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THE FATE OF THE SURVIVORS



MORE THAN one scholar of the Nanking massacre has commented upon the dismal manner in which justice was doled out after the IMFTE. While many of the Japanese who tormented the Nanking citizens received full military pensions and benefits from the Japanese government, thousands of their victims suffered (and continue to suffer) lives of silent poverty, shame, or chronic physical and mental pain.

The pivotal moment in this reversal of justice came with the advent of the cold war. The United States had originally sought to implement democracy in Japan by purging Japan's leadership of people involved in the war. But after the war the Soviet Union broke its promises at the Yalta Conference and seized Poland and part of Germany. As the "iron curtain" of communism descended on Eastern

Europe, so did a "bamboo curtain" in China; in 1949 the Communist forces of Mao Tse-tung defeated the armies of Chiang Kai-shek, forcing his government to retreat to the island of Taiwan. Then in 1950 the Korean War broke out, eventually killing 1 million Koreans, a quarter-million Chinese, and thirty-four thousand Americans. With China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea as its new postwar enemies, the United States suddenly viewed Japan as a country of strategic importance. Washington decided to maintain a stable government in Japan in order to better challenge communism in Asia. The United States left the prewar bureaucracy in Japan virtually intact, permitting many of its wartime perpetrators to go unpunished. Therefore, while the Nazi regime was overhauled and replaced and numerous Nazi war criminals were hunted down and brought to trial, many high-ranking wartime Japanese officials returned to power and prospered. In 1957 Japan even elected as prime minister a man who had been imprisoned as a class A war criminal.

At the same time, most if not all of the Nanking massacre survivors vanished from public view. During the cold war and the turbulent years of Mao's reign, Nanking—along with the rest of China—remained isolated from much of the international community. The Chinese Communist government not only severed communication with the West for several decades but expelled many of the remaining foreigners in Nanking, even those who had saved thousands of Chinese lives as administrators of the Nanking Safety Zone.

In the summer of 1995 I became one of the first people from the West to capture on videotape the oral testimonies of several survivors of the Rape of Nanking. Sad to say, if I had visited Nanking only a decade earlier, I would have found many sites of the massacre intact, for the city was then a model of historical preservation and much of its 1930s architecture was still standing. But in the late 1980s and 1990s the city underwent a frenzy of land speculation and construction, demolishing most of its ancient landscape and replacing it with new luxury hotels, factories, skyscrapers, and apartment buildings, under thick blankets of smog. Even much of the famous

Nanking Wall disappeared, with only a few gates remaining as tourist attractions.

If I did not know about the Rape of Nanking before my visit to this teeming, congested, and thriving city, I would have never suspected that it even took place, for the population of the city was at least ten times greater than it had been immediately after the massacre. Underneath the prosperity, however, hidden from view, were the last human links to the past—the elderly survivors of the Nanking massacre. Scholars in the city guided me to a few of them scattered throughout Nanking.

What I found shocked and depressed me. Most lived in dark, squalid apartments cluttered with the debris of poverty and heavy with mildew and humidity. I learned that during the massacre some had received physical injuries so severe they had been prevented from making a decent living for decades. Most lived in poverty so crushing that even a minimal amount of financial compensation from Japan could have greatly improved the conditions of their lives. Even \$100 in reparations from the Japanese to buy an air conditioner could have made a world of difference for many of them.

After the war some of the survivors had clung to the hope that their government would vindicate them by pushing for Japanese reparations and an official apology. This hope, however, was swiftly shattered when the People's Republic of China (PRC), eager to forge an alliance with the Japanese to gain international legitimacy, announced at various times that it had forgiven the Japanese; in 1991 the PRC government even invited the Japanese prime minister to visit mainland China. Hearing such news was like being raped a second time, and some saw themselves as the victims of a double betrayal—first by the KMT soldiers who fled from Nanking before the city collapsed, then by the PRC government, which sold out their futures to the Japanese.

