

attributed to
Lewis C. Smythe

NANKING OUTRAGES

Not for Publication

Nanking, 10 Jan. 1938

Dear Friends,

A few hasty jottings amid rape and bayonet stabs and reckless shooting, to be sent on the first foreign available since the situation developed after the Japanese entry-- a U.S. Navy tug engaged in salvage work on the "Panay". Friends in Shanghai will pick this up from the Consulate-General, and will get it away somehow on a foreign boat without censorship.

Things have eased a good deal since New Year's within the crowded Safety Zone, largely through the departure of the main hordes of soldiers. "Restoration of discipline" very scrappy indeed, and even the military police have raped and robbed and ignored their duties. A new turn may come at any moment, through fresh arrivals or vacillations in action. There is no policy visible. At least foreign diplomats have been allowed to re-enter (this week), which seems to indicate a desire for stabilization.

More than ten thousand unarmed persons have been killed in cold blood. Most of my trusted friends would put the figure much higher. There were Chinese Soldiers who threw down their arms of surrendered after being trapped; and civilians recklessly shot and bayoneted, often without even the pretext that they were soldiers, including not a few women and children. Able German colleagues put the cases of rape at 20,000. I should say not less than 8,000, and it might be anywhere above that. On University property alone, including some of our staff families and the houses of Americans now occupied by Americans, I have details of more than 100 cases and assurance of some 300. You can scarcely imagine the anguish and terror. Girls as low as 11 and women as old as 53 have been raped on University Property alone. On the Seminary Compound 17 soldiers raped one woman successively in broad daylight. In fact, about one-third of the cases are in the daytime.

Practically every building in the city has been robbed repeatedly by soldiers, including the American, British and German Embassies or Ambassadors' residences, and a high percentage of all foreign property. Vehicles of all sorts, food, clothing, bedding, money, watches, some rugs and pictures, miscellaneous valuables, are the main things sought. This still goes on, especially outside the zone. There is not a store in Nanking, save the International Committee's rice shop and a military store. Most of the shops after free-for-all breaking and pilfering were systematically stripped by gangs of soldiers working with trucks, often under the observed direction of officers, and then burned. We still have several fires a day. Many sections of houses have also been burned deliberately. We have several samples of the chemical strips used by soldiers for this purpose, and have inspected all phases of the process.

Most of the refugees were robbed of their money and at least part of their scanty clothing and bedding and food. That was an utterly heartless performance, resulting in despair on every face for the first week or ten days. You can imagine the outlook for work and life in this city with shops and tools gone, no banks or communications as yet, some important blocks of houses burned out, everything else plundered and now open to cold and starving people. Some 250,000 are here, almost all in the Safety Zone and fully 100,000 entirely dependent on the International Committee for food and shelter. Others scraping along on tiny holdovers of rice and the proceeds of direct or indirect looting. Japanese supply departments are beginning to let out for monetary and political reasons a little of the rice confiscated from considerable Chinese Government supplies, though the soldiers burned not small reserves. But what next, When I asked Japanese officials about post and telegraph services, they said, "There is no plan."

The International Committee has been a great help, with a story little short of miraculous. Three Germans have done splendidly, and I'd almost wear a Nazi badge to keep fellowship with them! A Dane and three Englishmen aided a good deal in the preliminary stages, but were pulled out by their companies and Governments before the Chinese retired from Nanking. So the bulk of the work has come on American missionaries, only none of whom have been outside the confining strain of the Hospital filled with bullet and bayonet cases; and of course some of us have had varying duties and conceptions of duty. Naturally there has been considerable Chinese aid and cooperation from the beginning, and most of the detail has had to be done by and through Chinese. Yet at some stages nothing could move, not even one truck of rice, without the actual presence of a foreigner willing to stand up to a gun when necessary. We have taken some big risks and some heavy wallops (literally as well as figuratively), but have been allowed to get away with far more than the situation seems to permit. We have blocked many robberies, persuaded or bluffed many contingents of soldiers away from rape and intended rape, besides all the general work of feeding, sheltering, negotiation, protecting and protesting after sticking our eyes and noses into everything that has gone on. It is no wonder that a Japanese Embassy officer told us the generals were angry at having to complete their occupation under the eyes of neutral observers, claiming (ignorantly, of course) that never in the history of the world had that been true before.

