

# **KOJE**



## **UNSCREENED**

by

**WILFRED BURCHETT and ALAN WINNINGTON**

*Cover Illustration*

KOREAN AND CHINESE PRISONERS SEARCHED

In compound 76 in June 1952, U.S. paratroopers rounded up prisoners in a bloody battle. They are now being stripped and searched while buildings still burn in the background. Their personal effects, including home-made gas masks, cover the ground. 31 prisoners were killed and over 80 wounded.



### PRISONERS BURNED OUT IN COMPOUND 76

Dense smoke rises as U.S. Paratroopers move in on June 10, 1952 to force prisoners into small groups. Scores of prisoners were wounded and 31 killed

## ON KOJE



Bodies of wounded or dead prisoners in compound 76 lie in the wreckage. Others, some wounded, move towards the compound gate. In pitched battles following an order from Brig.-Gen. Boatner for prisoners to be moved to another compound, 31 were killed.



Compound 76 early May 1952. June 10th U.S. troops hurled tear gas bombs to force prisoners to newly-built stockades. At least 25 killed.

WHILE BRITISH PRISONERS



Get suntanned on the hillside. Keith Clarke and Cecil McKee



Check mate with a laugh. Fred Moore wins the game from George Hobson, while another British prisoner, Sid Carr, looks on



Prisoners in Compound 96 hold a memorial service for five killed by guards. The casket is surrounded by paper flower wreaths.





Tear gas raid on compound 96 as troops move in to tear down flags. Soldiers and a heavy tank stand by.



British prisoners cheer their team on in the game



British prisoners give P.T. display in the May Day, 1952, sports event.



A Korean prisoner of war escorted by his American guard



The Chinese camp doctor drinks a toast for a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.



Sports day in the British prisoner camp. A clean vault over the block.



Laying on the tug-of-war.



Much talent has gone into the Christmas bulletin of the British prisoners



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## AUTHORS' NOTE

Reports of continuous violence against the Korean and Chinese prisoners of war on Koje Island by American troops have shocked the world and puzzled millions of people. According to American official communiqués and western agency reports alone, some three thousand prisoners of war were killed or wounded by their American captors up to the end of 1952. Machine-guns, rifles and other small arms, hand grenades, bayonets, and even flame-throwers and tanks were used against unarmed men.

The meagre accounts of the Koje massacres fed out through the fine mesh of American censorship have tried to create the impression that these events were “isolated” incidents caused by “fanatical” prisoners. Now the American government, in an effort to divert public anxiety rapidly turning to anger, has tried to turn history on its head by the ingenious invention that somehow it was not Generals Ridgway, Mark Clark and “Bull” Boatner who sent tanks and flame-throwers, machine-guns and bayonets against unarmed prisoners, but that the orders for these affairs were issued by the Korean and Chinese generals; that the unhappy Americans were the victims of a propaganda plot.

The purpose of this booklet is to cut through the propaganda and to show for the first time in a connected fashion, the sequence of events on Koje Island and in the other American prisoner camps. Only by viewing the events as they occurred and as they were related to American policy at the truce talks in Panmunjom, is it possible to understand the periodic large-scale massacres, some of which found their way into the headlines.

The authors were fortunate in being in Korea during all these events, not only at the truce talks and the front but also in the rear where they had scores of interviews with prisoners who escaped from Koje Island, Kuomintang and Rhee agents who worked on Koje and were later parachuted into North Korea and taken prisoner, and with captured United Nations soldiers who had themselves served as guards on Koje and had actually taken part in the massacres. The authors have pooled the information that each gathered separately and which is based on extensive research.

The full story of Koje, like that of the Nazi camps at Belsen and Buchenwald, can only be told when the survivors are free to fill in all the details of the picture which is broadly outlined here. But the picture is clear and conclusive. The Koje events were a necessary part of overall American strategy.

Readers will find that some of the material in this booklet duplicates that contained in other works written by the authors dealing with the broader aspects of the Korean war. In view of the enormous significance of the Koje event, which are the ostensible reason for the continuation of the Korean war, and to break through the news blackout imposed by the American Command, it was felt that a separate work on Koje was necessary. The macabre skeleton of Koje known to the public from attenuated press reports needs flesh and clothes in order to be recognised as the monstrosity that it truly is.

## CHAPTER I

“Kojé Island is a living hell. The shores of this island are no longer washed by sea-water but by our tears and blood. There is no breath of fresh air here, the pungent stench of blood fills our nostrils in every corner of the island. We shall continue to fight for our just cause, for human rights and for our own personal right to return to our homeland. We shall not hesitate to give our lives for this noble cause ....”

These words came out through the barbed wire of Kojé in a smuggled letter signed by the inmates – all 6,223 of them – of one of the compounds of the American prisoner camp on Kojé Island. It was carried over the mountains to North Korea and broadcast over Pyongyang Radio on June 8, 1952, two days before General “Bull” Boatner ordered his flame-throwing tanks into action to achieve the purpose of the American Command on Kojé.

Even those people who do not know the rights or wrongs of the Kojé events know that these Koreans made no empty pledge. What they stood for, they defended to the very end. Unarmed, with food supplies cut off, they braved the tanks and flame-throwers, the grenades, gas and machine guns.

The toll of more than 3,000 killed and wounded there, even according to the demonstrably minimised official figures issued by the Americans and the International Committee of the Red Cross, stamps with blood the hallmark of authenticity on this tragic document, of which the above passage is only a small excerpt. In the minds of all people who read of these events the question arises: How is it possible that under the flag of the United Nations, prisoner-of-war camps could degenerate into places where by admission of the UN Command – in fact the American Command – prisoners are shot by the thousand and horrifying massacres take place over a period of more than a year with no slackening of intensity?

Behind it all lies a decision taken by Truman and Acheson on the recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to refuse to return captured Korean and Chinese troops. Demaree Bess writing in the November 1, 1952 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* of which he is associate editor revealed that on July 5, 1951, five days before the cease-fire talks began, the US Army’s Psychological Warfare Branch submitted a scheme to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the retention of prisoners.

“Apparently nobody in Tokyo or Korea suspected,” writes Demaree Bess, “that the exchange of prisoners would cause serious trouble. But back in Washington, nearly a week before the Korean discussions started, on July 5, 1951, the Army’s Psychological Warfare Branch made a move – hitherto unpublished – which had very far reaching consequences.... The memorandum recommended that some definite decision be taken, for or against forcible repatriation of prisoners in Korea, before the matter came up for negotiation. Whatever stand we took, it was pointed out, would inevitably become a factor in psychological warfare. The Army’s Chief of Staff forwarded this recommendation for consideration by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the latter in turn passed it

on to the National Security Council, whose members include the President and the Secretary of State....”

“Forcible repatriation” or “voluntary repatriation” was in fact only a camouflaged term for “forcible detention” of prisoners and the certain stumbling block to peace in Korea was eagerly accepted by an American government that had been pressed by public demand into starting negotiations but was already pouring cold water on them via every available propaganda agency.

Psychological Warfare Branch, a sinister organisation which employs murder, forgery and other common-law crimes as part of its stock-in-trade, openly boasts of trying to foment civil war in the People’s Democracies and of preparing for war against the Soviet Union. It was the Branch that devised the magic formula of “voluntary repatriation” as a “psychological” pill to dope the public but it was left to another American organisation to provide a presentable front by “proving” that the prisoners did not want to go home. This was the notorious Counter- Intelligence Corps (CIC). Their job was to provide the facts to suit American policy, a task to which they brought among other things several years of experience, assisting Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee in converting “Communists” into something else – most frequently into corpses.

For a full understanding of the happenings in Koje, it must be recalled that for years before the Korean war began, anyone in South Korea suspected of being a “Red” or even of even of knowing a “Red” was flung into gaol. This was done on direct orders of the American military authorities during the period of overt American occupation and many of the arrests were made by the Americans. It was continued when American military “advisers” directed the Rhee internal security services in trying to stabilise the South Korean rear for the attack across the 38th parallel. Only a tiny proportion of those arrested on the orders of the American CIC or the Rhee security police ever emerged alive from the gaols. When the war began, the process was intensified in a futile effort to wipe out all active opposition to the Rhee regime.

Sources which must be regarded as impeccably “non-leftist” due to their habit of normally leaning over backward to support the American Command in Korea, have testified to this policy of the wholesale wiping out of Korean civilians on suspicion of harbouring dangerous thoughts. The following examples come from a period before the Koje events became public. But they are vital to an understanding of Koje because the apparatus which carried them through is the same apparatus now running the prisoner camps, though now it has grafted on its side American racial contempt for what they term “Gooks” and “Chinks.”

Ian Morrison, Far Eastern correspondent of *The Times*, later to be killed in Korea, recorded the conditions he found in one of Syngman Rhee’s prisons in Seoul, in a despatch dated October 25, 1950.

“The crimes committed within its walls are the accepted methods of the South Korean police sent from Pusan to eradicate Communism.