According to Karen Parker, an international human rights attorney, the PRC has never signed a treaty with the Japanese relinquishing its right to seek national reparations for wartime crimes, despite its conciliatory statements toward the Japanese. Moreover, Parker claims that even if such a treaty is made, it

cannot, under the principle of *jus cogens*, infringe upon the right of individual Chinese people to seek reparations for wartime suffering.

But most of the survivors I spoke with in Nanking did not know the intricacies of international law and therefore believed that the PRC had already forfeited their right to seek reparations. Any news of friendly relations between the Chinese and Japanese governments is emotionally devastating to them. One man who was nearly roasted alive by the Japanese during the Rape of Nanking told me that he wept uncontrollably when he heard rumors that the PRC had forgiven the Japanese their past crimes. Another woman whose father was executed during the Nanking massacre said that her mother collapsed in a faint when the news of the prime minister's visit reached her over the radio.*

Equally sobering were the fates of many of the foreigners who organized the Nanking Safety Zone. Although they sacrificed their energy and health to help the Chinese in Nanking, many of these Westerners never quite got what they deserved from life or posterity. There are no famous books devoted to these forgotten heroes of World War II, and certainly there has been

*Not all of the survivors from the Rape of Nanking, however, suffered tragic fates. Sometimes I encountered numerous surprise endings, like the conclusion of the life of commander Tang Sheng-chih. Despite his fiasco at Nanking, Tang went on to enjoy a charmed existence in China. Things were rough for him at first, because the Nanking debacle left him in foul odor with the Nationalist party and forced him to return to his home province of Hunan without an official job. But after the Communists came to power, the new leadership embraced Tang—even though he had been a high-ranking military official in the enemy camp. Swiftly Tang rose to prominence, serving as lieutenant governor of Hunan and a member of the National People's Congress, the National Defense Committee, the Chinese National Party Revolutionary Committee and number of other organizations. Only after serving a long prestigious career in politics did he finally die on April 6, 1970—a revered official in his eighties.

no movie about them that has captured the imagination of the world public as intensely as *Schindler's List*. Their spirit lives mainly in a few archives and attics from Berlin to Sunnysvale—and in the minds of a handful of survivors in China who remember them simply as the living Buddhas who saved Nanking.

Most of the Nanking survivors know the deeds of the Safety Zone leaders, but few are aware of how their lives ultimately played out. The survivors I talked with in China were saddened to learn that some of their protectors eventually endured disgrace and expulsion from China, interrogation and ostracism in their home countries, and irreparable physical and mental wounds—even suicide. Several of these foreign heroes can be considered the belated victims of the Rape of Nanking.

The experiences of Miner Searle Bates and Lewis Smythe illustrate how the facts of their heroism during the Nanking massacre were twisted for political ends. During the Korean War the PRC distorted the history of the massacre in newspaper articles to depict the Americans as the villains of Nanking who assisted the Japanese in the carnage. In the local newspaper, Lewis Smythe saw articles that accused the Safety Zone foreigners of giving over the city to the Japanese and turning over thousands of women for raping. In a similar vein, an article in the national *Xinhua Yuebao* charged that the Americans who remained in Nanking in 1937 “not only responded well to the imperialist policies of the U.S. Government but also protected their companies, churches, schools and residences with the blood and bones of the Chinese people.” The author insisted that the International Safety Zone Committee was an organization of imperialists who worked in “faithful collusion” with the Japanese invaders, and he quoted one Chinese survivor as saying “the American devils called out the names and the Japanese devils carried out the execution.” Pictures of the atrocities were printed with the slogan, “Remember the Nanking massacre, stop American Remilitarization of Japan!”

Such propaganda shocked and frightened Smythe, though his Chinese teacher assured him of his safety. “Dr. Smythe, there are 100,000 people in this city [who] know what you

people did," the teacher said. "There's nothing to worry about." Nevertheless, his days in Nanking were numbered. In 1951 he left his position at Nanking University to join the faculty of Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky the following year. Bates also left Nanking, but not before he had been placed under virtual house arrest by the Communists.

