

PART II



6

WHAT THE WORLD KNEW

THE WORLD was not kept in the dark about the Rape of Nanking; news of the massacre continuously reached the global public while events unfolded. For months before the fall of Nanking, numerous foreign correspondents lived in the capital to cover its aerial bombardment by Japanese aviators. As the Japanese army neared the doomed capital in early December, reporters provided vivid and almost daily coverage of battles, fires, last-minute evacuations, and the creation of the International Safety Zone. Amazingly, when the massacre began, Japanese newspapers ran photographs of Chinese men being rounded up for execution, heaps of bodies waiting for disposal by the river-side, the killing contests among the Japanese soldiers, and even the shocked commentary of the reporters themselves.

Apparently, before international opinion

kicked in, the first few days of the massacre were a source of tremendous pride to the Japanese government. Celebrations broke out across Japan when the people heard the news of Nanking's defeat. Special meals of Nanking noodles were prepared in Tokyo, and children across Japan carried globe-shaped, candle-lit paper lanterns in evening parades to symbolize the ascendancy of the rising sun. It was only later, after news of the sinking of the *Panay* and the butchering of Nanking citizens had met with international condemnation, that the Japanese government quickly tried to hide what its army had done and replaced the news with propaganda. Thanks to the efforts of a few American journalists, the Japanese as a nation soon faced a scandal of gargantuan proportions.

THE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS

The journalists who had the greatest influence on Western foreign opinion at the time were three American foreign correspondents: Frank Tillman Durdin of the *New York Times*, Archibald Steele of the *Chicago Daily News*, and C. Yates McDaniel of the Associated Press. An adventurous streak ran through all three men. Durdin, a twenty-nine-year-old reporter from Houston, had spent time mopping decks and cleaning winches on a freighter to secure free passage from the United States to China. Once in Shanghai, he worked for a daily English-language newspaper and soon moved on to the *Times* to cover the Sino-Japanese War. Steele was an older correspondent who had reported on the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and the expanding Asian war. McDaniel was perhaps the most daring of the three: before the massacre he had driven through battle lines in the countryside, barely escaping death from exploding shells during his quest "to find the war."

Durdin, Steele, and McDaniel left only a few days after the massacre began, but in the brief time they were in Nanking they made an enormous impact. Not only did they write riveting stories that were splashed across the biggest and most pres-

tigious newspapers in the United States, but they also joined the International Safety Zone Committee in trying to save lives.

The Rape of Nanking forced the reporters out of their normal role as neutral observers and into the war drama as full-fledged participants. Sometimes they starred in their own stories by choosing to protect Chinese citizens from the Japanese invaders. For instance, C. Yates McDaniel assumed the responsibility of guarding the Chinese servants of the U.S. embassy. During the massacre most were so frightened they refused to leave the building even for water, and McDaniel spent hours filling buckets with well water and lugging them back to the embassy for the servants to drink. He tried to find their missing relatives (often retrieving only their bodily remains) and also chased away Japanese soldiers who tried to break into the embassy.

The reporters even tried to save people who were clearly beyond saving, if only to comfort those who were minutes away from death. During the massacre Durdin encountered a Chinese soldier lying on the sidewalk with his jaw shot away and his body bleeding. The soldier held out his hand, which Durdin picked up and held. "I didn't know where to take him or what to do," Durdin remembered years later. "So I just, stupidly, decided to do something. I just put a five-dollar bill in his hand. Which is utterly useless to him, of course, but anyway, somehow I felt the impulse to do something. He was just barely alive."

On December 15, most of the reporters left Nanking for Shanghai to file their stories. Their last day in the city was grisly. On the way to the waterfront, the reporters literally had to drive over several feet of bodies under the Water Gate, where dogs were already starting to gnaw on the corpses. Later, as they waited for their ship to arrive, they saw the Japanese military line up one thousand Chinese men, force them to kneel in small groups, and shoot each of them in the back of the head. During the execution some of the Japanese were laughing and smoking, as if they greatly enjoyed the entire spectacle.

The AP's McDaniel stayed in Nanking a day longer before boarding a destroyer for Shanghai. On December 16, his last

day in the ruined Chinese capital, he saw more corpses and passed a long line of Chinese men with their hands tied. One of them broke away from the group, dropped on his knees, and begged McDaniel to save him from death. "I could do nothing," McDaniel wrote. "My last remembrance of Nanking—dead Chinese, dead Chinese, dead Chinese."

THE NEWSREEL MEN

There were also two American newsreel men near Nanking who risked their lives to film the bombing of the *Panay*. During the bombing Norman Alley of Universal and Eric Mayell of Fox Movietone happened to be on board and obtained superb footage of the action. Though they survived the attack unscathed (Alley emerged from the bombs and machine-gun fire with only a nicked finger and a bullet-perforated hat), another journalist was not so lucky. A splinter hit the Italian correspondent Sandro Sandri in the back of his eye when he followed Alley up a stairway on the *Panay*, and he died only hours later.

While hiding with the surviving *Panay* passengers under the riverbank reeds, Alley wrapped his film and Mayell's with canvas and buried it under the mud when he thought the Japanese were coming ashore to kill them. Later the film was safely unearthed and shipped to the United States, where parts of the newsreel footage of the event ran in movie houses across the country.

The sinking of the *Panay* caused more of an uproar in the United States than all the wholesale rape and slaughter in Nanking combined. On December 13, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced that he was "shocked" at the bombing and demanded immediate compensation from Emperor Hirohito. A few days later, when the exhausted survivors finally reached civilization, the public response only grew worse. Filthy, cold, and wearing only blankets, Chinese quilts, and tatters of clothing, some of the survivors were still in shock or near death. Their stories, along with their photographs, soon appeared in every major newspaper in the country under head-

lines like "Panay Victims Under Japanese Fire for Full Hour," and "Butchery and Looting Reign in Nanking." When Alley's and Mayell's footage hit the theaters, it only aroused more outrage and anti-Japanese sentiment among American audiences.

JAPANESE DAMAGE CONTROL

The moment the foreign correspondents left Nanking, the Japanese sealed off the city to prevent other reporters from coming in. George Fitch witnessed the beginning of this on December 15, the day he drove some of the foreign correspondents out of the city to the riverfront so that they could board a gunboat for Shanghai. When Fitch tried to drive back into Nanking from Hsiakwan, a Japanese sentry stopped him at the gate and absolutely refused to let him reenter. Even Mr. Okamura, a member of the Japanese embassy from Shanghai who accompanied Fitch, was unable to persuade the man to let them through: "The embassy cuts no ice with the army in Japan." In the end Okamura had to take one of the cars to military headquarters to get a special pass for Fitch.

When the Japanese finally permitted a few foreigners to enter the city, they carefully controlled their movements. In February they allowed a few American naval officers to go ashore in Nanking, but only when accompanied by Japanese embassy representatives in a Japanese embassy car. As late as April the Japanese high command prevented most foreigners from freely leaving or entering the city.