“Interrogation is a neat word like liquidation. In this case it meant beating with rifle butts and bamboo sticks, and the insertion of splinters under the finger nails.

“During that morning a rifle was shattered on the back of one prisoner, and two women, one suckling a baby, were also interrogated. The scene described has been and still is being repeated throughout Korea.” The prison guards from these political prisons were later sent to Koje under the direction of the American CIC to carry out “interrogations” and “screening”.

A report submitted by M. Bieri, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, dated December 18, 1950 and sent to Syngman Rhee reveals even more dreadful conditions than the *Times* despatch. This report, though printed and available, was never published in the press.

“Mr. President,” reads the report, “I have the honour to draw your attention to the following.

“On October 20, 1950, M. de Reynier, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross and I witnessed a batch of civilian prisoners (both male and female, some of the latter carrying infants on their backs) all tied to a rope, marching towards the Westgate Prison. We followed them until they entered the prison, where by the way, we saw a number of the female prisoners (some with infants on their backs) kneeling on the ground with bowed heads.... “

Bieri, the ICRC delegate, then goes on to describe that “moved and touched by these distressing sights” he called on Rhee’s Acting Foreign Minister and tried to have the prisoners, who had been arrested, he discovered, only because they were suspected of being Communists or Communist sympathisers, accorded the status of Civilian Internees as provided in the Geneva Convention of 1949. This was flatly refused and he was prohibited from inspecting the prisons but Bieri relates in his report that after further pressure, his colleague, M. de Reynier was allowed to visit two prisons in Seoul.

“He found,” the report continues, “9,200 prisoners in a state of semi-starvation,

- without adequate medical care (one prison doctor reports that he had no medical supplies left),
- without facilities for washing themselves,
- absolutely inadequate accommodation (20 to 25 persons in a cell normally intended for 3).
- with permission to write only one letter once and for all to relatives and friends,
- without special care for women, mothers and in particular their babies;
- also innumerable cases of dysentery, tuberculosis, influenza and many sign of starvation.

“M. de Reynier saw a total of about 50 dead bodies in the morning of his visit, including men, women and babies. According to the statements made to M. de Reynier by the Governor of the prison and the prison doctors themselves, the daily rate of deaths due to starvation alone is about 100. What M. de Reynier saw represented the sorry harvest of one night only.

“M. de Reynier further saw in the prison infirmary he visited, parents showing signs of what appeared to be beatings and other forms of ill treatment.” (One of the authors who visited Seoul Westgate Prison in July 1950, was able to inspect the array of torture instruments used for producing these signs – not to mention an execution shed where two hangings could take place at one time.)

Bieri continues by pointing out that the prisoners should be protected by the Geneva Convention and referred to a statement made to de Reynier by Rhee’s Minister of “Justice”, to the effect that “not one of those detained was guilty of any common law or other crime”. They were there as the Minister expressed it because they were Communists or favoured Communist ideology and “it was therefore his duty for security reasons to put them into gaol and to kill them first before they had an opportunity to kill others.” Bieri reminded Rhee that these shocking conditions constituted a breach of the Geneva Convention which Rhee had publicly announced he would respect.

Considering that Rhee guards from these very goals were later transferred to run the prison compounds on Koje; that the statement of the Minister of “Justice” represented the policy of Rhee and therefore the policy of the people in Washington who jerk this puppet’s strings and that the mere expression by a prisoner of war of the desire to return to his family in North Korea or China was classified by the Americans in their reports as the sign of a “diehard Communist fanatic”, no one can doubt the degree of nerve needed by a prisoner to stick to his right under international law to be repatriated.

This report of the ICRC, while not directly relating to Koje, nonetheless remains a key document in evaluating the reports given by prisoners who escaped from Koje and described life in the compounds at first hand.

Chang Wen-jung was one of the former Koje inmates we interviewed. Since the most dramatic and almost incredible part of his story was later confirmed from an unexpected source and the rest of his story coincides with less complete reports from many other former prisoners, it is quoted rather fully.

Chang joined the People’s Volunteers soon after they were formed, became a radio-operator at a divisional headquarters and was wounded and captured on the western front in February 1951.

He was given what all former prisoners we interviewed described as a routine American or ROK (Syngman Rhee’s Army) intelligence interrogation. Rifle butts swung and clubs were liberally

used to extract information as to the strength and location of units, names of officers and other matters, questions to which prisoners may refuse to reply under international law.

“When I saw what happened to some of my comrades,” Chang said “and after I had been beaten up with a rifle butt, I told them a few things to stop the beatings.”

From the front he was sent to Seoul and then by rail to Pusan together with other military and civilian prisoners

“We were herded into closed, steel trucks,” Chang said, “in what was a death train. We were packed in so tightly that we could just squat on the steel floor without moving. It was deadly cold and there was no heating. We were forbidden to talk. There was only one small hole in the walls of the truck so a guard could shine a flashlight through or poke a rifle in. We were given no water for the 24-hour trip and only one small ball of kaoliang (sorghum) to eat. There was no toilet and of course no washing water. Within a few hours the stench was unbearable. The wounded were crying and moaning. Some died where they squatted and were left there till we were unloaded.”

Chang was temporarily put into Compound 11 at Pusan. Others including Chinese and women prisoners were sent to Compound 12.

“The first they did was to register us and take away all our personal belongings which we never saw again. We were given tawdry uniforms, each marked with a number. After that our names were never used. We were just numbers. We were herded into tents which were as crowded as the cattle trucks, with just enough room to squat. These tents were surrounded by barbed wire and outside the wire were American guards with rifles and machine guns. We were forbidden to talk to each other and if anyone broke the rule, a guard leapt in and prodded with his bayonet or struck out wildly with his gun. The only time we were could leave the tent was when we were called out for questioning or if the guard agreed we could go to the latrine. Often to humiliate us, he would refuse even for urgent needs to let us go out. At night, though it was freezing cold, we were not allowed to put on a coat or blanket to go to the latrine, because the guards feared we would try and escape in the dark. We got one bowl of watery grain swill three times a day and a soup of stinking vegetables and salty water once a day. But life in the Pusan camp was only the beginning of our troubles. We were only kept there until the interrogators were finished with us.”

At Pusan, as many others including Chang reported to us, interrogation was carried out by G-2 (regular US military intelligence) and CIC, the brutal Counter-Intelligence Corps. G-2 was an all-American outfit, apart from some Chinese and Korean interpreters, while CIC was mainly composed of Kuomintang and Rhee officials, with Americans in control at the top but rarely appearing. All prisoners were thoroughly grilled by both organisations.

G-2 was mainly interested in military information from the Chinese mainland and carried out a line of questioning which convinced Chang that it was related to an extension of the war into

China. He was questioned down to the finest detail about his native place, Szechuan, in the remote Southwest, about military installations in his home district and even down to the names of leading local Communists and government personnel. Chang, who gives the impression of an honest but not too firm a person, admitted that after other prisoners had been terribly beaten up in front of his eyes, he gave his inquisitors quite a lot of what he described as “unimportant information.”

It was the CIC questioners who were handling the various, carefully scheduled steps in the process that was later to become known as “voluntary repatriation.” Their interrogation, carried out by undisguised Kuomintang officials, first aimed at finding out the political backgrounds of the prisoners and their first step was to list all who had formerly been members of the Kuomintang army or party. They were far more interested in this during the early stages of the interrogation than in finding out members of the Communist Party or Youth League. Enticements to disclose their former Kuomintang connections took the form of promises that they would be appointed as compound administrators, with special food and conditions, when they were sent to Koje Island.

“We were kept in Compound 11 for two weeks,” Chang went on, “and then we were sent to Koje. I was put into Battalion 4, in Compound 72. Many of the other Chinese prisoners were sent to Compound 86. Conditions on the island were even worse than those on the mainland at Pusan. Food was reduced to half a bowl of sand-filled rice at each meal with even worse soup than that at Pusan. Again we were huddled 50 to 60 in a tent, forced to squat on our haunches all day and never allowed to talk. If anyone talked they were hauled out and flogged for suspected resistance. The compound was surrounded by high double walls of barbed wire and overlooking the barbed wire were machine-gun towers at regular intervals with the machine-guns always pointing into the compound. Armoured cars patrolled outside and guards with savage dogs were stationed between the barbed wire fences. At night, giant searchlights would start up at any moment and sweep the compound. Anyone approaching the barbed wire fences at any time was shot....”

Chang was very clearly not disposed to tell us all of his activities in Compound 72, but it can be seen from what followed that the Americans considered him a “reliable anti-Communist” element. He was appointed as squad leader of the 20th Platoon, 4th Battalion of Compound or Regiment No. 72. He stayed on Koje for about nine months until December 13, 1951, five days before the name lists of prisoners held by both sides were exchanged at Panmunjom. Then he and four other Chinese prisoners were taken by plane to Tokyo for training at a special school for secret agents. His later adventures belong to another place in this story.