Smythe and Bates did not suffer as much as some of their colleagues. For several committee members, the massacre took years off their lives. David Magee, son of the Reverend John Magee, is certain that the stress of dealing with the Japanese caused the early death of his father. Other zone leaders endured years of mental agony. For example, Edith Fitch Swapp, the daughter of the YMCA secretary George Fitch, said her father had been so traumatized by the Japanese atrocities in Nanking that he often suffered complete amnesia when delivering lectures on the subject. This happened at least twice when Fitch spoke about the Sino-Japanese War in front of large organizations in the United States.

Robert Wilson, the Nanking University Hospital surgeon, paid the price of Nanking with his health. His widow recalled that while other doctors on the zone committee carefully paced themselves and went to Shanghai at least once a week to catch up on sleep, Wilson recklessly worked nonstop without taking breaks. Surgery consumed most of his energy during the day, while Japanese soldiers interrupted his sleep at night when he was called away from home time and again to stop a rape in progress. He operated, it seemed, on adrenaline alone. Finally, his body rebelled. In 1940 violent seizures and even a mental collapse forced Wilson to return to the United States, where he rested for a year in Santa Barbara, California. He never returned to China, nor did he fully recover from the strain. In the United States Wilson not only endured both seizures and nightmares but also experienced trouble focusing his eyes in the morning.

Minnie Vautrin paid the price with her life. The Nanking massacre took a deeper psychic toll on her than any of the other zone leaders or refugees had realized at the time. Few were aware that under a legend that had grown to mythic pro-

portions was a vulnerable, exhausted woman who never recovered, either emotionally or physically, from daily exposure to Japanese violence. Her last diary entry, dated April 14, 1940, reveals her state of mind: "I'm about at the end of my energy. Can no longer forge ahead and make plans for the work, for on every hand there seem to be obstacles of some kind. I wish I could go on furlough at once but who will do the thinking for the Exp. course?"

Two weeks later she suffered a nervous breakdown. At the bottom of the last page of her diary is a sentence that was written, no doubt, by somebody else: "In May 1940 Miss Vautrin's health broke, necessitating her return to the United States." Her niece recalls that Vautrin's colleagues sent her back to the States for medical help, but during the voyage across the Pacific Ocean she tried repeatedly to kill herself. A friend who accompanied Vautrin could barely restrain her from jumping over the side of the ship. Once in the United States, Vautrin entered a psychiatric hospital in Iowa, where she endured electroshock treatment. Upon her release, Vautrin went to work for the United Christian Missionary Society in Indianapolis. Her family in Shepherd, Michigan, wanted to visit Vautrin, but she discouraged them by writing that she would be coming to see them soon. A fortnight later Vautrin was dead. On May 14, 1941, a year to the day she left Nanking, Vautrin sealed the windows and doors of her home with tape, turned on the gas, and committed suicide.

Then there was the fate of John Rabe, whose life remained a mystery to historians for years. Before he was summoned back to Germany, Rabe had promised the Chinese in Nanking that he would publicize the Japanese atrocities in his homeland and try to seek an audience with Hermann Göring and even Adolf Hitler. People in Nanking prayed that Rabe's presentation would compel Nazi leaders to exert pressure on the Japanese government to stop the carnage. Before Rabe's departure, a Chinese doctor had asked Rabe to tell the Germans that the Chinese were not Communists, but peace-loving people who wanted to live in harmony with other nations. After a round of tearful farewell parties in February 1938, Rabe departed for

Germany with a copy of John Magee's film of the Nanking atrocities. After that point in time, he vanished from all the records, and his whereabouts baffled scholars for decades.

I was determined to get to the bottom of the story for two reasons. First, the irony of a kind-hearted Nazi working with American missionaries to save Chinese refugees from Japanese soldiers was too intriguing for me to ignore. And second, I was convinced that something terrible must have happened to Rabe after he returned to Germany. Rabe, after all, did not appear at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East to testify with his colleagues about the horrors of Nanking. Also, an oral history interview with one of his friends indicated that Rabe had somehow run afoul of Hitler's government. But the friend failed to provide specific details, and by the time I came across the transcript he was no longer alive to give me the full story.