To cover up the nauseating details of their military outrages, the Japanese even impeded the return of foreign diplomats to Nanking. But in the end they proved unsuccessful in hiding the truth—especially from the Germans and the Americans.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ON THE RAPE OF NANKING

Hitler's government soon learned the Japanese motives for the delay. "The assumption I made in my previous report that the

Japanese delayed our return in order to have no official witnesses of the atrocities has been confirmed," a German diplomat reported to Berlin in January. "Once the intention of the foreign representatives to return to Nanking had been made known, according to Germans and Americans who were there, there were feverish cleanup efforts undertaken to remove the evidence of the senseless mass murders of civilians, women and children."

The American government also knew what the Japanese were trying to hide. A machine cipher had protected the Japanese Foreign Office's high-level diplomatic messages, but by 1936 cryptanalysts from the U.S. Army's Signal Intelligence Service had cracked the Japanese code, which the Americans dubbed "RED." American intelligence was thus able to intercept and read secret messages between the Japanese leadership in Tokyo and their representatives in Washington, D.C., during the Rape of Nanking. On December 26, 1937, Foreign Minister Hirota Koki sent one such message to Japanese Ambassador Saito Hiroshi in Washington; it emphasized the need to stonewall the American embassy staff to prevent their immediate return to Nanking. "If they do return and receive unfavorable reports on the military's activities from their own nationals and if the diplomats, on receipt of such complaints, forward the reports to their home countries, we shall find ourselves in an exceedingly disadvantageous position," the message read. "We believe, therefore, that the best policy is to do our utmost to hold them here as long as possible. Even if this should cause some hard feeling, we believe that it would be better than running the risk of a clash on the scene."

But the U.S. government did not disclose to the public what it knew at the time and even contributed to Japanese censorship of the truth. For example, Norman Alley, the Universal newsreel man, had shot fifty-three hundred-foot rolls of movie film of the Japanese attack on the *Panay*, but before the film was released to the theaters, President Roosevelt asked him to excise some thirty feet of film that revealed several Japanese bombers shooting at the gunboat at nearly deck level. Alley agreed, even though those thirty feet were probably the best

images in the entire film and certainly the most damning to the Japanese government. Hamilton Darby Perry, author of *The Panay Incident*, believes that Roosevelt wanted to give credence to the Japanese excuse that the attack was a case of mistaken identity, not deliberate design. No doubt the U.S. government was anxious to reach a financial and diplomatic settlement with the Japanese over the bombing and knew that those thirty feet of film would have made such a settlement impossible.

JAPANESE PROPAGANDA

Japanese attempts to influence public opinion were nothing new. Even before the Rape of Nanking, the American intelligence community had seen the Japanese plans, marked "utmost secrecy," to spread favorable propaganda of themselves in the United States. The Japanese government also had a large budget for wooing influential newspaper men, advertising in major newspapers and radio stations, and printing pamphlets and leaflets.

But during the Rape of Nanking the Japanese faced a public relations disaster so titanic it seems almost ridiculous today that they even tried to cover it up. Instead of bringing a measure of discipline to their forces in Nanking, the Japanese marshaled together their resources to launch a blitz of propaganda, which they hoped would somehow obscure the details of one of the greatest bloodbaths of world history.

The Japanese media first proclaimed that all was well and good in the city of Nanking. On December 20, Robert Wilson heard that Domei, the Japanese news agency, had reported that the Nanking population was returning home and everything was normal. "If that is all the news coming out of Nanking, it is due for a big shake up when the real news breaks," Wilson wrote.

Then the Japanese government authorized carefully prepared tours of the city for Japanese visitors. A week after the Domei report, a Japanese merchant ship arrived in Nanking from Shanghai, crowded with Japanese sightseers. "Carefully

they were herded through the few streets now cleared of corpses," George Fitch wrote of the visit. "Graciously they passed sweets to Chinese children and patted their frightened heads." A number of ladies accompanied Japanese business representatives on a tour of the city, and Fitch observed that they seemed "tremendously pleased with themselves, also with Japan's wonderful victory, but of course they hear nothing of the real truth—nor does the rest of the world, I suppose."

In January Japanese newsmen came to Nanking to stage pictures of the city for distribution throughout Japan and the rest of the world. On New Year's Eve the Japanese embassy called together the Chinese managers of the refugee camps for a meeting and told them that "spontaneous" celebrations were to be held in the city the next day. The Chinese were ordered to make thousands of Japanese flags and carry them about in a parade for a motion picture that would illustrate crowds of joyful residents welcoming Japanese soldiers. Japanese photographers also came to Nanking to take pictures of Chinese children receiving medical care from a Japanese army doctor and candy from Japanese soldiers. "But," Lewis Smythe wrote in a letter to his friends, "these acts were not repeated when no camera was around!"

The rankest example of Japanese propaganda was an article that appeared on January 8, 1938, in the *Sin Shun Pao*, a Japanese-controlled newspaper in Shanghai. Under the headline "The Harmonious Atmosphere of Nanking City Develops Enjoyably," the article claimed that "the Imperial Army entered the city, put their bayonets into their sheaths, and stretched forth merciful hands in order to examine and heal," giving the starving and sick masses in Nanking medical aid and food.

Men and women, old and young, bent down to kneel in salutation to the Imperial Army, expressing their respectful intention. . . . The vast hordes gathered around the soldiers beneath the sun flag and red cross flag shouting "Banzai" in order to express their gratitude. . . . Soldiers and the Chinese children are happy together, playing joyfully on the slides. Nanking is now the best place for all countries to watch, for here one breathes the atmosphere of peaceful residence and happy work.

Japanese attempts to gloss over the entire massacre with hokum provoked incredulous responses in the surviving missionary diaries. Here are a few samples:

From the diary of James McCallum, January 9, 1938:

Now the Japanese are trying to discredit our efforts in the Safety Zone. They threaten and intimidate the poor Chinese into repudiating what we have said. . . . Some of the Chinese are even ready to prove that the looting, raping and burning was done by the Chinese and not the Japanese. I feel sometimes that we have been dealing with maniacs and idiots and I marvel that all of us foreigners have come through this ordeal alive.

From the diary of George Fitch, January 11, 1938:

. . . we have seen a couple of issues of a Shanghai Japanese newspaper and two of the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*. Those tell us that even as early as December 28th the stores were rapidly opening up and business returning to normal, that the Japanese were cooperating with us in feeding the poor refugees, that the city had been cleared of *Chinese* looters, and that peace and order now reigned! Well, we'd be tempted to laugh if it wasn't so tragic. It is typical of the lies Japan has been sending abroad ever since the war started.

From the diary of George Fitch, reprinted in *Reader's Digest*:

In March, a government radio station in Tokyo flashed this message to the world: "Hoodlums responsible for so many deaths and such destruction of property in Nanking have been captured and executed. They were found to be discontented soldiers from Chiang Kai-shek's brigades. Now all is quiet and the Japanese army is feeding 300,000 refugees."

From a letter written by Lewis Smythe and his wife on March 8, 1938:

Now the latest is from the Japanese paper that they have found eleven Chinese armed robbers who were to blame for it all!

Well, if they each raped from 100 to 200 women per night and day for two weeks and got away with the reported \$50,000 they were pretty powerful Chinese . . .