Sometimes we have failed cold, but the percentage of success is still big enough to justify considerable effort. We must recognize that although in some points the relationship is far from satisfactory, we have gained a good deal by the effort of the Japanese Embassy to put cushions between the Army and foreign interests, the relative decency of their Consular Police (few and not altogether anglophobic), and by the fact that the main figures of the enterprise have been Germans of the Anti-Comintern Pact and Americans to be appeased after the barbarous attacks on American ships. The Japanese refused twice to send out for us a mild request for the return of American officials, because of the great number of property cases and flag problems; and even with this week's improvement we are still in practical isolation even from the countryside and river-front, except for the opportunities of American naval wireless through the Embassy for a limited scope of messages.

No mail since about December 1, and that most tardy. Electric light in our house last night by special arrangement (seven Americans, among whom were personal links to the staff of the power plant). Japanese shot 43 of the 54 technical men on the staff, falsely accusing them of being Government employees. Bombing, shelling and fires on top of that, and you can imagine that utilities are slow in resumption. But insecurity of workmen and their families was the main stumbling-block at that. Water depends on electric pumps, but we are beginning to get a trickle at low levels of the city. No dreams of telephone or bus or even rickshas. The Zone is about two square miles in area, not all built up. In this concentration we have had no accidental fire of notice, and practically no crime or violence except that of soldiers, until this present week's turning to loot outside the area in open buildings - especially for fuel. No armed police.

The University has 30,000 refugees on various parts of its property. Problems of administration are fearful, even on the low scale of living that can be maintained. We have very few indeed of regular University staff and servants, most of whom have done splendid work. There are many volunteer helpers hastily got together by the International Committee, who have come with considerable adulteration of motives. Now we must add delation and the intimidation and purchase of agents by the Japanese. I'm in three hot spots right now over this sort of business, and begin to wonder whether they are out to get me or the University into a corner. For instance, the two occurring

in the past three days involve a contradiction of my report of losses for the University. Middle School (thus putting me down for lying and cheating to the Japanese, and striking between me and a key man in that tremendous refugee camp); and a severe shove through the gate of a terrible military police office when I tried to inquire about a good-spirited interpreter whom they had carried off bound as for death (after he had refused to leave the Middle School camp to accept their offers or submit to their threats). Incidentally, police from that office last night took a woman from a University house and raped her thoroughly, after putting a bayonet against our man R, when he happened along at the wrong time. So you get a little of the flavor of our daily diet while struggling to do something for these wretched but remarkably durable and cheerful people.

The real military police numbered 17 at the time that over 50,000 soldiers were turned loose on Nanking, and for days we never saw one. Eventually soldiers were given special armbands and called police, which means that they have special preserves for their own misdeeds, and keep out some of the ordinary run. We have seen men scolded for being caught by officers in the act of rape, and let go without a tie; others made to salute an officer following robbery. One motorized raid on the University at night was actually conducted by officers themselves, who pinned our watchman to the wall and raped three women refugees before carrying off one of them (another was a girl twelve years old).

L had every reason to think I was finished or wounded on the "Panay", for my messages about remaining in Nanking had not got through to her and the papers in Tokyo implied that all foreigners were taken on the boats. But after 48 hours of distress she read in a Japanese paper an interview that a couple of dumb-bells got out of me shortly after the Japanese entry. The paper responded to the thanks of her friends by rushing out reporters and a photographer on the 17th. (entry on 13th; "Panay" sinking on 12th, reported slowly). One of their men brought me a picture and a letter New Year's Day, the latter of course dutifully read in the Japanese Embassy. Thus we were saved a good deal of prolonged concern. I have no other word since November 8th save that letter, although she wrote and wired many times by all sorts of routes and agencies. On December 17th she expected to come to Shanghai the first week of January, but I have heard nothing more. Perhaps a recent radio through the newly arrived gunboat will get some information from Shanghai.

However, I am not allowed to pass through a Nanking gate, and she would not be allowed to start west of Shanghai even if means of communication were open to her. How long this state will continue we do not know. Chinese have been greatly afraid lost Americans or all foreigners would be expelled from Nanking, but they seem more afraid to have us go than to have us stay - so far. Meanwhile I try to keep on friendly terms with Embassy staff and a few Japanese in semi-official posts, and even with a few of the less violent and treacherous of the police and soldiers. But it's hard going. Four weeks today. The shells and bombs were almost comfortable, if we had only known it. And what's ahead.

P.S. The disorder of this letter corresponds to that outside. I should have said at the start that the Chinese armies in an ill-conceived military program burned many villages and blocks of houses outside the wall, and did some casual looting of shops and houses for food. Otherwise they caused little trouble, though there was great anxiety over their obvious collapse, their preparations for street fighting that never occurred, and their possible injuring of the civilian population. The Chinese failure was disgraceful in the flight of high officers, and in its lack of military co-ordination and determination. But comparatively considered, the ordinary soldiers

3

were very decent.