Questions nagged me at every turn. Did Rabe actually show the film and the report to Hitler? Or did he, God forbid, get sucked deeper into the Nazi machinery in Germany and contribute to the extermination of the Jews? (This I highly doubted, given his record of heroism at Nanking, but the possibility remained.) Perhaps he had been thrown in prison after the war. Or perhaps no one had ever heard from him again because he became a fugitive from the law, living out his remaining years in a Latin American country. I also wondered whether he had kept a personal diary of the Nanking massacre. But if he kept such papers, they must have been destroyed during the war, incinerated perhaps in an air raid; otherwise, any such diary should have ended up in archives by now, available to the rest of the world. Still, I figured that it would not hurt to write some letters to Germany to see what I could find.

I possessed one important clue about Rabe: he had been apprenticed in Hamburg around the turn of the century. Perhaps he had been born there and still had family in the city. Somehow I had to establish contact with a key source in Hamburg. I turned to an old friend for help. John Taylor, whom scholars called "a national treasure," had worked more than half a century at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and knew

just about every serious historian in the world. If there was an expert somewhere on the planet who had studied the history of the German community in China during World War II, Taylor would probably know who he was. Taylor suggested that I contact the historian Charles Burdick of Ferndale, California. Burdick in turn suggested that I write to the city historian of Hamburg; he also gave me the address of Martha Begemann, a friend of his and, he assured me, a "lovely lady" who was not only well connected in the city but generous with her help. Within a few days I wrote to Begemann about the Rabe mystery as well as to the editor of the largest newspaper in Hamburg, hoping that the latter would run a notice about my search. Then, expecting no immediate reply from either of them, I turned my attention to other things.

To my surprise, a letter came back from Begemann right away. Through a fortuitous chain of events, she had already located Rabe's family. "I am happy I could help you, and it was not so very difficult," she wrote on April 26, 1996. "First of all I wrote to Pastor Müller, in Bavaria, who collected the whereabouts of all former Germans in China. He promptly rang me up the other day telling me the names of Dr. Otto Rabe, son of John Rabe, and his sister Margarethe." She enclosed in her letter a message from Ursula Reinhardt, Rabe's granddaughter in Berlin.

From that moment on, things moved swiftly. Ursula Reinhardt, I learned, had been born in China; as a little girl, she even visited Nanking only months before the city fell. She was Rabe's favorite granddaughter. To my delight, Reinhardt proved endlessly helpful to my inquiries and sent me many long letters. With handwritten text, photographs, and news articles, Reinhardt filled in some of the missing details of Rabe's life.

Rabe kept his promise to the Chinese that he would inform the German authorities of the Japanese horrors in Nanking. On April 15, he and his wife returned to Germany, where he received numerous accolades for his achievements. In Berlin the German secretary of state officially commended Rabe for his work in China; Rabe was awarded the Service Cross of the Red Cross Order. In Stuttgart he was further decorated, receiv-

ing the Silver Poster for Service to Germany Award and the Diamond Order Award on a red, white, and blue necklace from the Chinese government. That May, Rabe publicized the Nanking massacre by lecturing and showing John Magee's film all over Berlin, speaking before packed audiences at the Siemens Company, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Association for the Far East, and the War Ministry. Rabe failed to secure an audience with Adolf Hitler, however, and so on June 8 he sent a letter to the fuhrer, along with a copy of the film and a typewritten report on the Rape of Nanking.

But if Rabe had expected a sympathetic response from Hitler, he was gravely mistaken. A few days later two members of the Gestapo arrived on his doorstep to arrest him. Ursula Reinhardt was there when it happened. She was seven years old, trying on a pair of new roller skates near the door when she saw two official-looking men in black uniforms with white lapels take Rabe away to a waiting car. "My grandfather looked embarrassed and the two men very severe and stiff so that I didn't even dare hug him farewell."