Leaflets were another form of Japanese propaganda. During the mass executions Japanese army planes inundated the Nanking population with messages dropped from the air; for example: "All good Chinese who return to their homes will be fed and clothed. Japan wants to be a good neighbor to those Chinese not fooled by monsters who are Chiang Kai-shek's soldiers." The leaflets displayed colorful pictures of a handsome Japanese soldier holding a Chinese child ("Christ-like," as one observer put it) in his arms, with a Chinese mother at his feet bowing her thanks for bags of rice. According to George Fitch, thousands of Chinese actually left the refugee camps for their ruined homes the day the leaflets were dropped.

The Japanese also pasted bright, colorful posters on or near houses in which tragedies had occurred. One featured a Japanese soldier carrying a small child while giving a bucket of rice to his mother and sugar and other food to the father. A German diplomatic report described the poster as depicting "a charming, lovable soldier with cooking implements in hand who carries on his shoulder a Chinese child whose poor but honest Chinese farming parents gaze up at him (the soldier) full of thankfulness and family happiness, up to the good uncle." The writing on the upper right corner said: "Return to your homes! We will give you rice to eat! Trust and rely on the Japanese army, you can get help!"

At the same time the Japanese hosted glamorous receptions and media events in Nanking and Shanghai to divert attention away from the atrocities. In early February a Japanese general invited foreign diplomatic representatives to a tea at the Japanese embassy in Nanking. He boasted that the Japanese army was world-renowned for its discipline, and that not a single violation against discipline had occurred during the Russo-Japanese War and Manchurian campaign. The general said that if for some reason the Japanese had committed outrages in Nanking, it was only because the Chinese people had resisted

them under the instigation of foreign nationals, meaning, of course, the International Safety Zone Committee. But oddly enough, in the same speech the general contradicted his previous statements by admitting that Japanese soldiers had vented their anger upon the population because they had found nothing edible or usable during their advance on Nanking.

The Japanese media circus, however, failed to fool the foreign diplomatic community about the arson, rape, and murder that raged through Nanking. In mid-February the Japanese held a military concert in Shanghai, complete with geishas and press photographers. A German diplomat observed, however, that while the gala affair was taking place, "a mother of an 11-year-old girl who did not want to release the young girl to rape by the soldiers was burnt down with her house."

THE SAFETY ZONE LEADERS FIGHT BACK

The International Safety Zone Committee did all it could to fight the barrage of propaganda. During the first few days of the massacre the zone leaders enlisted the aid of American foreign correspondents like Frank Tillman Durdin, Archibald Steele, and C. Yates McDaniel. But after their departure, the International Committee was left to its own devices. The Japanese government barred other reporters, like Max Copping of the *Chicago Tribune*, from entering Nanking, and the behavior of the Japanese soldiers grew worse when they realized that their actions would not be observed by the world media.

But the Japanese government underestimated the ability of the International Committee to wage its own publicity campaign. One distinguishing trait that united the zone leaders was their superior training in the verbal arts. Almost without exception, they were eloquent writers and speakers. The missionaries, educated at the best universities in America and Europe, had devoted most of their adult years to delivering sermons, writing papers, and working the Christian lecture circuit; some of the professors on the committee had written books. Moreover, as a group they were sophisticated about

working with the media; long before the fall of Nanking they had enjoyed broadcasting speeches over Nanking radio or penning articles about China for the popular press. Finally, the missionaries had an additional advantage the Japanese did not foresee: they had spent their entire lives contemplating the true meaning of hell. Having found one in Nanking, they wasted no time in describing it for the world public. Their hard, cogent prose recaptured the terror that they witnessed:

Complete anarchy has reigned for ten days—it has been hell on earth . . . to have to stand by while even the very poor are having their last possession taken from them—their last coin, their last bit of bedding (and it is freezing weather), the poor ricksha man his ricksha; while thousands of disarmed soldiers who had sought sanctuary with you together with many hundreds of innocent civilians are taken out before your eyes to be shot or used for bayonet practice and you have to listen to the sounds of the guns that are killing them; while a thousand women kneel before you crying hysterically, begging you to save them from the beasts who are preying on them; to stand by and do nothing while your flag is taken down and insulted, not once but a dozen times, and your home is being looted, and then to watch the city you have come to love and the institution to which you have planned to devote your best deliberately and systematically burned by fire—this is a hell I had never before envisaged. (George Fitch, December 24, 1937)

It is a horrible story to try to relate; I know not where to begin nor to end. Never have I heard or read of such brutality. Rape! Rape! We estimate that at least 1,000 cases at night and many by day. In case of resistance or anything that seems like disapproval there is a bayonet stab or bullet. We could write up hundreds of cases a day; people are hysterical; they get down on their knees and “kutow” any time we foreigners appear; they beg for aid. Those who are suspected of being soldiers, as well as others, have been led outside the city and shot down by the hundreds—yes, thousands. . . . Even the poor refugees in certain centers have been robbed again and again until the last cent, almost the last garment and last piece of bedding. . . . Women are being carried off every morning, afternoon and evening. (John McCallum, December 19, 1937)

I think I have said enough of these horrible cases—there are hundreds of thousands of them. Being so many of them finally makes the mind dulled so that you almost cease to be shocked anymore. I did not imagine that such cruel people existed in the modern world. . . . It would seem that only a rare insane person like Jack the Ripper would act so. (John Gillespie Magee, January 28, 1938)

The graphic details of Japanese excesses appeared not only in Safety Zone diaries but in letters and newsletters that were mimeographed or retyped over and over again so that friends, relatives, government officials, and the press could all receive copies. When mailing descriptions of the massacre, the zone leaders often begged the recipients not to disclose authorship of the documents if they were published, for fear that individual committee members would face retribution or expulsion from Nanking. "Please be very careful of this letter as we might all be kicked out if it were published, and that would be a disaster for the Chinese of Nanking," Magee wrote to his family. The Japanese, he explained, would allow the foreigners to leave, "with the greatest pleasure," but would not allow anyone to return.

In the end the persistence, hard work, and caution of the zone leaders paid off. George Fitch's diary was the first one to be leaked out of Nanking, and it created a "sensation" in Shanghai. His stories and others (often with key names deleted) swiftly found their way into mainstream print outlets like *Time*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Far Eastern* magazine, evoking widespread outrage among American readers. Some eventually reemerged in books, such as in the *Manchester Guardian* reporter Harold John Timperley's *Japanese Terror in China* (1938) and Hsu Shuhsi's *Documents of the Nanking Safety Zone* (1939).

To brace their readers, the zone leaders sometimes prefaced their documents with warnings. "What I am about to relate is anything but a pleasant story; in fact, it is so very unpleasant that I cannot recommend anyone without a strong stomach to read it," Fitch wrote in his diary before publication. "For it is a story of such crime and horror as to be almost unbelievable, the story of the depredations of a horde of degraded criminals

of incredible bestiality, on a peaceful, kindly, law-abiding people. . . . I believe it has no parallel in modern history."

