not easy, but 650 well-drilled native policemen, plus a well-organized private corps of police stood at my side. We maintained public order, and I must once again state herewith that I have

great regard and respect for the Chinese race, who, as I have often witnessed, are willing to bear their pain and sorrow without complaint or murmur.

Two hundred thousand refugees, among them many, many women with small babes at their quivering, nursing breasts, driven from house and home, saving no more than their bare lives, sought safety and protection there.

Within the Nanking Safety Zone we had two well organized fire stations. Unfortunately our fire engines and fire trucks were commandeered by the Japanese army on its march into the city, and we were therefore absolutely powerless against the many fires that broke out day and night and could offer no help, indeed perhaps our help was not wanted—sad but true.

With the arrival of Japanese troops, our real troubles began within the Safety Zone, something it in fact was not, for it offered no absolute safety. Despite swastika flags and notices posted by the German embassy in German, English, and Chinese, no regard whatever was paid by the Japanese soldiers to all our arrangements, which had been so calmly and peacefully organized. Houseboys from vacated German residences, which enjoyed the special protection of the German embassy, came to me daily to report that Japanese soldiers had stolen bedding, money, etc., opening locked doors with rifle butts and bayonets or simply battering them down and thus gaining entry, often to no purpose whatever.

On 17 December, Herr Hürter's automobile was stolen. By chance Herr Hatz and I happened to be nearby, along with an official of the Japanese consulate, so that we were able to halt the thief at the next street corner, and with great difficulty and long speeches to regain possession of the vehicle. —During this incident I noticed how little power Japanese civil servants have. With many bows and scrapes, the consular official bade his farewell to these military brigands.

On 21 December, at the behest of Mr. Kikuchi at Japanese headquarters, I arranged for and transported 60 electrical workers in order to put the electricity works in Hsiakwan back in operation; the workers were loathe to work for the Japanese, because 50 of their comrades, who had sought refuge in the International Export Co. in Hsiakwan, had been shot in cold blood by the Japanese.

In well over 80 cases, I was called by Chinese civilians to drive off Japanese soldiers who had forced their way into houses inside the Safety Zone and were violating women and young girls in the most dreadful manner. I did so without any serious difficulties.

On New Year's Day, several Japanese soldiers were making themselves especially comfortable. The mother of a pretty young girl called upon me and pleaded on her knees amid tears that I help her. I drove with



her to a house in the vicinity of Hankow Road. Upon entering the house, I saw the following: A Japanese soldier lay fully unclothed atop a pretty young girl who was weeping terribly. I yelled at the fellow in dreadful tones and in every conceivable language, wishing him "Happy New Year," and in no time he hastened on his way, trousers in hand.

Reports have been made of all such cases, as well as cases of looting, and are kept among the records of the International Committee and may be reviewed at any time.

With German greetings and Heil Hitler!

EDUARD SPERLING

23 JANUARY

Krischan Kröger did indeed leave for Shanghai at 6 o'clock this morning.

Sindberg is back in town again and has brought me six eggs and twenty live ducks, three of which breathed their last inside the sack where they were forced to stay during my office hours. Cook says: "Not matter—*ke shefan*—can eat!"

Takadama visits me in my office, along with eight policemen who are all very upset. The American embassy has telegraphed Washington that a piano was stolen from the American School eight days ago, and now the police have been ordered by Tokyo to see to it that the piano is put back at once; but nobody knows where the instrument is hiding. Presumably it was turned into firewood a long time ago. I shove the whole bunch out the door. I don't want to be bothered with this!

4:30 P. M.

Church service at the Ping Tsang Hsian. Mr. Mills preaches a very fine sermon in which he makes frequent mention of Germany and the Führer, including his efforts to achieve peace.

6:00 P. M.

Pay a call on Dr. Rosen, who went on a longer excursion outside the gates today and returns with the news that the Golf Club has been burned to the ground.

7:00 P. M.

We celebrate the birthday of our director, Mr. Fitch, with a banquet. My present to Fitch is two live, though very skinny ducks. The poor creatures have not been fed a thing for a long time now.