From Chang and other prisoners in Compound 72 who returned by various ways across the battle-line, we learned that the main activity of the CIC up to the time that the cease-fire talks began, was to organise various feudal-style “secret societies” or “brotherhoods” in the compound, ostensibly started by the prisoners themselves but actually by the CIC agents. These agents worked quietly to watch trends and reactions in discussion and to list suspected “dissidents” or officers who had refused to reveal their rank in order to remain with their men. (Since officers of



the Chinese People's Volunteers bear no insignia of rank it was easy for them to stay with their men after capture.) Those who were marked down as "militants" or "officers" on the CIC lists were transferred to Compound 71, which the prisoners named the "Graveyard."

What went on in the "Graveyard" has not yet been revealed since no prisoner was ever transferred back to the other compounds from there and none escaped. All that is known was what could be told by sounds – the shots of firing squads, never-ending beatings and the cries of the prisoners inside. What went on in Compound 72 was happening in all the other compounds on Koje that held Chinese prisoners. In the compounds where the Koreans were held, Rhee's gaolers were employing the methods noted by the International Committee of the Red Cross as leaving signs of "beatings or other ill-treatment" in order to separate members of the Korean People's Army who formerly lived in South Korea from the rest.

When the cease-fire talks began, the tactics inside the prisoner camps changed according to the varying phases of the negotiations.

## CHAPTER II

Military leaders both in Washington and in the field made no pretence about not wanting an armistice in Korea. Van Fleet, the Commander of the American ground forces in Korea, was bragging that the talks were starting just when he was ready "to push to the Yalu" and no American spokesman was known to open his mouth at that time without warning the world that any demand for peace in Korea was a Communist trick. However, the public demanded peace in such a loud voice and the Koreans and Chinese had made their desire for peace so clear that there was nothing for it – the Americans had to negotiate. And they went to Kaesong with a "Joker" up their sleeves – "voluntary repatriation."

Unless the primary fact is borne in mind – the secret decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff five days earlier to refuse to return large numbers of prisoners – the initial manoeuvres of the chief American delegate at the cease-fire talks are not easy to understand.

The cease-fire talks began as the result of a radio broadcast on June 23, 1951, by Soviet delegate to the United Nations, Malik, who proposed a cease-fire on the basis of withdrawal of both sides from the 38th parallel, along which both armies roughly stood. World public opinion took up this proposal, the Chinese and Koreans agreed and the Americans with many hedgings and "warnings" agreed to meet on this basis.

But when the talks began, Admiral Joy, impatient to spring the card that would put an end to this, for the American military leaders, unwelcome pause in the war, proposed that the question of the prisoners of war should be taken as the first item on the agenda after the adoption of the agenda itself. It was an absurdity, as the chief Korean-Chinese delegate General Nam Il pointed out to Joy, to discuss prisoners' exchange before any concrete arrangements for an armistice had been agreed and Joy had to withdraw from this untenable position. Eventually an agenda was agreed

putting prisoner exchange in its right place – after the fixing of the demarcation line and concrete arrangements for an armistice had been agreed.

With everyone watching the talks so closely, the Americans had to keep the “Joker” up their sleeve for the time being. The prisoner question was pushed down the agenda and some quick thinking had to be done in Washington. To gain time they scrapped the whole basis on which the talks began and refused even to discuss a cease-fire on the 38th parallel, demanding instead some 12,000 square kilometres of territory north of the battleline as a gift. According to the best informed correspondents on the American side, this decision was taken just after the talks started and even took Admiral Joy by surprise. It was such a drastic, obviously wrecking demand that it was hidden from the public until the authors convinced many “UN” correspondents in Kaesong of its truth and set them on the track of the facts.

“Voluntary repatriation” having been put into cold storage for a while, various other wrecking devices were tried. The American air force took a hand and bombed the headquarters of the Korean-Chinese delegation in Kaesong city; General Ridgway had the talks postponed and played “hard-to-get” for two months while Van Fleet tried unsuccessfully “to push to the Yalu.”

All the time, the preparations for “voluntary repatriation” went ahead as fast as possible. By August more than 100 Kuomintang “instructors” had arrived in the Chinese compounds from Chiang Kai-shek’s hide-out in Formosa. Picked thugs from the South Korean gaols were drafted in still greater numbers into the compounds holding the North Korean prisoners.

In Compound 72, the “leaders” at first were Chang Hsing-teng and Chang Chi-teh, both officials of the Pao Mi Chu (Security Bureau) of Chiang Kai-shek’s Ministry of National Defence. (Another higher-ranking Kuomintang officer, Wang Shun-ching was appointed later – Authors.) Assisting them were a number of “clerks” and an unknown number of other imported agents who were infiltrated as “prisoners” to act as spies and agents provocateurs. The Compound was administered by one American and two Kuomintang officials and each of the battalions had a similar set-up. Companies, platoons and squads were solely in charge of Kuomintang agents or persons regarded as “reliable anti-Communists.” An open Kuomintang headquarters was set up on the island with a branch in each compound. Branch No. 63 was opened up in Compound 72 where all prisoners who had admitted, under torture, to having former connections with the Kuomintang were registered and told that they had been re-accepted into the Kuomintang and must henceforth obey orders from Formosa. Their names and family particulars were registered with Chiang Kai-shek’s consul in Pusan and forwarded to Formosa.

First in a long series of steps to force the prisoners to remain with their captors was the setting up of CIE (Civil Information and Education) schools in each compound. Prisoners were herded into classes here twice a week and forced to listen to hymns of hate against the Chinese People’s Republic, the Soviet Union and Communism. Efforts to avoid these classes brought retribution in the form of caning, clubbing and being deprived of their meagre portion of gritty mash. Main

subject of study was “China’s Destiny” written by Chiang Kai-shek in close parallel to Hitler’s “Mein Kampf.” (“China’s Destiny” is so filled with Fascist rubbish and follows Hitler’s book so faithfully that Chiang’s missionary advisors persuaded him to have the English edition suppressed when it was first published in 1942. It was released five years later in a specially doctored version for western consumption.)

Mou Ping-yun, one of the many former prisoners on Kojé who returned to North Korea by parachute as a “secret agent,” gave the following description of the “education” system in American prisoner camps:

“We were marched unit by unit to the classes. Anyone who spoke or even smiled was given a prod with a bayonet or a crack on the head with a rifle butt. Sick and wounded also had to attend and prisoners were even carried in by their comrades. Inside the class-room we started by singing a song in praise of Chiang Kai-shek or against Mao Tse-tung. Those who refused to sing, or did not seem to do it heartily enough, were beaten with bamboo rods or clubs inside the “classroom.” Not one day passed without terrible incidents because prisoners refused to sing or changed the words of the songs.

“We had to listen to lectures against China and the Soviet Union and at the end the Kuomintang agents shouted slogans which everyone was supposed to repeat, with the thugs standing round. Anyone who refused was either beaten up on the spot or marked down for future action.

“At the end of each class some of the prisoners were dragged off on the charge of ‘contempt for lectures’ and were beaten or made to kneel down for hours without moving. If they moved a bayonet was stuck into them or they were clubbed. Some were given no food for days on end. ‘Blood classes,’ the prisoners called them because of the blood left in the classes every time.”

We know not only from the testimony of those who attended the schools but even from a few accounts given by American pressmen quoted later, that the prisoners stood firmly against this terror.

Each month examinations were held, supervised by the Kuomintang “instructors.” Those who failed too miserably were dragged off to Compound 71. The “bright” students were selected for special jobs inside the camp, or as was the case with those who were airdropped into North Korea, taken for training as special agents.

After the classes had been in progress for a short time, the next step was taken. The “secret societies” were dissolved and in their place the “Oppose Communism Resist Russia Association” was formed. By this time the Kuomintang had “evidence” against a great number of the prisoners, collection of which had been made easy by the formation of the “secret societies.” Kuomintang and CIC agents planted among the prisoners had formed these societies, pretending, of course, that they were acting without the knowledge of the American and Kuomintang camp bosses. Many unwary prisoners, regarding the societies as organisations expressing the prisoners’ desire

to return home, had disclosed their real feelings to the Kuomintang agents. Now they saw these same agents forming the “Oppose Communism Resist Russia Association.” They knew they had been betrayed... They had been marked down as “Reds.” As this realisation dawned, with Compound 71 in the background with its screams and rifle volleys, the agents whispered their alternatives: Join the new organisation or....

At first the new organisation was also secret. Members were enrolled on the understanding that their names would not be revealed, but they would be entitled to special food and other privileges and freed from the overhanging fear of Compound 71. Although most of the prisoners were in a state of semi-starvation by this time, it was still only the Kuomintang agents who joined at first.

Pressure went on hard toward the end of September 1951 when members of the former secret societies were threatened with denunciation if they continued to refuse to join the Association. Some did so, a few others doubtless joined to try to ease the pangs of starvation, especially since it seemed at first that only lip-service had to be paid to the organisation and nothing else would be required. Then the Association became an open organisation and the names of its members were posted up in the camp as an inducement to others to join as well as a warning to the “members” that they had now gone too far to retract. Recruiting was done openly now and huge slogans were posted everywhere: “End Beatings by Joining Oppose Communism Resist Russia Association,” “Join... and Get Better Food,” “Show Your Loyalty by Joining....”