True to their predictions, the reports from the International Safety Zone Committee aroused skepticism from the American public. When the article "The Sack of Nanking" appeared in *Reader's Digest*, one subscriber wrote: "It is unbelievable that credence could be given a thing which is so obviously rank propaganda and so reminiscent of the stuff fed the public during the late war." Similar comments came from other subscribers. But the editors at *Reader's Digest* insisted that the stories were true. To defend their credibility, the editors took "considerable pains" to collect more letters from the Safety Zone leaders, which they reprinted in the October 1938 issue of the magazine. "The material we have seen," the editors hastened to add, "would fill an entire issue of this magazine, all of it corroborating the typical extracts which follow."

Fortunately, the crimes of Nanking were recorded not only on paper but on motion picture film, making them almost impossible to deny. John Magee, who possessed an amateur movie camera, filmed several bedridden victims at the University of Nanking Hospital. They were haunting images—the horribly disfigured, charred men the Japanese had tried to burn alive; the enamel-ware shop clerk whose head received a tremendous blow from a Japanese bayonet (six days after entering the hospital, the pulsation of his brain could still clearly be seen); the gang-rape victim whose head was almost cut off by Japanese soldiers.

George Fitch eventually smuggled the film out of China, though at great risk to his life. On January 19, he received a permit to leave Nanking and took a Japanese military train to Shanghai, where he shared the third-class coach with "as unsavory a crowd of soldiers as one could imagine." Sewn into the lining of his camel's hair coat were eight reels of 16-mm negative movie film of Nanking atrocities. There was no doubt in his mind, he told his family later, that if he had been searched and caught with the film, he would have been killed instantly. But luckily Fitch made it to Shanghai, where he took the negatives to the Kodak office and developed four sets of prints. One

of them went to the Nazi Party leader John Rabe before he left Nanking for Germany. Some of the others ended up in the United States, where Fitch and other missionaries showed them during lectures before religious and political groups. Several frames from the films were reprinted in *Life* magazine; segments of actual footage later appeared in Frank Capra's newsreel documentary, *Why We Fight: Battle of China*. Decades later the film reappeared in two historical documentaries released during the 1990s: *Magee's Testament* and *In the Name of the Emperor*.

One can only imagine how the Japanese military leadership smoldered as these written reports, photographs, and even films of Japanese atrocities found their way into the world media. Many of the zone leaders lived in constant terror and believed that the Japanese would kill them all if they could get away with it. Some of the men barricaded themselves in their houses and after dark dared not venture outdoors except in twos or threes. At least one, George Fitch, suspected that there was a price on his head. But despite their fear, they continued to take turns guarding key areas of the zone at night and persisted in publicizing the Japanese atrocities. "The Japanese military hate us worse than the enemy for we have shown them up to the world," John Magee wrote on January 28, 1938. "We are all surprised that none of us have been killed and whether we all get out safely is yet a question."

7

THE OCCUPATION OF NANKING



THE RAPE of Nanking continued for months, although the worst of it was concentrated in the first six to eight weeks. By the spring of 1938 the people of Nanking knew that the massacre was over, and that while they would be occupied they would not necessarily all be killed. As Nanking lay prostrate under Japanese rule, the military began to implement measures to subjugate the entire population.

At first there was not much to subjugate. "You cannot imagine the disorganization of the city," one foreigner wrote, "the dumping of filth and every kind of waste everywhere." Trash and human flesh putrefied in the streets because the Japanese did not permit anything to be done without their permission—not even the disposal of garbage and corpses. Indeed, for days army trucks drove over several feet of corpses under the Water Gate, grinding

over the remains in order to impress upon the populace the terrible results of resisting Japan.

Observers estimated that Japanese damage to public property totaled some \$836 million, in 1939 U.S. dollars, and that the private property loss was at least \$136 million. These figures do not include the cost of irreplaceable cultural artifacts taken by the Japanese army.

Under the direction of the sociologist Lewis Smythe, the International Safety Zone Committee conducted a systematic survey of damage to the Nanking area. Investigators visited every fiftieth inhabited house in the city and also went to every tenth family in every third village in the countryside. In a sixty-page report released in June 1938, Smythe concluded that the 120 air raids that Nanking experienced and the four-day siege of the city did only 1 percent of the damage inflicted by the Japanese army after it entered Nanking.

Arson caused most of the destruction. Fires in Nanking began with the fall of the city and lasted more than six weeks. Soldiers torched buildings under the guidance of officers and even used special chemical strips to set the fires. They burned down churches, embassies, department stores, shops, mansions, and huts—even areas within the Safety Zone. The zone leaders could not put out these fires because their pumps and fire equipment had been stolen by the Japanese. By the end of the first few weeks of the Rape of Nanking, the military had incinerated one-third of the entire city and three-fourths of all the stores.

They burned down the Russian legation embassy, defiled the American embassy, and ransacked almost every foreign house—even those marked clearly with flags or seals. The Japanese reserved American property for special insult: they tore down the American flag six times from the University of Nanking and trampled it in the dirt, threatening to kill anyone who dared to put it up again. But German property suffered almost as badly as American property, despite the alliance between the Nazi and Japanese governments. The Japanese tore down Nazi flags, burned German homes and businesses, and even stole pictures of Hitler and Hindenburg, a “remarkable”

act, one German wrote, "considering the cult of the Japanese for their emperor pictures."

The consequences of the sack of Nanking extended far beyond the city walls. Japanese soldiers devastated the countryside around Nanking, torching entire villages by burning down straw huts and collecting furniture, tools, and farming implements into brick houses so that everything could be incinerated all at once. The region near the city was stripped clean of farm animals, both domestic and otherwise.

The Japanese also used acetylene torches, pistol shots, and hand grenades to blast open vaults in banks, including the personal safe deposit boxes of German officials and residents. Soldiers were permitted to mail back to Japan some of their booty, but most of the goods were confiscated and concentrated for official use. Warehouses filled rapidly with rare jade and porcelain artwork, rugs and paintings, gold and silver treasures. More than two hundred pianos were housed in a single storage hall. In late December the Japanese began to heap stolen goods—jewelry, art, furniture, metal, antiques—on the wharves for transport back to Japan.

Japanese looters usually sought big-ticket items. They coveted foreign cars, prompting committee members to believe that the army would have taken all of them in the city if foreigners were not sitting in them. (Trucks used to cart corpses away were also stolen.) But the Japanese also invaded Nanking University Hospital to steal trivial items—pens, flashlights, and wristwatches from the nurses—and broke into the Safety Zone repeatedly to steal bedding, cooking utensils, and food from the homeless. A German report noted that on December 15 the Japanese had forced five thousand refugees to line up so that they could steal a total of \$180 from them. "Even handfuls of dirty rice were snatched from them by the soldiers," George Fitch wrote. "Death was the sure retort to any complaint."

In January 1938, not one shop was officially open in Nanking except for a military store and the International Committee's

rice shop. The harbor was practically empty of ships. Most of the city lacked electricity, telephone, and water service because the Japanese had rounded up and executed some fifty employees from the local power plant. (The lack of running water made it difficult to bathe, but many women chose not to bathe anyway, in hopes that their unwashed flesh would repel Japanese soldiers intent on raping them.)

Slowly the city came back to life. People could be seen ransacking houses throughout Nanking—ripping out floorboards and wood paneling for firewood and carting away metal and brick to repair their own homes or to sell on the streets to others. On Shanghai Road in the Safety Zone, dense crowds of people clustered before hundreds of vendors who sold every kind of loot imaginable, including doors and windows. This activity jump-started the local economy, for next to the roadside merchants of booty mushroomed new teahouses and restaurants.