24 JANUARY

General Gao's houseboy shows up at my door and I give him five dollars, because he claims he has nothing to eat. His master, he says, left for Hankow.

The Zone Committee wants to send a telegram via the Christian Council to Siemens China Co., Shanghai, asking them to allow me to stay here until 1 March. So for now I'm postponing my request to the Japanese embassy for a travel pass to Shanghai.

LATER

We're all degenerating around here. We're becoming spineless, losing our respectability. In *Indiscreet Letters from Peking*, a book about the siege of Peking in 1900, Putnam Wheale reports how he and many other Europeans simply joined in the looting. I don't think we're all that far from it ourselves. My houseboy Chang bought an electric table fan worth 38 dollars for \$1.20 today, and expects me to be pleased. A couple of genuine Ming vases, costing one dollar each, gaze at me with reproach from my fireplace mantel.

If I felt like it, I could fill the entire house with cheap curios—meaning stolen and then sold for a song on the black market. Only food is expensive these days: A chicken now costs two dollars, the exact same price as those two Ming vases.

Takadama was back at our headquarters today and brought along some high-ranking police officer who can make himself understood in Chinese. Takadama got caught, by Dr. Bates no less, asking for girls at one of the University refugee camps. He claims now that he was looking for "washerwomen and cooks," which of course no one believes, since it's general knowledge in the Far East that in China you hire men to do the washing and cooking. And so Takadama is demanding that his reputation be restored.

Dr. Smythe, who took down the minutes of the entire discussion, promises him that the various embassies will be notified. That, of course, really rubs Takadama the wrong way, and he departs in great disgruntlement, after first expressly asking that the embassies not be bothered. The entire Safety Zone headquarters is pleased as Punch by his comedown.

John Magee lays a report and a Japanese sidearm on my desk. The report describes how a Japanese soldier threatened a Chinese woman with this same weapon but dropped it and ran when he was surprised by three members of our committee. Smythe beams at the news, which he immediately passes on to the American embassy, since all the eyewitnesses were Americans. Mr. Allison from the American embassy has taken over the task of writing protests for us, which pleases us no end. Allison simply can't get over the way the Japanese are behaving. "Allison in Wonderland" is Dr. Rosen's name for him.

#### 25 JANUARY

John Magee brings two Chinese nurses, a man and a woman, from Waichiaopu Hospital to headquarters, who tell us that a hospital coolie has been stabbed by a Japanese soldier. We listen to our two visitors and record their statements in a confidential file. At the same time we have them tell us all about the hospital at the War Ministry, where conditions are evidently very bad.

There is one case that we don't record: A Chinese worker, who has worked all day for the Japanese, is paid in rice instead of money. He sits down in exhaustion with his family at the table, on which his wife has just placed a bowl of watery rice soup: the humble meal for a family of six. A Japanese soldier passing by plays a little joke and urinates in the half-full rice bowl and laughs as he goes his merry way.

The incident made me think of the poem "*Lewwer duad iis Slaav*";<sup>45</sup> but one simply can't expect a poor Chinese worker to behave like a free Frisian. The Chinese are far too downtrodden, and they patiently submitted to their fate long ago. It is, as I said, an incident that is given the scantest notice. If every case of rape were revenged with murder, a good portion of the occupying troops would have been wiped out by now.

I've just received some mail by way of the German embassy: Mutti writes that I can leave at once on a furlough to Germany. If I don't leave now, I'll have to wait another five years. Well, it won't be as bad as all that.

I'm still waiting for an answer to the Shanghai Christian Council's re-

quest that the company let me stay here until 1 March, although I'm afraid we won't be finished with our work here even then. Personally I'd be very happy to take a vacation now. I am in fact a little weary of China at the moment; but I can't desert the colors now!

10:10 P. M.

Radio Shanghai reports that after a twelve-hour ride in an open railway car, Kröger arrived in Shanghai in good shape on Saturday evening, 23 January.