Now the stage was reached where refusal to join if “invited” by a Kuomintang agent meant a trip to CIC headquarters for interrogation for “dangerous thoughts” – a one-way trip for many of the prisoners. As a further method of pressure, the thin diet was still further reduced and prisoners who complained were branded as “Communists” or “rioters” and became liable to be beaten to death or shot in the compounds. On one occasion mentioned by several escaped prisoners, 20 were killed or wounded when guards opened fire on prisoners protesting about food.

No imagination at all is needed to understand what would be the attitude of the Kuomintang officials and their bosses, the race-arrogant, Communist-fearing American officials and guards, toward prisoners who refused to join the “Oppose Communism Resist Russia Association.” Refusal to join was to brand oneself a “diehard Red.”

When the press-gangs could force no more prisoners into the Association, the next stage opened – prisoners must show their “loyalty” (to Chiang Kai-shek or Syngman Rhee) and their genuine “change of heart” by allowing themselves to be tattooed with anti-Communist slogans and with insults to the Chinese and Korean governments and leaders. This provoked even more bitter resistance.

Tattooing is a despised custom in China, having been used in feudal days to brand thieves and evil-doers. Chiang Kai-shek turned this to his own purpose during the civil war in China. At first he used it to mark captive troops with slogans insulting the war-lords for whom they had fought,

to prevent their return. Later he used the same device to brand captured troops of the People's Liberation Army to discourage their escape from his own army. When Kuomintang troops started to desert him en masse for the PLA, he started tattooing his own men with anti-Communist slogans in an attempt to stem the flood of desertions. After he was driven off the mainland he ordered all the garrison troops on the islands near the coast of China to be tattooed to prevent them crossing over to the mainland and deserting.

But tattooing has always been and still is a despised custom to which almost no Chinese would submit voluntarily. For the prisoners to hide their thoughts while they shouted empty slogans, to evade beatings and worse, was one thing. But now they were asked to take a step which would, it seemed, sever them forever from their comrades; from their country; from the soil which was now their property, given to them in fulfilment of the land-hungry yearnings of hundreds of generations of peasants; from their wives and children whom they were defending when they marched into Korea to close the back door into China which the Japanese had driven through only 20 years before. They resisted.

At first the known Kuomintang importees from Formosa showed off their own tattoo marks and appealed for volunteers to have themselves branded as a further, essential sign of "loyalty." There were no volunteers apart from the planted Kuomintang agents who were fairly well known by this time. They stepped forward with great display and "demanded" to be tattooed. But the prisoners refused.

By the middle of October 1951, Van Fleet's two offensives had been ground to dust in the Korean hills and the combination of military and public pressure had forced the Americans to resume negotiations at Panmunjom. Admiral Joy's highly publicised demand for a demarcation line along the battle-line, while he was secretly demanding over 12,000 square kilometres of North Korea, was blown sky-high when the Korean-Chinese delegation proposed that the demarcation line should be along the battle-line.

Settlement of this issue was imminent; public pressure was on for a speed-up in the talks and the failure of Van Fleet's two offensives showed there was no hope of a "military solution." At any moment discussion might begin on Item Four – Prisoners of War. But the prisoners were proving far more difficult than the Americans, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff downward, had expected. For Americans of that mentality, Koreans and Chinese are just unidentifiable objects, to be used and abused, bribed or beaten, depending on their place in American schemes. They do not think of them as individuals with a history and culture that has extended over five thousand years. The Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum estimated that the prisoners could be made to perform according to American desires, but instead they were all demanding to be returned to North Korea and China. The CIE "educational" programme had failed dismally. When the Camp Executive Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Moran said in an interview with a UP correspondent "You can't split their heads open and see how they think, so how can you tell what they really want?" he

really meant, “We can’t rely on the measures so far taken to ensure that these prisoners will not demand to be sent home.”

The programme had to be speeded up. More specific guarantees had to be ready and available when the American delegates at Panmunjom slipped their “voluntary repatriation” card out of their sleeves and threw it on the green baize table in the tent.

Orders were issued for more speed. More speed demanded more pressure and the frequency and violence of the incidents increased in proportion. On October 10, 1951, Kuomintang officials tried to force a group of prisoners to hoist Chiang Kai-shek’s flag in Compound 86. They refused and ripped the flag to pieces, paying for this with 20 killed and wounded. Five days later, when a group of 13 prisoners was being brought into Compound 72 from Pusan, they noticed that there was a Kuomintang flag at the entrance to the Compound and, led by Liang Chao-hsiang, refused to enter until it was removed. American guards beat them up with rifle butts but the prisoners linked hands and refused to move. The Americans then called in the Kuomintang guards, who under the protection of the GIs’ rifles beat them with clubs until they were all either unconscious or seriously injured. They were carried in and flung into the compound gaol.

At about this time an event occurred in one of the “classes” in Compound 72. Prisoners were forced to put on a play depicting the advantages of joining the remnants of Chiang Kai-shek’s army. During the play one of the actors, Lin Hsueh-pu, was supposed to shout, “We want to go to Formosa and join the army in a counter-attack against the mainland.” But when his cue came he shouted instead, “We absolutely insist on returning to our homes.” A roar of applause from the audience changed to a roar of protest when Kuomintang guards rushed on to the stage and rained blows on Lin Hsueh-pu as they dragged him out. News of these incidents and others like them swiftly ran through the compounds on the bush telegraph and raised still higher the spirit of resistance among the prisoners.

Before the end of October orders had been handed down by the Kuomintang headquarters to complete the tattooing of the prisoners at high speed. Time-limits were set for the leaders of the units to finish the job and a completely free hand was given as to the methods to be used. Groups of prisoners were taken from their tents at all hours of the day or night and ordered to submit to tattooing. Those first in the list who resisted were flung to the ground, beaten half to death and tattooed while insensible, in full sight of their fellow prisoners. In Compound 72 one prisoner, Sun Chen-kuei started to fight back with his fists against the club-swinging guards and about a hundred of his comrades rallied to his help. American armoured cars were rushed to the spot and under cover of their machine-guns, Kuomintang guards went in with their clubs. The prisoners fought back, singing as they fought until, overpowered, carrying their wounded with them and still singing, they were escorted to Compound 71.

A favourite “mass-production” method of making prisoners submit was to hang them by their feet, then flog them and afterwards make them crawl round on all fours with crushing blows from clubs when they said “No” to the question whether they were now ready to be tattooed.

An American pastor and priest, former missionaries of the “old China hand” type lent their hand to this work with results they later proudly displayed to Cardinal Spellman when he visited the camps. The English names of these befrocted scoundrels were not known to any of the prisoners. One, a Catholic, was known to them as Su and the other was a Protestant who left Peking shortly before the city was handed over to the PLA and was called Hu. Both of them exhorted the prisoners in fluent Chinese to show their loyalty to God and testify to their change of heart by printing on their living flesh the new creed “Oppose Communism Resist Russia.” Hu made a specialty of photographing tattooed members of one company and showing the pictures to other prisoners, urging that they do likewise. Their efforts were reinforced by those of an energetic Buddhist monk imported from Japan. Since all prisoners had to register as members of one of these three religious creeds and had to attend regular religious services, this formed a useful addition of moral pressure to buttress the work of the inquisitors.

Those who were registered as Christians had to attend three services weekly and the Buddhists had to spend half an hour daily reciting prayers.

The result of all these unremitting pressures was that a proportion of the prisoners were tattooed. When it was seen that “Operation Tattoo” could be pushed no further, “Operation Blood Petition” began. This was probably intended to be the last step and it appears that only when this step was complete, did the Americans feel secure in exposing their hand at the conference table. It consisted in having the prisoners sign “petitions” in their own blood, asking to be sent to Formosa rather than return to their homes in China, and to South Korea rather than their homes in the North. From the evidence of Ridgway’s personal interest in this stage, it appears that the American negotiators would only be satisfied when they had the signatures of the majority of the Chinese and a high proportion of the Koreans in their pockets. The orders were to get blood petitions and to get them quickly. It was obvious that the Americans could not stall indefinitely on the issue of the demarcation line for they were now deadlocking the truce-talks by demanding Kaesong as a free gift, although it lay to the north of the battle-line.

Those who had been tattooed were now jeered at by their guards and told that with such marks on them they could never return home. Their only hope was to petition Chiang Kai-shek to let them go to Formosa and Syngman Rhee to accept them in South Korea. If they proved themselves real anti-Communists, these requests would most likely be “granted.”

Wang Chia-ti was one of the prisoners regarded as a “bright” student in the CIE classes and had been gradually promoted to the position of Propaganda and Research Secretary of the 63rd Kuomintang Branch Office in Compound 72. Later he was selected for special agent work and parachuted into North Korea where a few days later he was giving the Chinese People’s Volun-

teers interesting confirmation, which his job on the island eminently suited him to do, of the reports of other Koje inmates.

