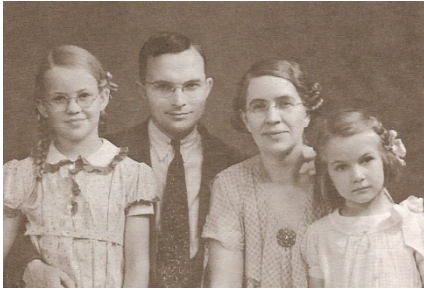


# Lewis S. C. Smythe: Eyewitness of Nanking 1937-38



Lewis S. C. Smythe received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago. In 1934 he moved to Nanking when the United Christian Missionary Society appointed him to teach sociology at the University of Nanjing. During the Nanking Massacre Smythe was Secretary of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone. As Secretary, he wrote sixty-nine letters to the Japanese Embassy from December 14, 1937 to February 19, 1938, protesting atrocities committed by the Japanese Army; some of the letters were signed by the Chairman of the Committee, John H. D. Rabe, but most were signed by Smythe. He was witness at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East testifying for the Nanking Massacre.

Source: *American Missionary Eyewitnesses to the Nanking Massacre, 1937-1938*  
published by Yale Divinity School Library, p.5

## Report by Lewis S. C. Smythe on December 21, 1938 (Notes on the Present Situation)

Nanking, March 21, 1938

1. Order is becoming a problem again. Robbery and rape are recurring, at least in cases that are closer to our observations. This includes the rape of a young girl on the afternoon of the 19th [March 19, 1938] at one of our refugee camps on American property. A Japanese soldier was found there by an American and he was able, although threatened with a bayonet, to persuade the fellow to leave. But he demanded a woman of the American! And the real damages had already been done.....
2. Food. The food situation is somewhat relieved now that commercial rice is allowed to come into the city more freely and the Self-Government Committee has received 3,000 bags of rice by boat from Wuhu. But how much there is available and how long it will be free to come no one can say. The price is fixed at \$9.00 per *tan* or \$11.25 per bag. With rice selling for \$4.50 to \$6.00 per *tan* in Wuhu, it is hoped the price will fall here somewhat. However, a tax by the Self-Government Committee (with approval of the Special Service Organ) of \$0.60 per *tan* will partly prevent a fall in prices. The Committee hopes to be able to buy rice in the open market for its relief work.
3. Economic conditions. The most serious question for the future is the fact that only a few of the 10,000 gardeners inside the city wall have dared return to their homes and begin spring planting. We are trying to organize their return so as to give them some greater degree of security. Most of them have lost not only their household things, but also their implements and seed. Another phase of the same question is that people are coming in from the countryside hoping to find greater safety here. Over 300 came one afternoon asking for a camp to take them in. Intelligent observers returning from north of the river say in some areas the winter wheat crop will be less than 30 percent of normal because of late planting due to fighting and that 80 percent of the farmers have no reserve food supplies. In Chuyung *hsien* winter crops are better, probably 70 percent of normal, but 90 percent of the farmers have no reserve food supplies and less than 10 percent have started spring work. North of the river also, country people have gone to the towns for protection. If the countryside depends on the city, what can the city depend on? When farming is the only form of basic production that can be done in this area, it is very important that farming be carried on.
4. Relief situation. Because of country people coming into the city and because of our "semi-permanent" camps are full with 15,000 refugees, we have had to slow up on closing other camps. But all eight camps in government

buildings have been closed excepting one reserved for refugees from other towns. In general, we are trying to get all men to move out, only allowing women between 13 and 40 years of age to stay, but permitting children to stay with their mothers. An inspection of the southern part of the city reveals that many streets are now populated which were deserted a month ago. This extends even to the southeastern section of the city. But very few young women have returned — after the terrible experience of the first week in February the people have learned to leave their young women either in camps or in houses in the Safety Zone..... There was even one rice shop open on Moh Tsou Road! .....

Putting together information from organizations interested in burying the dead and other observations, it is estimated that 10,000 persons were killed inside the walls of Nanking and about 10,000 outside the walls -- this latter figure depends upon not going too far along the river bank! These people estimated that of this total about 30 percent were civilians.