It is hardly necessary to say that this letter is not written to stir up animosity against the Japanese people. If the facts speak of needless savagery on the part of a modern army, one that covers its crimes with lying propaganda, let them speak. To me the big thing is the unmeasured misery from this war of conquest, misery multiplied by license and stupidity, and projected far into a gloomy future.

Please send by safe means to N.Y. Ass. Boards Chr. Coll. in China, 150 Fifth Ave. Make local copies if you wish.

8 January, 1938

American Embassy
Nanking.
Dear Mr. A

Herewith please find the statement you requested regarding the immediate situation as affecting "me and mine", in this case the University of Nanking; with brief recommendations as to desired improvements.

The statement is written without regard to the general war situation, and is concerned primarily with our present program of bare maintenance of plant and skeleton staff in Nanking; not with thought of return of the major part of our staff and resumption of something like our usual program. I hope that a member of the Hospital staff will report separately to you, for that unit of our institution has its special services and problems at this time though it would share in most of what I say for the University as a whole.

Yours faithfully

NOTES ON THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION AS AFFECTING THE
UNIVERSITY OF NANKING (8 JANUARY, 1938)

I. Direct losses from Japanese military:

- A. Institutional. Valuable breeding animals. Large number of doors and windows, gates and locks smashed by soldiers plundering and seeking women. Tools and secondary equipment from several buildings. Total roughly estimated in local currency at nearly \$10,000.
- B. Personal property of American staff. Most of their residences worked over many times. Disorder of the remains and absence of many persons concerned makes accurate estimate difficult, but present knowledge would put a low figure: about \$5,000 and two cars.
- C. Personal property of Chinese staff. Many residences plundered; no figures possible. Japanese are not interested in losses of Chinese. But we hold that manifold forcible entry in irregular fashion of property flying American flag and bearing American proclamations, plus armed robbery of our Chinese staff, deserves consideration apart from monetary claims.

II. Personal security:

- A. American staff. We stayed here in time of war at our own risk, and therefore have little to say. However, wanton acts apart from normal risks of war are indications of dis-regard of Americans and of ordinary decency. Our members experienced several cases of blows from soldiers and officers, of cocked firearms pointed at us, of shots recklessly fired near us, and of general rough handling.
- B. Chinese staff. Many instances of beating and threatening while working for our institution and under the American flag. Many cases of rape upon our property (more than one hundred fully reported, and others withhold), including some among our own staff families; also some in houses now occupied by American members of the staff. One man slightly wounded in the neck by a bayonet.

III. Flags.

Aside from the abundant disrespect already indicated above, American flags were torn down, lowered under armed compulsion, and in at least one instance carried away by soldiers. Total of cases six.

IV. Guards:

Former policemen were disarmed, disorganized and intimidated by the murder of many of their own number, plus frequent beating and threatening. One compound of the University has received irregular, tardy, inefficient and very troublesome guard service. Just this morning they suddenly seized and beat two of our watchmen without reason or warning.

V. Refugees:

Our religious and humanitarian interests commit us to a present calamity. Continued casual damage to buildings alone by refugees will cost us nearly \$20,000 to say nothing of serious additional costs and risks. We are intensely interested as an institution and as individual Americans in seeing order restored among this population, and opportunities for some beginning of normal life for most of them. Now we face grave problems of disease and crime among the 30,000 on our property; and there is no

sign of a police force, little of public water supply, none of fire protection, little hope for electric light and its diminution of fire risk. This whole problem is only suggested here.

VI. Interference with staff and work:

Already we are suffering from troubles that seem likely to grow: denunciation and malicious misrepresentation of us and our staff members to the military police, either for the self-interest of characterless Chinese or in collision with the Japanese; efforts by the Japanese to get certain of our people into their employ by intimidation and purchase combined. These difficulties are greatly increased because of the confusion of our personnel with the ad hoc volunteers hastily gathered together by the International Committee in emergency conditions for service in refugee camps. Also we have been injured by Japanese propaganda against universities in China, and especially by one or two false reports naming us individually in Domei, plus the frequent attribution to us of the crime of the National Central University (carelessly called "Nanking University" by the Japanese).