“Towards the end of November,” Wang Chia-ti said, “one of the CIC officers, Captain Booth, personally directed the Kuomintang Commander of the 72nd Regiment, Wang Shun-ching, to complete the signing of the blood petitions that night. He said that the petitions were all drawn up and all that remained was to fill in the signatures. Booth told Wang Shun-ching that he was personally assigned to take the appeal to Ridgway’s headquarters on the following day.

“Wang Shun-ching told me,” the airdropped agent continued, “that he knew it was impossible to get the signatures. He suggested getting blank sheets of paper of the same size as the petitions and using any excuse to get the prisoners to put their names down. But even then most of them refused to sign.”

Shortly after, Ridgway made a personal visit to the camp and Wang Shun-ching was again ordered to have the petitions completed, this time by 2 p.m. on the day of the visit. This job was passed on to Wang Chia-ti.

“I called an emergency meeting of battalion and company leaders,” he went on, “and informed them that all petitions must be filled in by midday. But by midday the sheets were still mostly empty and so we got all the agents together and let them fill in the blanks with their own finger and thumb prints. At 2 p.m. that day they were all handed over to Ridgway by an American lieutenant colonel of the military police.” When we asked Wang Chia-ti where they got the blood, he said calmly, “There was always plenty of blood.”

This incident is interesting in showing the type of “evidence” on which the American Command was basing its policy, but it is by no means the whole story of blood petitions. They were accompanied by the same orgies of blood-letting and torture that kept pace with the tattooing.

Hwang Ik Sung, a Korean prisoner who was selected to do espionage work but gave himself up as soon as he was airdropped, described what he had seen during his stay in No. 64 Field Hospital on Koje, where he had been taken after falling sick as a result of forced labour on a low diet.

“My own view was that this ‘hospital’ was a place for putting fear into the prisoners and not a place for the care of the sick,” stated Hwang. “After wounded or sick prisoners were taken there, they were first coaxed and then bullied into betraying their country and were killed secretly if they didn’t give in.... “ After the Americans started to insist on “voluntary repatriation” at Panmunjom, the number of wounded at this “hospital” increased several-fold.

When whips and clubs failed, sometimes trickery succeeded. In some cases, before the prisoners got wise to this device, they were lined up and told that a movement had been started by the prisoners petitioning to be sent home. Those in favour should sign in blood. Many fell for this trick and signed. Next day they were told they had petitioned to be sent to Formosa.



Some of the prisoners went half crazy, some completely mad, with the prolonged physical torture and anxiety. There were cases of men hacking off the skin which bore the hated tattoo marks, regardless of the agony.

Most of the events described occurred in Compound 72 because this happens to be the compound for which we have the most complete picture and can thus give an authentic connected picture of the situation, which was identically reproduced in the other compounds, as a mass of nightmare evidence shows. There was no difference in treatment for Korean and Chinese prisoners, but since the number of Chinese was a small fraction of the Koreans, greater “individual attention” could be paid in their case during the time available to the inquisitors.

There is evidence that the tempo of the “work” was speeded up at the end of November in Compound 86. Possibly Ridgway felt that the blood petitions looked too phoney and wanted a sample test made to ensure that when the matter came up at Panmunjom, he could rely on enough prisoners being coerced by the “screening” process to back up the claims he intended to make at the conference table. Just after his visit to Koje, two tables were set up in Compound 86, each attended by Kuomintang officials from Formosa, surrounded by guards with clubs. Each prisoner was brought individually to the table and asked: “Do you wish to return to the mainland or go to Formosa?” When the prisoner replied that he wanted to return to China, he was asked “Why?” while the guards gathered in, expectantly twirling their clubs. “Why do you want to go to the mainland? Are you still loyal to the Communists?”

If he still insisted, a beating followed that left the prisoner covered in bloody dust and the question was put again. When he still persisted he was handed over to the guards to be put into a special battalion on starvation diet. There he was forced to do back-breaking work, quarrying stone, road-making and unloading at the wharves and mercilessly beaten on every pretext. It was made very clear that the way out of his misery lay toward Formosa and the Kuomintang army. From time to time the prisoners were called in and asked whether they had changed their minds.

This was the first case we were able to trace of the type of “screening” that later became universal. Meantime the issue of prisoners of war, Item Four of the agenda, was being discussed at Panmunjom.

### CHAPTER III

“We have no intention of buying a pig in a poke,” said razor-faced Rear-Admiral Libby, who handled for the Americans the first stages of discussion on prisoners of war in December 1951. This was the American answer to the Korean-Chinese delegation’s proposal that the principle of prisoner exchange should be “the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war as soon as an armistice is signed.”

Brigadier-General William Nuckols, “UN” briefing officer, told the press that the Americans had no intention of returning more prisoners than were returned to them because they “did not wish to present the Communists with a military advantage in terms of man-power.”

Considering that the Korean war has been kept going and world peace endangered by American insistence on “humanitarian” treatment of prisoners of war, it is notable that during the first weeks of the discussion about prisoners, the American delegates never raised any question of “principles” – humanitarian or otherwise – but bargained over the bodies of prisoners like cattle traders. They felt very sure of themselves on this question because they knew that they held many more prisoners of war than were held in the camps in North Korea. And there were very simple reasons for the difference.

When the Korean war began, although the South Korean Army was officered by Americans down to battalion level, and directed from Washington, it was technically a civil war and it is commonplace in civil wars to find the great majority of the population supporting one side while the other side consists of unpopular politicians, generals and a press-ganged army propped up by foreign support. Anyone who was in Korea during the first days of the war could see that the Korean people, North and South, supported the democratic government of the North against the bankrupt, American-manufactured government of Washington’s puppet, Syngman Rhee. During the swift advance of the Korean People’s Army to the south in July to August 1950, whole divisions of Rhee’s conscripted troops threw down their arms and welcomed the People’s Army as liberators. Not only was there no point in locking these brother Koreans up in stockades, but also the People’s Army was pressing south, intent in freeing the whole country from American control. The “prisoners” were given a few lectures on the situation in Korea and the reasons for the war and promptly set free to make their way home, except for a few thousand officers who would almost certainly have caused trouble in the rear.

When the Americans landed in Inchon, near Seoul, in September 1950, they cut off scores of thousands of People’s Army fighters and captured them. But the Americans had to treat every Korean who carried weapons, and many who had none, as mortal enemies. Truman and his puppet Rhee were fighting against a whole people. They put every captive behind barbed wire.

These facts were well known and also that the prisoner of war camps in North Korea contained only a few thousand prisoners while those in the South, mainly Koje, contained some 170,000 former People’s Army soldiers and Chinese Volunteers. Truman and Acheson seized on this disparity as a weapon and took the decision to detain a large proportion of the Korean and Chinese prisoners.

But though American policy was clear, the method of its application had not been worked out by the time discussion began on this issue at Panmunjom, and this was because the prisoners were steadfastly refusing to “co-operate” with their captors and refused to sign away their right to return home – the right of all prisoners of war under international law.

From the beginning Admiral Libby refused to discuss the principle put forward by the Korean-Chinese delegates – complete repatriation of all prisoners. He demanded to know how many “pigs were in the poke,” numbers, names, ranks, units, and also that the International Committee of the Red Cross should first be allowed to visit the camps in the North. Since at this time the Americans were already engaged in germ warfare – as testified by Colonel Schwable and Major Bley of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and other American flyers – it is easy to see that a group of pro-American “neutrals” with medical experts, wandering around in North Korea, could be of considerable assistance to the U.S. germ specialists. However, the Korean-Chinese side proposed that such visits could be made immediately an armistice was agreed.

On December 18, both sides passed over lists of prisoners of war in their hands to the other side. The Americans were handed a full list of all non-Korean prisoners in English, with accurate details of rank, serial number and units. South Koreans were listed in Korean characters. Then the cruel hoax that the Americans had been preparing became clear. Admiral Libby handed over 132,000 names which were said to be those of North Korean and Chinese prisoners – written in English. No other particulars were given. Not a single prisoner could be accurately identified. Any Chinese name can be transcribed in many different ways in Chinese characters and all will sound the same; and any one of those can be transcribed according to any one of a dozen different systems of Romanisation. Korean is based on an alphabet and something similar to the names could be arrived at by turning them back into Korean symbols. But not another particular was given except the names. The lists were a worthless pile of junk. Every one of the Kuomintang or South Korean agents advising the Americans, knew these facts and there can be no other conclusion than that this was a calculated device of the Americans to gain time.

This took place, it should be noted, at the very time when all the world was hoping that peace would be signed before December 27, 1951. A 30-day time-limit had been set on November 27, when the military demarcation line for the cease-fire had been agreed by both sides. If peace was signed in 30 days, the line would remain; if later, the line would be altered to correspond to the battle-line at the later date. Talks began on the prisoners issue on December 11 and there were 17 precious days left to get the cease-fire. Libby wasted seven of these in refusing to discuss the principle of repatriation. Then the Korean-Chinese delegates handed over their lists, hoping to speed up the talks. Libby said, on December 18, that it would take at least one week to give the names in their original Chinese and Korean characters and “much longer” to provide the other information.