On January 1, 1938, the Japanese inaugurated a new city government: the Nanking Self-Government Committee (the *Nanjing zizhi weiyuanhui*)—or “Autonomous Government,” as some of the Westerners in the city called it. The Self-Government Committee was staffed with Chinese puppet officials who controlled the city’s administration, welfare, finance, police, commerce, and traffic. By spring Nanking was outwardly starting to function like a normal city again. Running water, electric lighting, and daily mail service resumed. A Japanese city bus service started, rickshas appeared in the streets, and people could take the train from Nanking to Shanghai. Nanking quickly became a busy shipping center for the Japanese as small locomotives, horses, field pieces, trucks, and other supplies were ferried daily from the city to nearby Pukow.

But signs of a brutal occupation were everywhere. Chinese merchants endured heavy taxes and rent extortion to finance the salaries of the new officials in power. The Japanese also opened up military shops for the Chinese populace that drained the city of Chinese gold and money and replaced it with worthless military currency. The Chinese puppet government compounded the poverty by confiscating valuables and

stocks of inventory that remained in the city, even if the owner was still in town, leading some of the lower Chinese officials to joke cynically among themselves: "We are now doing an authorized plundering."

Far more alarming than the exploitation of the populace by taxes and confiscation was the reappearance of opium in the city. Before the Japanese occupation, opium was an underground narcotic, secretly smoked in the back rooms of Nanking by aristocrats and merchants. But it was not sold openly and brazenly in the streets, nor was it conspicuously paraded before young people. After the fall of the city, people could freely stroll into opium dens without interference from the police. These dens boldly advertised the drug with Chinese character shingles marked *Kuang To*, or "Official Earth"—a term used for opium.

To encourage addiction and further enslave the people, the Japanese routinely used narcotics as payment for labor and prostitution in Nanking. Heroin cigarettes were offered to children as young as ten. Based on his research, the University of Nanking history professor Miner Searle Bates concluded that some fifty thousand people in the Nanking area were using heroin—one-eighth of the population at the time.

Many of the downtrodden citizens of Nanking fell prey to drugs because it gave them the means to escape, if only temporarily, from the misery of their lives. Some even tried to use opium to commit suicide, swallowing large doses as poison. Others turned to crime to support their addiction, causing a wave of banditry to sweep through Nanking. After making conditions ripe for banditry in Nanking, the Japanese used the epidemic of crimes to justify their occupation, preaching the need for imperial law and order.

Japanese employers treated many of the local Chinese laborers worse than slaves, often killing them for the slightest infractions. Survivors later claimed that a harsh environment and capricious punishment were deliberately imposed upon the workplace to keep Chinese employees in a constant state of fear. One Chinese man who worked in a factory seized by the Japanese described the horrors that he witnessed there over the

period of a few months. When a fellow employee was falsely accused by a Japanese overseer of stealing his sweater, he ended up being wrapped with rope, almost mummylike, from feet to throat and then stoned to death with a heap of bricks. By the end of the stoning, the body had lost all shape, and the flesh and bones, entwined with the rope, was thrown to the dogs as food. Another time, the Japanese found four small shoulder pads missing from the factory and discovered they had been used as toilet paper. A twenty-two-year-old woman who admitted that she had used the toilet that day was dragged behind the factory and beheaded with a knife. That very afternoon the same Japanese murderer also killed a teenage boy whom he accused of stealing a pair of slippers.

The Japanese even inflicted medical experiments on the Nanking people. In April 1939, they opened up a facility in the city to conduct research on human guinea pigs whom they called *zaimoku*, or "lumber." On East Chungshan (or Zhongsan) Street, only a short walk from the Yangtze River, the Japanese converted a six-story Chinese hospital into a laboratory for research in epidemics, which they named Unit Ei 1644. Though the laboratory was situated near a military airport, a geisha district, movie theaters, and conspicuous Japanese centers such as the Japanese consulate, the military police office, and the headquarters for the Chinese Expeditionary Force High Command, it remained a closely guarded secret. A high brick wall surrounded the compound, topped with barbed wire; the facility was patrolled by guards; the staff was ordered never to mention Ei 1644 in their letters back to Japan. Inside scientists injected or fed Chinese prisoners with a variety of poisons, germs, and lethal gases; the substances included doses of acetone, arsenate, cyanide, nitrite prussiate, and snake poisons such as cobra, habu, and amagasa venom. The Japanese scientists killed about ten or more people weekly in this manner and disposed of them in the Ei 1644 incinerator.

When the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, the staff of Ei 1644 destroyed their equipment and data, blew up the laboratory, and fled before Chinese troops could reach Nanking. We know about this secret laboratory only because some scien-

tists of the unit confessed their activities to American interrogators after the war.

Those Chinese in the city fortunate enough to escape the physical brutality, the Japanese medical experiments, and the lure of drugs lived under a suffocating atmosphere of military intimidation. The Japanese authorities devised a method of mass control by organizing the population into a pyramidal hierarchy. Every ten households were ordered to appoint a head man, and every ten of those heads were ordered to appoint another head, and so on. Under this system, every man in Nanking was required to carry a registration card signed by his heads of ten, one hundred, and one thousand men attesting to his loyalty to the new government. Every person was also required to report the presence in his household of any unknown or unregistered person to the immediate head of ten, who reported it to his direct head, and on up until the news reached the district officer of the city government. This was not a Japanese invention, but a traditional Chinese system called *baojia*, revived, no doubt, by the Japanese to legitimize their rule among the natives in Nanking.

The Japanese subjected this *baojia* system to frequent tests, sometimes releasing men without passes in the city to see if they could find a place to stay. If the men were not caught and reported within two hours, the heads of the groups in the neighborhoods where they stayed would be severely punished. "This," the committee member Albert Steward wrote in his diary in 1939, "is supposed to be the Japanese way of preserving loyalty to the new regime."

In spite of war, fire, and massacre, Nanking recovered. The dreaded famine never struck, not only because the Japanese eventually permitted shipments of food to enter the city, but because local farmers were able to harvest winter wheat crops after most of the Japanese troops left Nanking to pursue Chinese forces inland. Within the space of a year, much of the agriculture in the fertile Yangtze delta area produced yields close to prewar levels. This is not to say that Nanking did not suffer

food shortages under Japanese occupation. The gardens and farms inside the city walls failed to thrive because soldiers not only confiscated vegetables from them but forced the farmers to dig up and transport the produce for Japanese use. Also, as the war dragged on, Japanese authorities in Nanking tightened their hold on supplies and heavily rationed necessities such as coal and rice. But there is no evidence to suggest that Nanking endured worse hunger or malnutrition than other areas in China. Other cities, such as the new Nationalist capital of Chungking, had suffered far worse food shortages during the war.