Rabe was interrogated for several hours at Gestapo headquarters. The Gestapo released him only after his employer, Carl Friedrich von Siemen, vouched for his character and promised them that Rabe would refrain from talking of the Japanese so openly. Rabe was warned never to lecture, discuss, or write on the subject again and, most of all, never to show John Magee's film to anyone. After Rabe's release, the Siemens Company immediately sent him abroad, probably for his own protection. For the next few months Rabe worked in Afghanistan, helping German nationals leave the country by way of Turkey. In October the German government returned his report but kept the copy of John Magee's film. (Rabe never found out whether Hitler read the report or saw the film, although his family today is convinced that he did.) The German government informed Rabe that his report was sent to the Ministry of Economics, where it was read by the highest circles of government, but that he should not expect any change in German foreign policy toward Japan because of it.

The next few years proved nightmarish for Rabe. His apart-

ment was bombed out, and the Russian invasion of Berlin reduced his family to poverty. Ursula Reinhardt is convinced that they survived only because they were living in the British, not the Soviet, section of Berlin. Rabe continued to work sporadically for the Siemens Company, translating economic correspondence into English. But the low wage was barely enough to keep his family alive.

The immediate postwar period for Rabe must have been one long string of angry accusations. First he was arrested by the Soviets, who interrogated him for three days and nights before the unrelenting glare of klieg lights. Then he was arrested by the British, who grilled him for an entire day but later gave him a work permit. (The permit, however, had little value for Rabe because the Siemens Company still did not have a permanent position for him.) The final humiliation came when a German acquaintance denounced Rabe and propelled him into a long, drawn-out "de-nazification" process; he had to pay for his own legal defense, in the process losing his work permit and depleting his savings and energy. Crowded into one tiny room with his family, fighting cold and hunger, Rabe was forced to sell, piece by piece, his beloved collection of Chinese artwork to the American army in order to buy beans, bread, and soap. Malnutrition caused him to succumb to skin disease, while sorrow and stress all but destroyed his health. In Nanking he was a legend, but in Germany he was a dying man.

Excerpts from Rabe's diary reveal his state of mind in 1945-46:

There is no job for me at Siemens—I am unemployed . . . According to the Military Government I must give my Standard Life Policies to be registered in Spandau [a district in the northwest of Berlin] at the Stadtkontorbank. The policies of over 1027.19 pounds (the rest of 5000) for which I worked and saved so many years are with Gretel [Margarethe, his daughter] in Bunde. As far as I can see this money is lost now!

Last Sunday I was with Mommy [Dora Rabe, John Rabe's wife] in the Xantener Straße [Rabe's bombed apartment]. They

broke the door in our cellar and stole my typewriter, our radio and more—Meo fatze!

Now Mommy weighs only 44 kg—we have grown very meager. The summer comes to an end—what will winter bring? Where will we get fuel, food and work? I am now translating Timperley's What War Means [a book of documents about the Nanking massacre]. At the moment this brings no money, but perhaps I shall get a better food ration card . . . All Germans suffer as we do.

We suffer hunger and hunger again—I had nothing to tell, so I didn't write down anything. In addition to our meager meal we ate acorn flour soup. Mommy collected the acorns secretly in autumn. Now as the provisions come to an end, day after day we ate stinging nettle, the young leaves taste like spinach.

Yesterday my petition to get de-nazified was rejected. Though I saved the lives of 250,000 Chinese people as the head of the International Committee of the Nanking Safety Zone, my request was refused because I was for a short time the leader of the Ortsgruppenleiter district of the NSDAP in Nanking and a man of my intelligence must not have sought membership of this party. I am going to appeal . . . If they don't give me any possibility to work at SSW [the Siemens Schuckert Werke, the name of Rabe's company] I don't know what to live on. So I must go on to fight—and I am so tired. At the moment I am questioned every day by the police.