Apart from the obvious conclusion that handing over meaningless name lists was a delaying device, the far more sinister one can also be drawn – that “failure by the Americans to keep accurate and up-to-date records of the prisoners was due to their earlier decision that they were never going to repatriate them in any case. Their only classifications were presumably “Red” or “anti-Red.”

Prisoner lists had been handed by the Americans to the International Committee of the Red Cross from time to time, in lip-service to the formal requirements of the Geneva Convention, and now it was found that the number of names on the lists handed to the Korean-Chinese representatives at Panmunjom was more than 44,000 short of the names previously notified. When this was first taken up with the Americans, Libby fell into a towering rage and said he was “tired of criticism of the American list.” Later he tried to explain the discrepancy by claiming that the missing names were those of South Korean civilians captured “by mistake,” wrongly classified as prisoners of war and since released. A few days later still, he admitted that this was an error and that all these “reclassified civilians” were imprisoned on Koje Island awaiting “screening.” A new list of prisoners thrown on to the table by Libby on December 25 was a continuation of the previous hoax. It consisted of transliterations of the English “names,” not into the actual symbols of the prisoners’ names but by choosing any symbols that roughly fitted the sounds. It was equally worthless. Libby, who seemed to stand in need of treatment for neurosis, flew into another rage when this was pointed out and said the real names would come on January 4, 1952.

Behind this, there must have been a frantic shuffling round in Koje as lists were made and scrapped in an effort to keep out the names of prisoners who had been selected for airdropping into North Korea, and of those who had been murdered, and to decide how many of the 44,000 missing names to include. Even the American press took up this delay as “another bungle” to add to the dreary tale of American deadlocking devices. So the “UN” Command had to hurry and made, as a result, many “mistakes” which were later to prove very embarrassing.

With the full details of American, British and other prisoners held in North Korea in their hands, the Americans now produced their first plan, aimed at turning Panmunjom into a cattle-fair and amazing in its lack of “humanitarian” principle. It was, in brief, exchange of prisoners head for head; South Korean civilians who had fled North were to be exchanged for surplus North Korean prisoners in American hands; after the head-for-head exchange, if further North Koreans remained in American hands, they would be repatriated only if the ICRC was “convinced” that they wanted to go home; prisoners returned in excess of those received must be paroled by the Korean and Chinese military commanders. It remained only for the Americans to set up weighing-machines in Panmunjom to negotiate on the basis of pound-for-pound of human flesh. American “humanitarian” policy meant holding war prisoners as hostages for the return of political refugees to face Rhee’s firing squads. *The New York Times* commented admiringly:

“A proposal advancing new principles and setting new standards of equality in repatriation of war prisoners and captive civilians... if and when adopted it would establish a precedent.”

That final line in the *New York Times*’ comment might have read, “if and when adopted it would tear up all international agreements on the repatriation of war prisoners and reverse all civilised practice.”

It was hard to imagine that the Americans had the least hope that such a proposal would be acceptable to the Korean-Chinese side. But with their customary patience the Korean-Chinese delegates pointed out that from the beginning, Admiral Joy had announced he would discuss no political matters, and thus there was no place on the agenda for discussing political refugees. However, said Korean General Li Sang Cho, if the Americans insisted on discussing this matter, he proposed that after the cease-fire, both sides should give every assistance and facility to all civilian refugees on both sides of the parallel to return to their original homes. Libby countered by demanding that vast numbers of unknown refugees should be personally interrogated and then when the absurdity of the proposal had become clear to the world, dropped it, as he had also to drop the head-for-head bargain.

During these preliminary American manoeuvres, it must be stressed again, they never once advanced the “humanitarian” principles on which they were later to walk out of the negotiations and wreck the hopes of peace in Korea. It was only after Libby had to back down on the exchange of civilian refugees for combatants that the Truman-Acheson scheme for “voluntary repatriation” was brought from the pigeon-holes to be applied to all prisoners, according to Libby’s demand.

When General Li pointed out that this was in direct contradiction to the Geneva Convention and quoted from Article 118 of the Convention which requires that “prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities,” Libby was astonished. It became clear later that he was unaware of this article and did not even know that the Geneva Convention had been re-drafted in 1949 and that America had played a prominent part in the work.

While Libby was making various excuses for his failure to produce the lists, ominous reports began to trickle through from Koje. General Li demanded to know what was the meaning of reports that 104 Kuomintang “instructors” from Formosa were active in the compounds holding the Chinese prisoners. These reports coincided with news about tattooing. Members of the Korean and Chinese delegation staff had personally experienced the sort of “instruction” handed out by the agents of Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek. Libby tried to cover up by a statement in Panmunjom on January 12 that the prisoners in Koje were “being taught the fundamental concepts of democracy... the basic principles of democratic life, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, freedom from disease and freedom from fear.” He added: “There is nothing that remotely resembles coercion or intimidation.” Next day Rhee’s government announced that 5,231 KPA prisoners had said, “They would rather be interned for ten or more years than be returned to the North Korean authorities.” Rhee said they were petitioning him with signatures in their own blood begging to be kept in South Korea.

A week later the tattooers and bloody-thumb-print experts had got far enough to start the publicity drums beating the theme of “voluntary repatriation.” By chance or otherwise, Cardinal Spellman “happened” to visit the camps at this time and by the same sort of coincidence the

State Department's United States Information Service broadcast a long interview with the prelate on January 28 from Tokyo in which Spellman said that "of 150,000 prisoners, 71 per cent do not want to be returned to Communist rule." The broadcast went on that Cardinal Spellman "described a group of 300 Chinese who had tattooed themselves with the words 'I am anti- Communist' in the Chinese, Korean and English alphabets. 'The anti-Communist tattooed Chinese,' Spellman said, 'want to be placed in the frontline of the UN forces so they can demonstrate actively their opposition to Communist rule in their own country'." (It was clearly of little use to Cardinals and publicity photographers having prisoners only tattooed in Korean and Chinese. English had to be added.)

Two days after this statement by the Cardinal, a very revealing Reuter report was smuggled out of Kojé marked "delayed by censors," quoting one of the island's administrators, Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur Raven as stating that "at least 500 Chinese had tattooed their arms with anti-Communist slogans, some both in English and Chinese." So it seems that by the end of January the camp authorities had only succeeded in getting tattoo marks on between 300 and 500 Chinese, but this was enough for Spellman to be able to report in figures almost as precise as a MacArthur communiqué, that 71 per cent (not 70 or 72) of 150,000 prisoners would refuse to go home.

Queried in the conference tent about tattooing, Libby replied that the prisoners were tattooing themselves. As this, on second thoughts, seemed a physically difficult act to perform, he changed his explanation to say that they were tattooing each other voluntarily.

A few chosen pressmen were allowed to visit Kojé during this period on carefully conducted tours to selected parts of the island – and of course to photograph the tattoo marks. Peter Groening of United Press writing from Kojé on January 20 and 21 referred to "eight camp commanders in twelve months, working behind a wall of official silence to create order in barbed wire compounds..." He described a "concentration centre of camps turned into an island of fear. Riots, torture and murder have woven a pattern of terror in the daily prisoner life." Groening quoted an instance in an officers' barracks where "an outspoken Communist was strung up by his thumbs and beaten unconscious."

Earlier, George Barrett of the *New York Times* referred to the tattooing and quoted the camp commandant at the time, Colonel Fitzgerald as complaining that the tattoo marks "were made with ordinary stickpins and are not very lasting." Barrett quoted this to underline his own scepticism of the reported "conversion" of the Chinese and Korean prisoners.

By the same coincidence, on the day that Cardinal Spellman made his broadcast, January 28, Libby handed over the list of 132,000 names in their proper symbols, 41 days after he had received meticulously accurate lists himself. But he still failed to give the names of the 44,000 prisoners omitted from the list handed over on December 18 and arbitrarily relabelled as "civilians" by Libby. While still claiming they were actually South Korean civilians, Libby kept set-

ting new dates for giving exact information. Some reasons he gave for the delay were not quite easy to believe from a man representing what is claimed as the most industrialised country of all – excuses such as shortage of accountants and breakdown of the mimeographing machine. Still another month went by and in the third week in February, Libby promised to hand over the information “in a few days.” On February 24 the US Armed Forces Radio Service reported from Munsan (US Truce Talks Headquarters) and Tokyo that “the UN Command that day had handed the Communists a complete accounting of the 44,000 reclassified war prisoners.” All American news agencies carried the same story but soon they had to admit another “bungle.” It was a plain lie. Right up to the day the Americans broke off the talks eight months later, not one name from these 44,000 had been submitted, although General Li Sang Cho had handed Libby a list of 38,000 members of this group who had been identified as former members of the Korean People’s Army.

