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Vautrin worked from early morning to late at night to get rations for the refugees, many of whom had narrowly escaped death and were penniless. She tried to arrange lessons to help the women learn skills and crafts that would help them make a living after the war. Sometimes, despite her efforts, she was unable to prevent Japanese soldiers from raping women in the college or carrying them away.

On Dec 24, 1937, Vautrin wrote in her diary that she had allowed some Japanese soldiers to take away 21 prostitutes because they promised that once they got them they would leave the other women alone.

Eventually, Vautrin suffered a nervous breakdown and returned to the US for treatment in May 1940 after 28 years in China. A year later, in Indianapolis, she killed herself. Her tombstone is engraved with four Chinese characters meaning "Forever Ginling" and the words "Goddess of mercy, missionary to China, 28 years".

Rabe was the chairman of the International Committee, which oversaw the safe zone. Because Germany was Japan's war ally, his records of the massacre have immense credibility.

In his diaries, Rabe kept detailed notes about the brutality of the Japanese soldiers, his protests to senior Japanese military officials, and his letters to Adolf Hitler, in which he detailed the atrocities and asked for help.

"With Vautrin and Rabe's diaries, the evidence of the crimes committed by the Japanese army is irrefutable," Yang Shanyou says, adding that Rabe is a great man who is widely respected in China but barely recognized in Germany, partly because he was a Nazi.

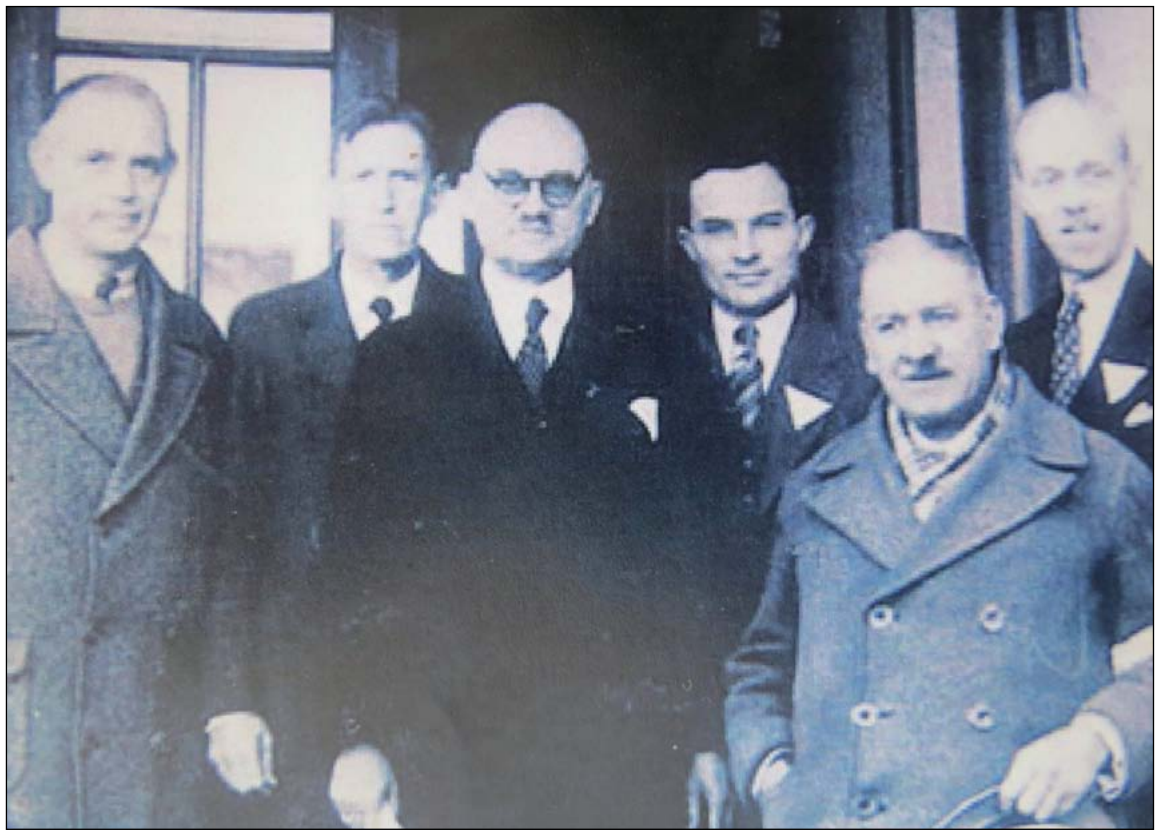
However, it was Rabe's very position as a Nazi that greatly helped him as chairman of the International Committee in Nanjing. Japanese soldiers would stop and back away when he pointed at the swastika he wore on his arm. None of the 622 refugees under his protection was hurt.

"He loved China and the Chinese people," Yang says. "He expressed that clearly in his diaries. He lived in China for 30 years and it was his second home. He's the Schindler of China.

