

Nanking,
14 March, 1938.

Dear Timperley:-

Study of your materials was followed by a real conference on the subject, held today with Mills and Smythe.

They both feel strongly that the job should not be too rushed, and that some one from our group here (preferably myself, they say) should go over it with you before sending to England. They wish to guard against errors that would be inevitable on the part of any one who had not been here, but which would give a handle for rebuttal by the Japanese and might weaken total effect anyhow. Also, we wish to guard against any more of personalization than is really necessary; though we don't want to be excessively timid. That would require discussion in detail, with opportunity for give-and-take.

They suggest that I should go to Shanghai in about 7-10 days' time, according to opportunities in transportation. We hope that the railway will be available, but cannot be certain. A stay of a week should be of considerable assistance to you.

Another reason for this recommendation is that we all fear a tendency to "atrocity stories", at least in the impression given to many readers. And that closes some minds at once. Title should guard carefully against such a suggestion. More fundamentally, we think your true purpose is a demonstration of the cruelty and injury of such warfare to normal life. For that purpose, the rural and urban economic inquiries which we are now undertaking (rural men are three days out; city men at work today) and hope to complete in two weeks -- a little more time for analysis and interpretation of results, though tabulation will be carried along day-by-day for the city investigators, and the rural fellows will not all return on the same day, -- should be very valuable in lending body and balance to the more sensational human injuries. Complete economic dislocation, lasting damage to property and means of production, dislocation of ~~the~~ ^{the} social life and connections of millions of people those are in some senses more basic than shootings and rape. And we will have really good stuff by sampling methods that will give really good calculations for the totals in this area in and near Nanking. At this moment we can only guess at such things, but in April we can know with some meaningfulness if not with completeness. Of course the main purpose is to plan relief more intelligently, but we are covering the war damage to buildings and property and life and limb by extensive inquiry.

Likewise there is important information almost ready as to burial records of the Red Swastika Society (which will show perhaps 40,000 unarmed persons shot or bayoneted in Nanking or close to its walls) and some information on rape from family investigators covering thousands of homes, but not yet assembled from individual sheets.

I have secured the actual papers or the promises for the following: letters by Smythe; reports from Tsehsiahsan (cement works between here and Lungtan, where a Dane and a German have helped with refugees that numbered 24,000 at one time -- the Dane very adventurous and always out looking for trouble, which he found in plenty). Probably you can see Miss Vautrin's diary with Miss R. Chester in Shanghai, which will give some idea of the sufferings and problems of thousands of women and children refugees. I will also try Magee, Forster, and Wilson for items not yet tapped.

We question whether Fitch's diary and my letter are adequate for the heavy burden you put upon them, and think they should be utilized for information rather than put in as narratives or records in themselves. With Smythe's full case-lists and the new stuff promised, or already in hand here for copying, you will have plenty from Nanking to permit a subject-treatment or a composite narrative as you prefer, drawing upon these various sources.

We don't want to get the Relief Committee boxed for the future, nor individuals expelled or barred from such work. Perhaps you could say that you had been able to draw upon the Committee's correspondence by acquaintance with relief organizations in Shanghai which had received copies in order that they might understand, cooperate, and so on. You get the drift. Somehow there must be cushions, for this will be a terrible shock even to the Japanese on the Embassy staff. We are convinced that not one of them ever read more than a fraction of the whole correspondenced usually contenting himself with that part which somebody forced upon him individually in the course of an interview. They will be terribly aggr, and there must be scapegoat always. Even the better Japanese seem remarkably insulated against the depth and breadth of what the Army has done. It's all passed off so nicely with a word about Belgium, or "all armies". Incidentally, if you know anything authoritative about the quantity of murder of civilians and so on in Belgium, including rape, I'd like it for comparative purposes. I have marked some passages in my books for copying, but they are not comprehensive.

We have very little information about commanders and units as such. But we can get the names of several of the "detachments" that have been here at various times, supposably named for their commanders. I'll try on this right away. There are no distinctive marks on the soldiers.

Remarks on your TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS. 1. Not sure of a policy of terrorization, though some things look like it. There was also a general hatred and contempt, with a bad carryover from the punitive idea sponsored in highest quarters, and an artificially stimulated fear of snipers or of hidden Chinese soldiers -- quite ridiculously at variance with the facts of their own experience. After command did forbid the wrongful acts (repeatedly) there was no genuine effort at enforcement. 3. Civilians did a little for moderation, but really very little, and our final judgment of them is very low both in attitude and in ability, to say nothing of their powerlessness before their masters. 5. Sadly true, but don't overdo it or generalize too much.

Surprised to find a reversal of previous attitudes today, when I was asked to consider a visit to Japan a month or two later. More of that anon, but will be glad for any tips whatsoever. Allison says his wife writes from Tokyo that certain Japanese soldiers have sent letters of shame for what was done in Nanking. Let's hope so.

Your enclosures from Moosa and Leighton Stuart were most valuable.

I want to write a little commentary on that Mukden Anniversary piece, setting it against the usual condemnation of the Chinese as anti-foreign, and restrained only by Japan. By the way, the newspaper office admits that the article came directly from the Army with orders to print it in display.

This has been written wearily and with three interruptions.

I've been abrupt in suggestions, as you implied, and you know it is because there is confidence in the usefulness of your idea and in the character and experience that you bring to it. Otherwise the group here would be decidedly non-cooperative.

With best regards,