Reason for the false news report is easy to find – if one looked on Koje. Most probably Libby had intended to hand over the list on February 24 accompanied by the usual statement that they were all “civilians,” mistakenly classified as prisoners but not wanting to return to North Korea. For this he counted on continued silence from the prisoners themselves. The constant delays and subterfuges were necessary to give the “instructors” on Koje time to “persuade” the 44,000 to agree to their changed status. But this scheme blew up in the Americans’ face, and gave the world a glimpse of “humanitarianism” as applied to the prisoners on Koje Island.

#### CHAPTER IV

The “reclassified civilians” wrote their protest in their own blood when 214 of them were killed or wounded by troops of the American “Wolfhound” regiment on February 18, 1952. The entire inmates of one compound refused to co-operate in changing their status. At first the Americans made desperate attempts to suppress news of the massacre but rumours began to leak out. By February 22 distorted and conflicting stories had been fed out to the press.

First reports claimed that about 1,500 “Communist” inmates of Compound 62 had attacked American troops. This was quickly replaced by a story that there had been a battle between Communist and anti-Communist prisoners, following which about 20 Communists had led an attack against American troops. Finally, in order to justify the deaths of 85 and the wounding of 129 prisoners, another version said that American troops fired in self-defence when faced with an attack by the entire compound of 6,000 inmates.

With the news ringing round the world, the American High Command tried to show clean hands by stating that the International Committee of the Red Cross had been invited to make an investigation. Since this entirely national organisation of Swiss citizens had been getting a good drubbing in the progressive press for continuing on Koje its Second World War policy of whitewashing the Nazi concentration camps, it felt impelled to go through the motions of investigating this case.

The ICRC did carry out an enquiry which in general was a complete white-washing of American over-all policy of enforcing “voluntary repatriation.” In order to camouflage the report under a cloak of objectivity, however, the ICRC had to disclose some of the shocking conditions on Kojé. It is noteworthy that while the delegates of the ICRC were constantly running to the press with unimportant stories, their report which criticised American actions on Kojé, was tucked away in the French language publication of the Red Cross. It was ignored entirely by the pro-American press – and not surprisingly. For if one searched among the polite, diplomatic phrases one found that the report did expose some of the gangster methods being used by the Americans on Kojé. It did, in fact, blow wide open the dual myth that (a) the 44,000 were “civilians” and (b) that they did not want to be repatriated to the North. In so doing, it inevitably cast the gravest doubts on the whole American case that vast numbers of prisoners did not want to return to their homes. The story of the February 18 massacre is to be found in the April 1952 issue of the *Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge*, published in Geneva. In view of its calculated suppression we quote extensively from this vital document.

The report begins by giving a general account of the conditions found in various Kojé compounds visited by delegates between February 5 and 22, an account made even more horrifying by its obvious attempt to minimise the grim realities they found. The tents and barracks are described as overcrowded, washing and toilet facilities – in the Korean winter – were in the open air, delegates heard many complaints about the quantity and quality of the food and they found “a large enough number” of prisoners affected with “gastro-intestinal” diseases – produced by starvation. Hospital staff members complained of shortage of medicines.

Because of “the great publicity given to the events of February 18,” the report continues, with manifest reluctance, it was decided to publish the findings of the delegates who investigated the matter. The 6,000 inmates of Compound 62 among whom the massacre had taken place were part of the 44,000, and the first few lines of their findings clear up the identity of the reclassified “civilians.” “The prisoners of war in Section 62,” the report states, “originally from South Korea but captured as troops of the Korean People’s Army, having expressed their desire not to be sent back to North Korea after the signing of an armistice, the detaining Authority proceeded to interrogate them. Recognised as originally from South Korea by the Authorities of the Republic of Korea (Syngman Rhee’s government – Authors), they were reclassified as ‘civilian internees’.

“Recently, a certain number of these internees demanded to be sent to North Korea after the armistice. The detaining Authorities then decided to proceed to a new interrogation with a view to definitely establishing who wanted to return to North Korea after the armistice and who wanted to remain in South Korea. The internees were opposed to this new reclassification.”

Even from this part of the report alone it is clear:



1. The “internees” were part of the regular Korean People’s Army and therefore should be classified as prisoners of war with the protection which is provided under the terms of the Geneva Convention.
2. It was incorrect that they did not want to return to North Korea.
3. The prisoners were opposed to the new “interrogation.”

The report goes on to describe a visit paid by the delegates to Compound 62 on February 8. The delegates arrived there during a celebration of the anniversary of the founding of the KPA. “The 6,000 inmates attending, that is the entire number of the internees in Compound 62, were greatly excited,” the delegates report, and refer to songs, speeches and dances. After the celebration the ICRC delegates talked with the compound spokesman and tried to help the Americans in their illegal policy of “voluntary repatriation.” They told the prisoners’ spokesman that as the inmates had signed a statement that they were South Koreans and wanted to remain in the South, they would now have to sign new declarations if they had changed their opinions. “The spokesman declared that the prisoners would never allow themselves to be questioned again, alleging that pressure had been brought to bear at the time of the first interrogation,” the report states.

From this second paragraph it is clear:

4. Since all were attending the celebration, these prisoners considered themselves loyal to the KPA and not as “civilians,” loyal to Rhee.
5. The charge that “pressure had been brought to bear” is the only possible explanation why a compound that the Americans alleged was loyal to Rhee, should suddenly turn out loyal to the KPA, to the last man.

The delegates somewhat coyly refrain from mentioning what type of “pressure” was alleged by the spokesman, who in the nature of things, would surely have mentioned such an important matter, and the delegates themselves, if they were doing their job, should have pressed for detailed information. The spokesman asked the delegates to transmit a letter from the compound inmates to the North Korean Government, but the delegates somewhat cynically told them, says the report, that they should send it through “normal military channels.” No imagination is needed to know the fate of a letter, and all who had signed it, if it were sent through Koje camp channels to Kim Il Sung. The delegates promised to take up with the Koje authorities the prisoners’ objection to screening. But in fact there is no evidence in this or other reports that the ICRC ever raised its voice about “screening” – basic cause of all the Koje events.

While the American delegates at Panmunjom, during the second week in February, were daily inventing new excuses for not giving details regarding the 44,000 prisoners, the Koje commandant was secretly preparing to bring the 6,000 members of Compound 62 “into line” as a warning to the rest of the “reclassified civilians.”

“On the 18th of February,” continues the report, “in the early hours of the morning, learning that serious incidents had occurred late at night in Compound 62, the ICRC delegates immediately went to the spot. They were informed that without their having been previously advised, the new work of reclassification intended by the Authorities had been undertaken before dawn with the aid of troops.” The delegates reported seeing the activities of the American troops, including elements of a regiment, in trucks. Guards had been quadrupled, armoured cars with machine-guns were posted around the barbed wire compound, two ambulances were at the camp entrance and great excitement was noticed inside the compound “where the internees were singing in front of their flags, once again unfurled.” (The Camp Commandant had seized and destroyed their flags after the KPA anniversary celebration.)

From an interview with the prisoners’ spokesman, the delegates learned that at 4 a.m. on February 18 “about one regiment of troops entered the compound without warning. Almost all the internees were asleep with the exception of some who had been put under guard in one tent. The troops encircled the other tents, including that of the spokesman; the latter was not able to gain the attention of the camp authorities. The internees were forced to remain in their tents threatened by bayonets. Not knowing what was happening, one or two of them tried to leave the tents, they were fired upon. Seized with fear and thinking they were all going to be killed, the internees went out to defend themselves and to find out what was happening. The troops then attacked, using their weapons. The report goes on:

“At daybreak, the spokesman tried in vain to talk to the Commandant of the troops. He tried equally vainly, because they were dispersed all over the compound, to keep the internees under his control. One of his comrades, the chief of the 3rd Battalion of the internees, who helped him in his attempt to talk to the Commandant, was shot dead, when, in front of a group of internees, he walked alone towards the troops.

“In the meantime – it was about 8 o’clock – Colonel Fitzgerald, the Camp Commandant, arrived on the spot to settle the matter. In his presence, whilst the internees were singing, shots were still being fired.... He ordered the internees to sit down, after which still more internees were killed and wounded, and their bodies stretched out in front of him. The internees had obeyed the order of the Commandant to sit down. Several times Colonel Fitzgerald said the troops would withdraw. The internees hoped this would be done immediately but such was not the case.

“The spokesman then requested Colonel Fitzgerald to make a tour of the Compound with him to see for himself the facts. He accepted and accompanied by the spokesman and the chiefs of the internees’ battalions, he was able to confirm the damage, see and hear the wounded who were calling for help...

“From the fourth battalion, they went to the kitchens where the personnel was under guard in the mess-hall. The request of the spokesman that these men should be released was not granted. Then they went to the Compound shop. On their way they discovered about 40 internees under

guard squatting with their hands joined on their necks. One of them had been wounded by blows from a rifle-butt. The rifle-butt of the guard responsible was broken. The spokesman did not know whether the Camp Commandant had seen this or not. The troops prevented the men from carrying the wounded to the dispensary.

