



Lewis S. C. Smythe

1901-?

USA

Lewis S. C. Smythe was born in 1901 in the USA. He received his BA from Drake College in 1923 and married Margaret Lilian Garrett in 1924. He then earned a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1928. In 1934 he was appointed by the United Christian Missionary Society to teach sociology at the University of Nanjing, where he taught until his return to the United States in 1951.

In September of 1937, his wife took their two children to the American school at Kuliang in Fujian province, but Smythe stayed behind in Nanking. During the Nanking Massacre, Smythe served as Secretary of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone. In that role, he wrote 69 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.

Smythe was one of the members of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone who testified about the Nanking Massacre at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East after the War.

**Excerpt from Report on Cases of Disorder by Japanese Soldiers in the Safety Zone
to Japanese Embassy in Nanking by Lewis C. Smythe
Filed on December 16, 1937**

2. A carriage loaded with rice was taken on Dec. 15th at 4:00 P.M. near the gate of Ginling College by Japanese soldiers.
3. Several residents in our second sub-division were drive from their homes on the night of December 14th and robbed of everything. The chief of the sub-division was himself robbed twice by Japanese soldiers.
4. On the night of December 15th, last night, seven Japanese soldiers entered the University of Nanking library building and took seven Chinese women refugees, three of whom were raped on the spot [...]
5. On the night of December 14th, there were many cases of Japanese soldiers entering Chinese houses and raping women or taking them away. This created a panic in the area and hundreds of women moved into the Ginling College campus yesterday. Consequently, three American men spent the night at Ginling College last night to protect the 3,000 women and children in the compound.

**Excerpt from Lewis C. Smythe's Letter
Dated March 8, 1938 and revised on March 14, 1938**

On the 20th of December when Mr. Fitch and I drove around the southern part of the city in the gathering dusk and found the Japanese Army systematically taking the remaining goods out of stores and loading it in Army trucks, then setting fire to the buildings, we realized that it was deliberate destruction rather than accidental. The Y.M.C.A. building had just been fired when we got there. We fully recognized that this deliberate destruction of the city would mean the finish of the local economic resources with which the population had some chance of staging a comeback. In the month following they burned over three-fourths of the stores in town (all the large ones, only some small ones remaining) and all of them were completely looted. Now they are hauling all the loot and wrecked cars, etc. out on the railway to Japan. Reminds one of the Punic Wars!

**Excerpt from Report on Cases of Disorder by Japanese Soldiers in the Safety Zone
to Japanese Embassy in Nanking by Lewis C. Smythe
Filed on March 21, 1938**

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* 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 soldier 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.

Source: American Missionary Eyewitnesses to the Nanking Massacre, 1937-1938. Yale Divinity School Library Occasional Publication No. 9, 1997.

(Worksheet for Rescuers and Global Citizenship in the Nanking Massacre, prepared by BC ALPHA www.alpha-canada.org)