## **5. Cases**

460. Feb. 27th, about 4 p.m. Ts'ai Djih-lan and his father were standing near a house at a place called Sa Chou Wei Kao Chiao, about eight or ten li [traditional Chinese distance unit of 1 li = 0.5 km] from Nanking outside of Shuisimen. There were some women in the house near which they were standing. Japanese soldiers were seen approaching and the women ran away. When soldiers came up, they asked where the women were and wanted the boy and his father to lead them to them. They refused, whereupon a soldier shot the boy in the leg, injuring him very badly. He is now undergoing treatment at the University.
461. March 4th, a farmer aged 54 at Molinkwan was asked by Japanese soldiers on February 13th for some cows, donkeys and girls. The neighbors all ran away. The soldiers tied the farmer and spread him out three feet from the ground. Then they built a fire under him and burned him badly around the lower abdomen, genitalia, and chest, and singed the hair of his face and head. One soldier protested because of his age and put out the fire, tearing off the farmer's burning clothes. The soldiers went away and after about an hour his family returned and released him.....
462. March 9th, 8 p.m. Japanese soldiers came to Mr. Hwang's house on Chukiang Road and asked him to lead them to women. He did not agree to do so. So one of the soldiers struck him with a bayonet through the left groin, piercing his flesh one-half inch. The man jumped back and at the same time pushed the bayonet aside with his right hand but cut his hand in so doing. He ran and the soldiers followed but he made good his escape. Bayonet just missed a large artery. (Because of fear the soldiers would return, two families related to him including 12 people, moved into the University Middle School.)
463. March 10th, about 8, p.m. five Japanese soldiers wearing blue and yellow uniforms came to the Ts'ai house in Men-si. While two soldiers kept watch outside, the other three entered the house asking for money. The whole family fell down on their knees begging for mercy. The three soldiers placed a wooden ladder in front of the room door. With a rope they tied the two hands of the husband to the ladder and left him hanging there. They began to search the family and took away: one five-dollar note, one ten-sen Japanese coin, three Chinese double dimes, one paper money and copper, after turning over wardrobes and trunks, they took away a fur robe, one woman's winter clothes, one phonograph. On leaving, they stabbed Ts'ai's thigh six time, two on each shoulder, and at last they shot him on his head and killed him instantly. They also stabbed several times the head of Ts'ai Lih Shih who was on her knees, and stabbed Wang's thigh twice. After this they went away.
464. March 11th, a woman was raped by two soldiers in a hut next door.

465. March 15th, a man named Chung, aged 47, living at Hansimen, while walking near Chu So Hsiang at 7 a.m. was hit by a stray bullet at his head. He was sent to the hospital for treatment, where he died shortly after arriving.
466. March 17th, at 10 p.m. six Japanese soldiers went into the house of a 40 year old farmer named Kao who lived at Hou Tsaimen. They demanded that he get some women for them. He replied he didn't have any women and could not find any women. So they jabbed him many times in the body and in the neck and cut his head with their bayonets. He ran but by the time he reached the door of the house he fell down bleeding very profusely. He died without being able to get up again. The soldiers saw they had killed him so they left quickly.....
467. March 19th, between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. a Japanese soldier committed rape upon a refugee, a nineteen year old girl, in the Language School Refugee camp at the University of Nanking. Dr. Bates arrived there about 4:05 and as he approached the soldier, the soldier brandished his bayonet and insolently said, "want girl." But Dr. Bates persuaded him to leave. The soldier showed no sign of being drunk.
468. March 19th, night, a man and a woman were caught crawling over the wall of the Middle School Refugee Camps. When told they could not come in, they said the woman had been raped twice that evening and they could not go back.
469. March 20th, 9:30 p.m. five poor families near our house were robbed of \$283.30 by Japanese soldiers.
470. March 19th, an uncle of one of our staff was marched off by Japanese soldiers because he wore khaki pants. Sperling rescued him.

Note: Underlines are added by the editor.

Source: *American Missionary Eyewitnesses to the Nanking Massacre, 1937-1938* by Yale Divinity School Library, p.58-61

Digital image of **Report by Lewis Smythe on "Cases of Disorder by Japanese Soldiers in the Safety Zone filed on December 16, 1937"** on Yale Divinity School Library, the Nanking Massacre Project <http://divdl.library.yale.edu/ydlchina/images%5CNMP0149.pdf>

Digital image of **Letter from Lewis Smythe to Dr. Imai on May 13, 1938** (2 pages) on Yale Divinity School Library, the Nanking Massacre Project <http://divdl.library.yale.edu/ydlchina/images%5CNMP0236.pdf>

[More Lewis Smythe documentation in digital image on Yale Divinity School Library, the Nanking Massacre Project website website] <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/Nanking/findingaid.html>

**More Western missionary eyewitnesses** and their documentations on Yale Divinity School Library, the Nanking Massacre Project website website <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/Nanking/about.html>