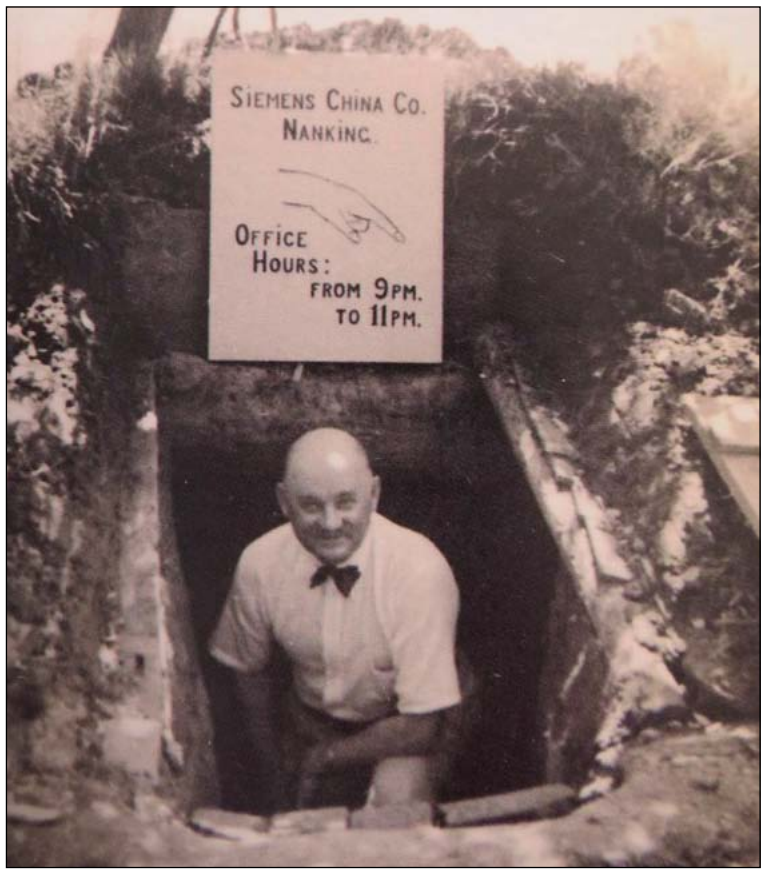
"Of course, he also worried about his own safety. He had diabetes and had to take insulin every day. He had the chance to leave Nanjing, but he asked himself in his diary what would happen to the people in the safety zone once he left."

Like Iris Chang, Shao Ziping showed dogged determination to find documentary evidence of the massacre.

In 1937 and 1938, Western media, including Reuters, The Associated Press and the New York Times, reported on the massacre, and from January to May 1938, Life magazine in the US published 10 photos of the wounded and the dead, without identifying the photographer.



Members of the International Committee set up by 15 expats from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark in Nanjing in 1937.



German businessman John Rabe emerges from a bunker that was used as an air raid shelter in Nanjing.

Fifty-three years later their source would be made known to Shao when, after months of searching, he tracked down David Magee, the second son of John Magee, who had been a US missionary to China and the chairman of the Nanking Committee of the International Red Cross Organization.

The photos published in Life were stills from a 37-minute film that the elder Magee had shot with a 16-millimeter camera.

Because the Japanese had imposed a ban on photos or filming in the street, Magee was unable to catch any scenes of slaughter, but he did capture footage showing severely injured locals being treated in hospitals.

He also filmed the ferocious murders of seven members of one family in which two children, Xia Shuqin, 8, and her younger sister survived. Rabe recorded the killings in his diaries.

In 1998, two Japanese scholars questioned Xia's credibility and in 2000 she sued them for defamation, using Rabe's diaries and Magee's film as evidence. In 2008, Japan's Supreme Court ruled in Xia's favor and she received compensation of more than 315,000 yuan ($50,600).

The silent movie, edited with explanations of each take, was especially effective in the case because John Magee had attended the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal as a witness of the crimes committed in Nanjing.

For several decades, many in Japan have repeatedly denied that the Nanjing Massacre happened or have raised doubts about it.

An archive of material, A Collection of Historical Materials Relating to the Nanjing Massacre, now consists of 72 books.

"Of course, there are related archives in many countries, so researchers can continue to investigate and uncover new facts," Yang Shanyou says. "But, what we really need to do is tell the world about the massacre."

Zhang Lianhong, a researcher at the Nanking Massacre Research Center at Nanjing Normal University, says: "We didn't have much material before Rabe's and Vautrin's diaries were found and published, and those debates were generally on a political level instead of an academic one.

"With this evidence, instead of continuing a childish debate about the scale of the massacre, which makes little sense, what we need to do now is to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and find out what the world thinks about it."

TALE OF HORROR ON THE STAGE

Last May, Jenny Chan established the Foundation Honoring Nanjing Massacre Survivors, a project sponsored by San Francisco's largest art space, Intersection for the Arts. Through the arts and theater, the foundation tries to encourage dialogue about the "forgotten Asian Holocaust" and provide an accurate account of events. Last year, the foundation performed a play about Minnie Vautrin called *Forever Ginling*.

In early March, Chan, 22, visited Nanjing to see the present-day city and Ginling Women's College, which later became part of Nanjing Normal University. Through her work on the US missionary Minnie Vautrin and the Nanjing Massacre, Chan has also met researchers in the field.

She became interested in Vautrin because "she is perhaps one of the bravest women I have read about". Chan, a US-born Chinese, said she had never heard about the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-45) when she was at school.

"It is rare to find a Westerner who knows about the war (of resistance). In the US, we study the Jewish Holocaust extensively, but we don't spend any time on the Nanjing Massacre or the war.

"My grandmother told me about some personal encounters during the war, but it never crossed my mind as being anything serious.

"After I read *The Rape of Nanking* by Iris Chang I understood what my grandparents were trying to communicate to me. I started the organization to communicate the message of the war because I do not want people to forget such a horrific event."

This week, the foundation began presenting a new show, *The Crimes of Hirohito: A Grand Jury Trial*, in San Francisco, featuring, among others, the characters of Vautrin and Chang.

— YANG YANG