RELIEF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Anything to improve discipline in the army, including that of guards and military police. We do not feel safe about one place or one hour, nor see a chance of relief from the pressing problem of refugees, so long as any private soldier is free to go ahead with arbitrary violence. Recent improvement lies in the reduction of numbers, and little else.
2. Revival of normal utilities and communications, with a chance for economic life. A separate memorandum on this subject is in preparation for submission to a Japanese friend, and will be supplied to you soon. But order is first requisite.
3. Education of army officers and soldiers as to foreign flags and proclamations. This might help other cities later.
4. Taking advantage of apparent "favorable" turn in international considerations, get prompt payment for losses as deterrent and as stimulus to numbers (1) and (3). Immediate assessment is needed, or Japanese will blame everything on to ordinary Chinese, who are now beginning to loot open buildings.

NOTE ON AFTERMATH OF REGISTRATION AT THE UNIVERSITY, 26.Dec. 1937.

Registration was begun in the main compound. To the relatively small number of men there, the authorities added more than two thousand from the new Library. Out of the total of about three thousand massed together on the tennis courts below Swazey Hall, between two hundred and three hundred stepped out in answer to a half-hour of haranguing to this effect: "All who have been soldiers or who have performed compulsory labor (Fu Juh) pass to the rear. Your lives will be spared and you will be given work if you thus voluntarily come forth. If you do not, and upon inspection you are discovered, you will be shot." The speeches were repeated by Chinese under the instruction of Japanese officers; they were Chinese who wished to save as many of their people as possible from the fate that others had met as former soldiers or men accused wrongfully of being former soldiers. The speeches were clearly and thoroughly heard by Mr. , Mr. and myself, as well as by many members of the University staff. It was thought by some Chinese that certain men who stepped out were influenced by fear or misunderstanding of the term for compulsory labor, and certainly that a number of them had never been soldiers.

Toward five o'clock in the afternoon, the two or three hundred men were taken away in two groups by military police. Next morning there came to the University Hospital a man with five bayonet wounds. This man twice reported with fair clarity that he had been a refugee in the Library building, but was not present at the tennis courts. He was picked up on the street and added to a group that did come from the courts. That evening (vaguely west or near Kuling Ssu) about 130 Japanese soldiers killed most of 500 similar captives with bayonet thrusts. The victim recovered himself to find the Japanese gone, and managed to crawl back during the night.

Also on the morning of the 27th there was brought to me a man who said that he was one of 30-40 who had escaped the death not by most of the 200-300 taken away the previous evening. Since the man desired help for himself and one or more companions in the registration then continuing and since I was surrounded by military police at the moment, I had to tell him the plain fact that registration was for that time and place limited to women, and that it was best not to speak further at the moment. When I endeavored three times later to get in touch with this man or his associate, I got not response. There were other rumours that the men taken away had been killed, but they did not seem to be specific. Later I talked with one who had escaped. Confirmed.

In the course of the same day and the next (27th and 28th) I heard and checked indirect but apparently careful and circumstantial reports that part of the men taken away were bound in groups of five and ten, to be passed successively from a first room in a large house into a second room or court where there was a big fire. As each group went forward, groans and cries could be heard by the remainder, but no shots. Some twenty remaining from an original sixty broke in desperation through a back wall and made their escape by an adjoining house. Part of the detachment brought from the University were said to have been saved by the pleas of priests living in the neighbourhood (Wu T'ai Shan, clearly specified in all this group of reports). A similar story had been heard by Mr. R early in the evening of the 26th, too soon to come from the same incident. This confusion or complexity of reports was discouraging, and several attempts at further inquiry met with little result while other duties and problems pressed upon each day.

To-day (31st) two men living nearby have given a request for aid, with their story, to a trusted assistant who offers to bring them to me for confirmation if desired. One admits that he was formerly a soldier, a frankness which creates some presumption in favor of his truthfulness. The two men say that the 200-500 from the University were split up into various groups. They themselves were taken first to Wu T'ai Shan, then to the bank of the canal outside Han Hsi Mon, where a machine-gun was turned upon them. They fell, one of them wounded, among the dead men and smeared with their blood. Thoroughly confirmed in my own interview later.

These notes are prepared in the first place for criticism and suggestion by several persons who know or may be able to find out something concerning these circumstances. It seems that the men taken from the University were taken away variously, and were probably mixed with men from other places that same evening. It should be remembered that this incident is only one of a series that had been going on for nearly two weeks, with changes on the main theme of mass murder of men accused rightly or wrongfully of being ex-soldiers. Other incidents involved more men. My special interest in this is two-fold: first because of the close connection of our property, personnel, and proteges (refugees) with the unfortunate outcome; second, because of the gross treachery of terms by which the men were selected. As a general finding, I am convinced that a large majority of the men thus deceived were murdered the same night.

31 December, 1937
Not yet fully revised.
10 Jan., 1938