

MOVIES

NANKING

An exceptionally well-knit documentary about the horrifying events that took place in Nanking between December, 1937, and March, 1938, when the Japanese Army fell upon the city, then the capital of China, and slaughtered as many as three hundred thousand soldiers and civilians and raped twenty thousand women. Directed by Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman, and produced by the AOL executive Theodore J. Leonsis, the movie integrates two kinds of material—letters and journals written mainly by Western observers of the events and read by actors (including Woody Harrelson and Mariel Hemingway), sitting in a rehearsal room, and historical footage of the bombardment and slaughter. It's very likely that the anguish of a city helplessly besieged by a marauding army hasn't been conveyed with comparable power since the Greek tragedies that were told from the Trojan point of view. The movie lays special emphasis on the heroic and largely forgotten efforts of Americans and Germans in Nanking to protect as many citizens as they could.—*D.D.* (Film Forum.)