If I had heard of any atrocities of the Nazis in China I wouldn't have entered the NSDAP and if any of my opinions as a German man had differed with the opinion of the foreigners in Nanking, the English, the Americans, Danes etc. etc. in Nanking wouldn't have chosen me Chairman of the International Security Committee in Nanking! In Nanking I was the living Buddha for hundreds of thousands of people and here I am a "pariah," an outcast. Oh, if I could only be cured of my homesickness!

On June the 3rd finally I was de-nazified by the de-nazifying commission of the British Sector in Charlottenburg.

The judgment runs: "Though you were deputy leader of the district of the NSDAP and though after your return to Germany you did not resign membership of the NSDAP [Ursula Reinhardt notes that doing so would have been suicide!] the commission decided to sustain your objection because of your successful humanitarian work in China" etc.

With this, the nerve torture finally came to an end. I was congratulated by many friends and directors of the SSW and given a holiday by the firm to recover from the strain.

Today Mommy is out with one of our Chinese wooden idols to go to Dr. Krebs, who now and then provided us with food and was in love with this idol. A Chinese carpet, a present from Kong, we gave to Mrs. Toepfer for three hundred weights of potatoes . . .

By 1948 news of Rabe's plight had reached China. When the Nanking city government announced to its people that Rabe needed help, the response was tremendous, almost reminiscent of the conclusion of Frank Capra's classic film *It's a Wonderful Life*. Within a matter of days the survivors of the massacre raised for Rabe's support \$100 million in Chinese dollars, roughly equivalent at the time to \$2,000 in U.S. dollars—no small amount in 1948. In March that year the mayor of Nanking traveled to Switzerland, where he bought large quantities of milk powder, sausages, tea, coffee, beef, butter, and jam to be delivered to Rabe in four huge packages. From June 1948 until the fall of the capital to the Communists, the people of Nanking also mailed Rabe a bundle of food each month to express their heartfelt thanks for his leadership of the International Safety Zone. The Kuomintang government even offered Rabe free housing in China and a lifelong pension if he ever chose to return.

The packages were a godsend for Rabe and his family. In June 1948 the city of Nanking learned just how badly Rabe had needed them when they received from him several letters of profuse thanks, letters that remain to this day in Chinese archives. Before the packages arrived, the family had been

collecting wild weeds, which the children would eat with soup. The adults subsisted on barely more than dry bread. But at the time when Rabe wrote his letters to Nanking, even bread had disappeared from the Berlin market, making the packages all the more precious to them. The entire family was grateful for the support of the Nanking people, and Rabe himself wrote that the gesture had restored his faith in life.

Rabe died from an artery stroke in 1950. Before his death, he left behind a written legacy of his work in China: more than two thousand pages of documents on the Rape of Nanking that he had meticulously typed, numbered, bound, and even illustrated; these documents included his and other foreigners' eyewitness reports, newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, telegrams, and photographs of the atrocities. No doubt Rabe recognized the historical value of this record; perhaps he even predicted its future publication. A decade after his death, Ursula Reinhardt's mother found the diaries among his papers and offered to give them to her, but the offer came at a bad time: Reinhardt was pregnant and immersed in school examinations; more significantly, she was afraid to read the gruesome contents of the diaries. When she politely declined the offer, John Rabe's son, Dr. Otto Rabe, inherited the papers instead. With him they remained unknown to the world public and even to German historians for half a century.

There are a number of possible reasons for this secrecy. According to the Reinhardts, John Rabe himself had warned his son not to disclose the existence of the diaries. The treatment he had endured under the Gestapo may very well have had something to do with his caution. But there was a more fundamental reason for the family's reluctance to advertise the diaries' existence. Rabe's previous status as a Nazi raised understandable concerns among some members of his family, and in the immediate postwar years it was simply not politically correct to publish the documents of a Nazi or boast about his accomplishments, however worthy they might have been.