Though the sale of opium and heroin thrived under Japanese rule, the population of Nanking remained relatively free of disease. After occupation, Japanese authorities in the city enacted rigorous policies to burn corpses that had perished from illness. They also began an aggressive inoculation program against cholera and typhoid, subjecting the people to shots several times a year. Chinese medical officers waited in the streets and in the train station to administer inoculations to pedestrians or visitors as they came into the city. This created great resentment among the civilians, many of whom feared the needles would kill them. Children of Western missionaries also remember that at the train station Chinese visitors to Nanking were ordered to step into pans of disinfectant—a requirement that many found deeply humiliating. (The Westerners themselves were often sprayed with Lysol upon entering the city.)

Within a few years Nanking pulled itself up from its ruins. In the spring of 1938, men started to venture back to the city—some to examine the damage, others to find work because they had run out of money, still others to see whether conditions were safe enough for their families to return. As reconstruction began, the demand for labor grew. Soon, more men were lured back, and before long their wives and children joined the influx of migration toward Nanking. Within a year and a half, the population had doubled, surging from an estimated 250,000–300,000 people in March 1938 to more than 576,000 people in December 1939. Though the population

failed to reach the 1-million level that the city had enjoyed back in 1936, by 1942 the population peaked at about 700,000 people and stabilized for the duration of the war.

Life under the Japanese was far from pleasant, but a sense of resignation settled over the city as many came to believe that the conquerors were there to stay. Occasionally there was underground resistance—once in a while someone would run into a theater packed with Japanese officials and throw a bomb—but in general such rebellion was sporadic and rare. Most of the hostility against the Japanese was expressed nonviolently, such as in anti-Japanese posters, fliers, and graffiti.

The end of Nanking's ordeal came at last in the summer of 1945. On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an untested uranium bomb on Hiroshima, Japan's eighth-largest city, killing 100,000 of its 245,000 people on the first day. When a Japanese surrender was not forthcoming, the Americans dropped, on August 9, a second, plutonium-type bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. Less than a week later, on August 14, the Japanese made the final decision to surrender.

The Japanese remained in the former capital of China until the day of the surrender, then quickly left the city. Eyewitnesses reported that Japanese soldiers could be seen drinking heavily or weeping in the streets; some heard rumors of unarmed Japanese men being forced to kneel by the side of the road to be beaten by local residents. Retaliation against the Japanese garrison appears to have been limited, however, because many residents hid at home during this chaotic time, too fearful to even celebrate in case the news of a Japanese defeat turned out not to be true. The evacuation was swift, and there was no mass persecution or imprisonment of Japanese soldiers. One Nanking citizen recalls that she stayed in her house for weeks after the Japanese surrendered, and when she reemerged, they were gone.

8

JUDGMENT DAY

EVEN BEFORE World War II drew to a close, the Allies had organized war tribunals to bring Japanese military criminals to justice. Fully expecting a Japanese defeat, the American and Chinese Nationalist governments made preliminary arrangements for the trials. In March 1944, the United Nations created the Investigation of War Crimes Committee; a subcommittee for Far East and Pacific war crimes was established in Chungking, China's wartime capital, after the fall of Nanking. After the Japanese surrender, the planning of the tribunals began in earnest. The Supreme Command of the Allied Powers in Japan worked closely with the Chinese Nationalist government to gather information about Japanese atrocities in China. For the crimes committed during the Rape of Nanking, members of the Japanese establishment stood trial not only in Nanking but in Tokyo itself.

THE NANKING WAR CRIMES TRIAL

The Rape of Nanking had been a deep, festering wound in the city's psyche, a wound that hid years of repressed fear and hatred. When the trials for class B and C war criminals started in the city in August 1946, the wound ruptured, spilling forth all the poison that had accumulated during the war.

Only a handful of Japanese war criminals were tried in Nanking, but they gave the local Chinese citizens a chance to air their grievances and participate in mass catharsis. During the trials, which lasted until February 1947, more than 1,000 people testified about some 460 cases of murder, rape, arson, and looting. The Chinese government had posted notices in the streets of Nanking, urging witnesses to come forward with evidence, while twelve district offices collected statements from people all over the city. One after another, they appeared in the courtroom, listened to the Chinese judge warn them about the five-year sentence for perjury, and then swore an oath of truth by marking printed statements with signatures, seals, fingerprints, or crosses. The witnesses included not only Chinese survivors but some of the Safety Zone leaders, such as Miner Searles Bates and Lewis Smythe.

During the trials evidence that had been painstakingly hidden for years emerged. One of the most famous exhibits was a tiny album of sixteen photographs of atrocities taken by the Japanese themselves. When the negatives were brought to a film development shop during the massacre, the employees secretly duplicated a set of images, which were placed in an album, hidden in the wall of a bathroom, and later secreted under a statue of Buddha. The album passed from hand to hand; men risked their lives to hide it even when the Japanese issued threats and conducted searches for photographic evidence of their crimes. One man even fled from Nanking and wandered from city to city for years like a fugitive because of the sixteen photographs. (The long and complex journey that these pictures made from photo shop to war crimes trial to their final resting place in archives has inspired numerous articles and even a full-length documentary in China.)

But not all of the evidence had taken such a sensational, circuitous path to the courtroom. Some came straight from old newspaper clippings. A *Japan Advertiser* article was brought forth at the trial of two lieutenants, Noda Takeshi and Mukai Toshiaki, who had participated in the famous killing contest described in chapter 2. During the trial both soldiers, of course, denied killing more than 150 people each, one of them blaming the article on the imagination of the foreign correspondents and the other insisting that he lied about the contest to better attract a wife when he returned to Japan. When the verdict was read in the courtroom on December 18, 1947, the Chinese audience whooped, cheered, and wept for joy. Both lieutenants were executed by firing squad.

The focal point of the Nanking war crimes trials was Tani Hisao. In 1937 he had served as lieutenant general of the 6th Division of the Japanese army in Nanking, a division that perpetrated many of the atrocities in the city, especially around Chunghua Gate. In August 1946, Tani was brought back to China for his trial and hauled in a prison van to a detention camp in Nanking. To prepare for his prosecution, forensic experts in white overalls dug open five burial grounds near the Chunghua Gate and exposed thousands of skeletons and skulls, many cracked from gunshot wounds and still stained with dark blood.

It must have been frightening for Tani Hisao to face the concentrated fury of an entire city. As he stood in the docks, his yellow Japanese military uniform stripped of its stars and stripes, more than eighty witnesses came to court to recite an endless litany of horrors. The indictment had been long, listing hundreds of stabbings, burnings, drownings, strangulations, rapes, thefts, and destruction committed by Tani's division. As evidence mounted, all of it damning, Chinese prosecutors even paraded in experts who heightened the drama by displaying heaps of skulls on the courtroom table. On February 6, 1947, the day his verdict was announced, the courtroom was not large enough to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend. More than two thousand spectators packed the courtroom while a loudspeaker broadcast the proceedings to tens of thousands of residents gathered outside.

No one was surprised that the verdict was guilty. On March 10, 1947, the court sentenced Tani Hisao to death after concluding that his forces had violated the Hague Convention concerning "The Customs of War on Land and the Wartime Treatment of Prisoners of War" and helped perpetrate a slaughter that claimed an estimated three hundred thousand lives in Nanking. Most of the city turned out to watch his execution. On April 26, spectators lined the streets and sidewalks as guards led Tani Hisao, his arms bound behind his back, to the execution grounds at Yuhuatai, or Rain Flower Terrace, an area just south of Nanking. There he met his death by gunfire—a fate that many survivors believed to be infinitely more humane than what had befallen most of his victims.

THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, began in the capital of Japan on May 3, 1946. The scope of the trial was staggering. The IMTFE drew more than 200,000 spectators and 419 witnesses. The transcript of the trial spanned 49,000 pages, contained 10 million words, and included 779 affidavits and depositions and 4,336 exhibits. Dubbed "the trial of the century," it lasted for two and a half years—three times as long as the Nuremberg trials. Indeed, the IMTFE would become the longest war crimes trial in history.

The IMTFE commanded enormous media and legal attention, even though only twenty-eight Japanese military and political officials were prosecuted. On any given day more than one thousand people packed the courtroom, including judges, lawyers, foreign correspondents, newsreel camera men, legal staff, MPs, stenographers, and translators. To the left of the press section sat the justices from eleven Allied nations on an elevated platform, to the right the accused. Spectators sat perched in the balconies while lawyers, aides, and clerks stood

below in the pit. Everyone wore earphones because the proceedings were conducted in both English and Japanese.

"At the IMTFE, a thousand My Lais emerged," wrote Arnold Brackman in his book *The Other Nuremberg: The Untold Story of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials*. During the trial thousands of horrific details of Japanese behavior across Asia came together in reams of news reports, surveys, statistics, and witness testimony. The IMTFE not only created an enduring oral history record of the Nanking massacre but proved that the massacre was just a tiny fraction of the totality of atrocities committed by the Japanese during the war. The prosecution learned, among other things, of Japanese medical experiments on their captives, of marches (such as the infamous Bataan Death March) in which gravely ill and starved prisoners dropped dead from exhaustion, of the savage conditions behind the construction of the Siam-Burma Death Railway, of the Japanese "water treatment" that pumped water or kerosene into the noses and mouths of victims until their bowels ruptured, of suspension of POWs by wrists, arms, or legs until their joints were literally ripped from their sockets, of victims being forced to kneel on sharp instruments, of excruciating extractions of nails from fingers, of electric shock torture, of naked women forced to sit on charcoal stoves, of every imaginable form of beating and flogging (a favored method of torture by military police officers involved tying prisoners to trees, surrounding them, and kicking them to death in a method they euphemistically called "triple attack," or "converging from three directions"), even of vivisection and cannibalism. It was later determined that Japanese treatment of their POWs surpassed in brutality even that of the Nazis. Only one in twenty-five American POWs died under Nazi captivity, in contrast to one in three under the Japanese.

The Rape of Nanking—perhaps the highlight of the IMTFE—served as a metaphor for Japanese behavior during the entire span of the war. Brackman, who had covered the IMTFE as a young United Press reporter, pointed out that "the Rape of Nanking was not the kind of isolated incident common to *all* wars. It was deliberate. It was policy. It was known in Tokyo.

For that matter, it was front-page news in the world's press. This was what the IMTFE was all about." The evidence presented at the trial overwhelmed the Japanese defense. Several members of the International Safety Zone Committee flew to Tokyo to read from their diaries, present their own research findings, and answer questions about the Rape of Nanking. The IMTFE verdict unequivocally denounced the Japanese for their crimes in Nanking, citing one observer's claim that the Japanese soldiers were "let loose like a barbarian horde to desecrate the city." The tribunal also concluded that the Japanese government had been well aware of the atrocities in Nanking. The crimes, after all, happened in plain view of the Japanese embassy. The International Committee had made daily visits to representatives at the Japanese Foreign Office and the Japanese embassy to report on the situation, even filing two protests a day for the first six weeks. Joseph Grew, the American ambassador in Tokyo, held personal meetings with top Japanese officials, including Hirota Koki, to inform them of the atrocities. Moreover, Ito Nobufumo, Japan's minister at large in China in 1937 and 1938, had also forwarded reports of Japanese outrages in China to Hirota.

The brunt of the blame for the Nanking atrocities fell on Matsui Iwane. As the commander of Japan's Central China Expeditionary Force at the time, Matsui served as the most obvious target: one month before the Nanking invasion, Matsui had boasted that his mission was to "chastise the Nanking government and the outrageous Chinese." On December 17, 1937, he had entered the city with great pomp and ceremony, perched on top of a chestnut horse, as soldiers cheered him on. But historians have suggested that Matsui may have served as the scapegoat for the Rape of Nanking. A sickly and frail man suffering from tuberculosis, Matsui was not even in Nanking when the city fell.

Because of the lack of literature on the subject, Matsui's responsibility for the crimes at Nanking remains a subject for further research and debate. The evidence suggests, however, that the tubercular general was guilt-stricken over the entire episode, no doubt because he was unable to maintain order in the Japanese army after Asaka took command. To atone for the

sins of Nanking, Matsui erected a shrine of remorse on a hill in his hometown of Atami, a beach resort some fifty miles down the coast from Tokyo. Sacks of clay imported from the banks of the Yangtze River were mixed with native Japanese soil and then sculpted, baked, and glazed into the statue of Kanon, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy. Before this statue a priestess was hired by the Matsui family to chant prayers and weep for the Chinese war dead.

But a public show of self-flagellation is one thing, and the willingness to seek justice for the wronged quite another. To this day Matsui's behavior at the IMTFE remains perplexing. During his testimony he failed to disclose the full story of what happened in Nanking, an account that would have implicated the imperial family. Instead, he waffled between lies and occasional self-denunciation. He tried to make excuses for the atrocities of Nanking, sometimes denied them completely, and irritated the prosecution with his circuitous, vaguely mystical discussions about Buddhism and the nature of Sino-Japanese friendship. But never once did he point accusatory fingers at the imperial throne. Rather, he blamed himself for failing to properly guide Prince Asaka and the emperor, and he told the prosecutors that it was his duty to die for them. "I am happy to end this way," he said. "I am really eager to die at any time."

He got his wish. The tribunal concluded that the Rape of Nanking was "either secretly ordered or willfully committed" and sentenced Matsui to death. He was not the only one; a total of seven Japanese class A war criminals, including Japanese Foreign Minister Hirota Koki, were judged guilty by the IMTFE and later hanged at the Sugamo Prison in Tokyo.

Unfortunately, many of the chief culprits of the Rape of Nanking—or those who might have exercised their royal authority to stop the Rape—never spent a day in court.

General Nakajima Kesago died shortly after Japan's surrender. The man whose troops had committed some of the worst Nanking outrages passed away on October 28, 1945, apparently of uremia and cirrhosis of the liver. There were rumors

that Nakajima was an alcoholic and committed suicide, but his eldest son said that his illness was caused by inhalation of gases to which he was exposed when employed in chemical weapons research and education. By coincidence, an American MP who came to question Nakajima about war crimes arrived at his door just as a physician was informing the family that Nakajima had died. His biographer Kimura Kuninori—who believes Nakajima followed a “take no prisoners” policy in Nanking—quoted Nakajima’s son as saying: “Had my father lived, he probably would not have escaped execution.”

