

Tiffin - Foreign YMCA - Shanghai

February 28, 1938

Gentlemen:

I am very grateful to you for having arranged this party, thus giving me an opportunity to get in personal touch with all of you and to talk to you before my departure to Europe.

You will all know by this time that the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone has changed its name to Nanking International Relief Committee. The newly adopted name is more in conformity with our present functions, that is to say we are now purely a Relief Committee as such can be found in many other cities - a private enterprise - with no other aim but to help the suffering poor of Nanking to the best of our ability and means.

I have made it quite clear to the Japanese Embassy in Nanking that our Relief Committee does not - and will not - interfere with either the work of the Japanese authorities or that of the Self-Government Committee - but we are quite willing to cooperate with the latter if circumstances permit.

You have all been well informed of what happened in Nanking. I am not going to add any atrocity-stories to those you have already heard. Conditions in Nanking are still far from being normal, but I can say that order is much better up there than it was, and with two-fifths of the people having returned to their homes outside the former Safety Zone conditions are gradually improving, though I must mention that so far it is largely the old people and small children that have returned to their homes.

The Safety Zone - now being abolished - was - I can frankly admit - after all, a success. A success - I am thankful to say - because all of the members of the International Committee - stood faithfully to their posts - ready by day and night - to care for the housing and feeding of the refugees and to protect them to the best of their ability against any assaults of the Japanese soldiers roaming all over the City - looting, raping, burning and killing.

If we failed - as I am sorry to admit - in many instances to protect our refugees - we did so on account of lack of foreign personnel - we were - as you all know - only 22 foreigners left in Nanking - whilst the refugees numbered between 200,000 to 250,000.

With five exceptions the remaining foreigners were all Americans and I congratulate you on the bravery of your countrymen. You can be proud of them - all and everyone of them - women and men - behaved heroically.

I shall never forget Miss Minnie Vautrin marching at the head of some 400 female refugees through the town - right past groups of vagabonding Japanese soldiers who were looking for girls - during the worst of the December days - to guide them to the safety of her Girls camp in Ginling College.

I shall ever remember Miss Hynds and Miss Bauer doing their work in the only Hospital at our disposal - the Kulo I-yuan.

I must tell you that Mr. Mills is the man - who originally had the idea of creating the Safety Zone. I can assure you that the brains of our organization were to be found in Ping Tsang Hsiang No. 3. Thanks to the cleverness of my American friends:

Mr. Mills, Dr. Bates, Dr. Smythe, Mr. Fitch, Mr. Sone, Mr. Magee, Mr. Forster and Mr. Riggs.

the Committee was put on its feet and thanks to their hard work it ran as smoothly as could be expected under the dreadful circumstances we lived in.

The Kulo Hospital with its reduced staff of only two doctors - Dr. Trimmer and Dr. Wilson -, the Manager Mr. MacCallum and the few Ladies already mentioned, did the finest bit of Hospital work I have ever seen in my life. As a matter of fact - we were all afraid that the Kulo Hospital would have to be closed down temporarily simply on account of its personnel being thoroughly overworked - Chinese as well as American.

If you allow me to speak a few words of my German friends I may mention that

- Mr. Christian Kroger Our treasurer
- Mr. Eduard Sperling Our Police Commissioner
- Messrs. Hatz and Cola Our technical Experts for overhaling and repairing of Motor cars.

did likewise do bravely their duty - not only sticking to the particular jobs they were assigned to - but never failing to respond to emergency calls if some poor Chinese soul had to be saved from Japanese soldiers.

However - whilst we foreigners were thus successful - I must not forget to mention our Chinese friends, who stuck to us in good and true fellowship - much of the practical work of the different commissions being carried out by them. In fulfilling their duty - they were - we must not leave that out of sight - often in very great danger. You know how badly some of us foreigners were occasionally handled. With the Japanese soldiers manhandling Mr. Mills, Dr. Bates and Mr. Riggs, wounding Mr. MacCallum with a bayonet and even beating Mr. Allison of the American Embassy - what could the Chinese attached to our Committee expect but working at the very risk of their lives.

Our Chinese staff was fairly large - I cannot mention all the names here but only the Chiefs of the Departments:

- Dean Tang Chief of the Chinese Secretariat
 - Han Hsian Ling The Food Commissioner
 - Dr. C. Y. Hsu The Housing Commissioner
 - Pastor Shen Yu Shu Commissioner of the Sanitation Department
- and their staff.

To all of them I want to herewith repeatedly express my heartfelt thanks.

I also want to thank the officials of the various Embassies

- Mr. Allison of the American Embassy
- Mr. Prideaux-Brune and his successor Mr. Jeffery of the British Embassy
- Dr. Rosen of the German Embassy

and their staff - whose support to our Committee was greatly appreciated.

I want to thank the Commanders of the American and British gun boats who have been at our aid whenever we asked for them. Personally I beg to thank Commander Armstrong of H.M.S. "Bee" who brought me safely to Shanghai.

And now - last not least - Gentlemen, - I turn to you: You were and are our backbone. With only comparatively small means at our disposal given to us by the Chinese National Government you were and are our hope.

Do - I pray - continue to give your aid to the Nanking Relief Committee - as you have done heretofore. Words fail me to express my thanks. You know how much we depend upon you for the continuation of our work.

We are grateful to you for having sent Dr. Brady back to us in Nanking. He started his smallpox vaccination campaign and camp clinic work for 30,000 refugees the very day he arrived in Nanking.

There is one problem that continues - whether people are outside or inside the Zone - that is food.

I would go too far if I had to explain in detail how the refugees are to be fed. You will read that - I hope - in a press report - that will be released by me these days.

Once more I beg to thank you for all past and future favors.

I am really sorry I cannot return to Nanking, where a lot of good work is still to be done - I should like to just carry on with all of you - but my firm has called me back to Europe - I am leaving China with my best wishes for the future work of the Nanking Relief Committee - which - with your aid - I am sure will be crowned with final success - and will go down into the History of Nanking - as a noble piece of your Missionary work. Thank you!

John D. H. Rabe, Chairman,
Nanking International Relief Committee.