The other Nazis on the Nanking International Safety Zone Committee kept quiet about their records as well. Shortly after the discovery of the Rabe papers, I learned of the existence of

another Nazi diary of the Rape of Nanking, entitled "Days of Fate in Nanking" by Christian Kröger. His son, Peter Kröger, had found a copy of the diary in his father's desk after his death at the age of ninety. It was fortunate, he wrote, that my letter reached him when it did; if it had arrived only a month earlier, he would have told me that his father had possessed only a few newspaper articles on the subject. To this day he wonders why his father never told him about the Rape of Nanking or the diary. I suspect the reason is linked to Rabe's downfall and persecution in Germany after he sent the report on the great Rape to Hitler. In fact, at the bottom of the diary is a handwritten scrawl, no doubt Kröger's, that warns: "Contrary to the current opinions of the Hitler government. Consequently I had to be very careful with this."

It was Ursula Reinhardt who finally told the world about Rabe's heroic efforts. When my letter reached her, she decided that the diaries merited closer examination. She borrowed the documents from her uncle and steeled herself to read them. The contents were violent beyond her wildest expectations, causing her to reel from descriptions of women gang-raped by Japanese soldiers in the public streets, of Chinese victims burned alive in Nanking. Months later Reinhardt remained so horrified by her grandfather's report that she did not hesitate to tell a reporter from the *Renming Ribao* (People's Daily) her honest opinion of the Nanking massacre, an opinion certain to provoke controversy: that the Japanese torture of their victims in Nanking surpassed even the Nazis in cruelty, and that the Japanese were far worse than Adolf Hitler himself.

Reinhardt worried about the implications of releasing the diaries to the world. She saw the diaries as political dynamite with the potential to wreck Sino-Japanese relations. But at my urging, and also at the urging of Shao Tzuping, a past president of the Alliance in the Memory of Victims of the Nanking Massacre who worked for the United Nations, she decided to make the diaries public. She spent fifteen hours photocopying them. Shao, who was fearful that right-wing Japanese might break into her house and destroy the diaries or offer the family large sums of money to buy up the originals, hastily flew Ursula

Reinhardt and her husband to New York City, where copies of the diaries were donated to the Yale Divinity School library at a press conference that was first announced by a prominent story in the *New York Times* and then covered by Peter Jennings of ABC-TV, CNN, and other world media organizations on December 12, 1996—the fifty-ninth anniversary of the fall of Nanking.

Historians were unanimous in their proclamation of the diaries' value. Many saw the diaries as more conclusive proof that the Rape of Nanking really did occur, and as an account told from the perspective of a Nazi, they found it fascinating. Rabe's account added authenticity to the American reports of the massacre, not only because a Nazi would have lacked the motive to fabricate stories of the atrocities, but also because Rabe's records included translations of the American diaries from English to German that matched the originals word for word. In the PRC, scholars announced to the *Renming Ribao* that the documents verified and corroborated much of the existing Chinese source material on the massacre. In the United States, William Kirby, a professor of Chinese history at Harvard University, told the *New York Times*: "It's an incredibly gripping and depressing narrative, done very carefully with an enormous amount of detail and drama. It will reopen this case in a very important way in that people can go through the day-by-day account and add 100 to 200 stories to what is popularly known."

Even Japanese historians pronounced the Rabe finding important. Kasahara Tokushi, a professor of modern Chinese history at Utsunomiya University, testified to the *Asahi Shimbun*: "What makes this report significant is the fact that, not only was it compiled by a German, an ally of Japan, Rabe submitted the report to Hitler to make him aware of the atrocities occurring in Nanking. The fact that Rabe, who was a vice-president of the Nazi Party, entreated Hitler, the top leader of a Japanese ally, to intervene testifies to the tremendous scale of the massacre." Hata Ikuhiko, a professor of modern Japanese history at the University of Chiba, added: "The meaning of this report is significant in the sense that a German, whose country was al-

lied with Japan, depicts the atrocity of Nanking objectively. In that sense, it has more value as a historical document than the testimony of the American pastor. At the time, Germany was not sure which side to take, either Japan's or China's. However, Ribbentrop's inauguration as foreign minister fostered Germany's alliance with Japan. It is amazing how brave he was by trying to let Hitler know of the atrocity in Nanking at such a critical time."