General Yanagawa Heisuke also died in 1945. Before his death by heart attack, however, he gave several interviews to his friend Sugawara Yutaka, who used seven volumes of notes from their conversations together to publish a book. Though the book is mostly laudatory of Yanagawa’s military exploits (“He was a rare man and a great talent” Sugawara writes) it does address the subject of the Rape of Nanking. Yanagawa simply pooh-poohed the entire episode, assuring Sugawara that reports of his men’s atrocities were “groundless rumors.” Rather, he boasted that his soldiers had followed such strict military discipline in Nanking that even when quartered in Chinese homes they took care to wear slippers.

Hirohito lived long after Japan’s surrender but never faced a full moral accounting for his activities during the war. In exchange for Japan’s surrender, the American government granted him, the emperor of Japan, immunity from trial, so he was not called in as a defendant or even a witness. Because the terms of the surrender exonerated all members of the Japanese imperial family, Hirohito’s uncle Prince Asaka (under whose command the “Kill All Captives” order was forged) also escaped justice, exempting him from having to appear at the IMTFE at all.

The decision to give Hirohito immunity from war responsibility and, still worse, the decision to keep him on the throne, later impeded the Japanese people’s own historical awareness of their World War II crimes. According to Herbert Bix, a biographer of Hirohito and prominent Japan scholar: “Many would find it difficult to believe that they had been accomplices in aggression and murder on a near-genocidal scale when the em-

peror whom they had served so loyally never had to bear responsibility for his own speech and actions . . . MacArthur helped prepare the ground for future Japanese conservative interpretations of the postwar monarchy that denied the Showa emperor had ever held real power."

The details of Emperor Hirohito's role in the Rape of Nanking remain a controversial subject because of the dearth of primary source material available. Unlike the Nazi government records, which were confiscated and microfilmed by the Allies and later used as evidence in war crimes trials, the Japanese deliberately destroyed, hid or falsified most of their secret wartime documents before General MacArthur arrived. Even most of the Japanese high-level military records that the American occupation forces did manage to seize in 1945—documents which one professor called "a priceless historical treasure"—were inexplicably and irresponsibly returned to Japan by the American government little more than a decade later before they could be properly microfilmed. For these reasons it is practically impossible today to prove whether Emperor Hirohito planned, approved of, or even knew of the atrocities in Nanking.

Perhaps the only English-language book that has attempted to explain Hirohito's involvement in the Nanking massacre is *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy* by David Bergamini. In his book, Bergamini claims that the Japanese laid out an intricate blueprint for world conquest, and that the person who made the decision to invade Nanking was Hirohito himself. Bergamini offers a riveting narrative (complete, apparently, with quotes from Japanese top-secret messages) to explain the chain of events leading to the tragedy at Nanking. Unfortunately, Bergamini's book was seriously criticized by reputable historians who claimed that he cited sources that simply did not exist or quoted mysterious unnamed informants who said amazing but unverifiable things.

Adding to the confusion is the debate among scholars on whether a Japanese imperial conspiracy to conquer the world had ever existed. For years it was believed that Prime Minister Tanaka Gi-ichi had submitted a secret report to the throne

during the Far Eastern Conference of 1927, a report known as the "Tanaka Memorial" that purportedly encapsulated Japanese ambitions at the time. "In order to conquer the world, we must first conquer China," the report allegedly dictated. "But in order to conquer China, we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia . . . If we succeed in conquering China the rest of the Asiatic countries and South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us. Then the world will realize that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare to violate our rights. This is the plan left to us by Emperor Meiji, the success of which is essential to our national existence."

Today, this report is generally considered by scholars to be a forgery, one with possible Russian origins. But when the Memorial first emerged in Peking in September 1929, it led many to believe that Japanese aggression against China was part of a well-coordinated Japanese plot to conquer the globe. The English text of the Tanaka Memorial later appeared in English in a Shanghai newspaper and even inspired the classic Hollywood movie *Blood on the Sun*, in which James Cagney attempts to steal Japan's master plan in order to save the world. Today the Tanaka Memorial still has a considerable grasp on the world imagination: many Chinese historians believe that the Tanaka Memorial is authentic, and Chinese encyclopedias and dictionaries as well as English-language newspaper and wire service articles continue to cite the Memorial as historical fact.

Currently, no reputable historian of Japan believes that there was a preplanned conspiracy by Japan to conquer the world. An examination of the chaos in the Japanese state administration in the 1920s and 1930s suggests that such a conspiracy was unlikely: the Japanese Army hated the Navy, the High Command in Tokyo didn't know what the Kwantung Army in Manchuria was doing until it was too late, and relations between the Foreign Ministry and the armed services were often chilly to the point of silence.

However, many scholars believe that Hirohito must have known about the Rape of Nanking. (Herbert Bix personally thinks it is "inconceivable" that Hirohito could not have known.) First, it was front-page news in the world press. Sec-

only, his own brother could have told him the gory details. Back in 1943, Prince Mikasa Takahito, the youngest brother of Emperor Hirohito, spent a year as a staff officer at the Nanking headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Army's expeditionary force in China, where he heard a young officer speak of using Chinese prisoners for live bayonet practice in order to train new recruits. "It helps them acquire guts," the officer told the prince. The appalled Mikasa described the practice as "truly a horrible scene that can only be termed a massacre." Out of a "desperate desire to bring the war to a close," the prince distributed a questionnaire to young staff officers to seek their opinions about the war, prepared a lecture that denounced Japanese aggression in China, and wrote the report "Reflections as a Japanese on the Sino-Japanese War." The paper was deemed controversial and dangerous, but Mikasa got away with writing it because of his royal blood. The Japanese military later confiscated and destroyed most of the copies, but a single copy survived, and it was later discovered in the microfilm collections of the national parliamentary archives.

If this story had come out during the Japanese war tribunals, it might have implicated the royal family and military command alike for their failure to crack down on war criminals when news of misdeeds reached them. (Mikasa admitted that he reported on the China situation in "bits and pieces" to his brother the emperor and even watched with him a newsreel about Japanese atrocities in China.) But Mikasa's confession did not emerge until 1994—almost half a century after the IMTFE.

We will probably never know exactly what news Hirohito received about Nanking as the massacre was happening, but the record suggests that he was exceptionally pleased by it. The day after the fall of the Chinese capital, the emperor expressed his "extreme satisfaction" to Prince Kanin, the grand-uncle of the empress and chief of the army general staff, and the prince, in turn, sent a telegram of congratulations to Matsui Iwane: "Not since history began has there been such an extraordinary military exploit." Hirohito even invited Matsui, Asaka, and Yanagawa to his summer villa to present them with silver vases embossed with the imperial chrysanthemum.

In the end, the royal family not only escaped scrutiny at the tribunal but went on to enjoy lives of leisure and national adoration. Prince Asaka, for one, retired to watch weekly newsreels with Hirohito, to sit with him on the Council of Princes of the Blood, and to play golf with him until the end of his days. (Asaka not only excelled at the sport but took an active interest in golf course development, becoming the architect of the Plateau Golf Course at the Dai-Hakone Country Club, in the resort town of Hakone on the east coast of Japan.) Hirohito himself lived peacefully and in dignity until his death in 1989.

9

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."