“The spokesman saw troops kicking the dead. Their corpses were put on a truck, without care and the greater part without any previous medical examination. A number of the internees, the spokesman believed, were thus regarded as dead though they were still living. The spokesman and the employees at the dispensary were not able to count the number of bodies...”

An account of the affair given in writing by Camp Commandant Fitzgerald to the ICRC is not less damning than that given by the prisoners’ own spokesman. Fitzgerald’s opening paragraph makes it clear that the prisoners were going to be interrogated, “screened” and re-interrogated until they came up with the answer the Americans wanted. They had to be coerced into confirming the already announced lie that over 70 per cent of prisoners were against repatriation. Especially in this case, it would be a blow against American policy (having announced these particular prisoners as “civilians” who wanted to stay with Rhee), if it emerged that they were KPA soldiers who wanted to go North.

“Following instructions from a higher headquarters,” reported Fitzgerald, “that POWs and CIs should express individually and privately whether or not they desired to be rescreened, POWs from Compound 62 refused to comply with this procedure. Accordingly the matter was thoroughly discussed and it was finally decided that troops be assigned to separate the inmates into small groups. (It was thus proposed that the agonies of interrogation “individually and privately” – where half a dozen strong-arm men could concentrate on one defenceless prisoner – were to be gone through in order to force them to agree to yet another interrogation.)

“A plan was developed and approved and put into effect to accomplish this purpose,” Fitzgerald goes on. “The Compound was secured and the inmates separated into small groups. Everything was going smoothly until the Communist agitators, of whom there are a considerable number in this compound, sided with one of the POW battalions to attack UN troops. All the inmates were heavily armed with iron bars, clubs, home-made weapons with barbed wire. Large stones and home-made grenades were thrown at the troops. In order to protect themselves it was necessary for the troops to use strong measures to subdue the attack. Throughout this demonstration, Communist flags and banners were displayed and every indication was given that the attack was planned for the purpose of overrunning the UN troops.

“I was not present during the attack by the inmates, having left the Compound after the first portion of the plan was successfully accomplished...”

Fitzgerald concludes by saying that he was convinced that “it would be impossible to accomplish our mission at the time. Therefore I ordered the withdrawal of the troops to prevent further bloodshed.”

Fitzgerald attempts to present his plan to use troops to force the prisoners to undergo “individual” questioning, as a “plan” worked out by the prisoners for the purpose of “overrunning the UN troops.” But his later comment that he withdrew his troops “to prevent further bloodshed” is itself a confession that the sole cause of the bloodshed was the American troops. According to the Geneva Convention, Fitzgerald among others responsible for managing Kojé, must be regarded as a war criminal.

This shooting down of more than 200 defenceless prisoners in the small hours of a grey winter morning in Kojé, was the classic exposure of the reality of American “humanitarianism” in trying to force “voluntary repatriation” on the unwilling prisoners.

Fitzgerald, already the ninth Kojé Commandant, was sacked shortly after and replaced by General Dodd. He was sacked for the same reason as Dodd and two of Dodd’s successors were sacked – for failure to break the prisoners’ determination to return home.

Eleven days after the massacre, on February 29, the American delegates at Panmunjom officially went back on their promises and said they would give no information at all about the 44,000 “re-classified civilians.” They refused to give any accounting for the massacre on February 18.

That shooting was by no means the first that had occurred on Kojé but it was the first to break through the American censorship. Escaped prisoners report a horrible shooting in Compound 61 in late January, when KPA prisoners were holding a demonstration demanding their repatriation. The prisoners were displaying banners with such slogans as “Send All Prisoners Home” and were singing the popular Kim Il Sung song, when American and puppet Rhee troops surrounded the compound with armoured cars and opened fire with machine-guns for half an hour. Later a work detail was sent from Compound 72 to bury the dead – the wounded having already been removed. They buried 170 Korean prisoners. Prisoners interviewed by the authors, described the scene as resembling a battlefield where heavy fighting had taken place.

After February 18, the world was to be constantly horrified by repeated mass shootings. On March 13 a group of Korean prisoners guarded by Rhee troops were being marched past the double rows of barbed wire surrounding Compound 95, which contained KPA prisoners. Suddenly the Rhee guards cut loose with their automatic weapons into Compound 95, killing 12 and wounding 26 men. The reason proffered by the Rhee men was that the prisoners had been jeering and tossing stones at them.

The shooting of unarmed prisoners was a violation of Article 42 of the Geneva Convention of 1949, it was pointed out in an Aide Memoire of the ICRC to the American Consul in Geneva on May 12, 1952. Further, this Aide Memoire revealed that the head of the Committee’s delegation in Korea had personally informed Ridgway of the situation in the camps, which was regarded as so serious that he had made certain proposals. Once more it was notable that the ICRC entirely condoned and glossed over the fact that “voluntary repatriation” is a breach of international law.

However, the ICRC chief urged the avoidance “in particular of the continuance of the political programme of the CIE or the education of prisoners of war.” (Our italics – Authors.)

The delegate pointed out that the ICRC normally did not concern itself with political questions but felt that the issue should be raised “in view of its humanitarian aspects, political activities being a constant source of incidents.” Such an evaluation of the “educational” programme by the chief of the ICRC delegation, exactly fits the description by escaped prisoners related in previous chapters of the barbarous methods used to force the prisoners to renounce their homelands.

Such a matter would scarcely have been raised by the ICRC – at great pains to explain its usual lack of concern with political matters – if the CIE programme had been of an innocent character to teach prisoners the “fundamental concepts of democracy... the basic principles of democratic life, freedom of speech... etc.,” so glowingly described by Admiral Libby.

America’s brass hats were unlikely to be influenced by the gentle piety of the ICRC. Van Fleet, most voluble of them all, expressed American views at the time in an interview with *Stars and Stripes*’ reporter Fitzgerald, published in the Tokyo edition on March 17.

“The trouble is,” said Van Fleet, “that they take advantage of our good treatment. They know we strictly observe the rules provided in the Geneva Convention and we won’t resort to brutalities when they get out of line.” (It appeared that Van Fleet, comparing the 250 unarmed prisoners killed and wounded in less than a month with his former record in Greece, found the results disappointingly small.) “Remembering his days as military adviser in Greece,” the Fitzgerald interview runs on, “the Eighth Army Commander said, ‘Greek guards didn’t treat Communists they captured with kid gloves by any means and they had no trouble with them. Some people told me we give these Communist POWs too much good care. We’re playing the rules, that’s the important thing. One incident leads to another and the only sure, stronger method for stopping them isn’t in our books’ ....”

Van Fleet is another officer who qualifies as a war criminal, according to the Geneva Convention and to the ICRC accusations of violations of the Convention while Van Fleet was in overall command of the Koje camps.

Van Fleet’s policy of “unbrutal” murder flowed from the failure of the other methods that had been used to force the prisoners to renounce their elemental rights. The CIE programme had won the Americans no recruits; tattooing and blood petitions had failed; individual executions only increased the prisoners’ unity. Collective open terrorism and murder had to be tried.

## CHAPTER V

A wave of indignation against the Americans ran round the world, bringing fresh pressure on their negotiators at Panmunjom to reach agreement on the cease-fire. With the Korean-Chinese

delegation incessantly probing for the real causes of the massacres, the daily sessions at Panmunjom became increasingly embarrassing for the American side.

As on earlier occasions when public opinion was mobilised against them, the American negotiators ran for cover. They adopted the same tactics as they had used seven months earlier when it became publicly known that they were demanding inside the conference tent 12,000 square kilometres of territory as a gift, while continuing to announce to the world that they were “only asking for the battle-line” as the cease-fire line.

Strong hints were dropped by the U.S. Information Officer, Nuckols, on March 20, that agreement could be reached on the prisoners’ issue, if the matter could be arranged quietly without the full glare of publicity on the massacres and the discussions. Manoeuvring by hints dropped to American pressmen, Nuckols let it be understood that US delegates were looking for a face-saving way to back down on the question.

There was no objection by the Korean-Chinese delegates to giving the Americans a face-saving way out of their self-created dilemma – the aim was an honourable armistice, not “face.” When the Americans formally asked for secret sessions, the proposal was accepted and they began on March 25. At first it really seemed that the Americans at last intended to reach agreement. But in fact during these sessions they took the final steps that led to the ultimate wrecking of the truce talks.

A big compromise move was made by the Korean-Chinese on the first day of the secret sessions. They made it clear that, if other points were agreed, they would not insist on the return as war prisoners of the “reclassified civilians.” This was a very serious effort to offer the Americans a “face-saver.” By this time it had been accepted that both sides were bound to assist civilians to return home north or south of the demarcation line when the armistice was signed. Therefore as long as their “civilian” status was retained, they could return under that heading. It would save the Americans from having to make a public retreat on this major issue. At the same time the Korean-Chinese delegates proposed that any member of the KPA whose homes were in South Korea, could return to their homes in the south instead of being formally returned to the north (where they would otherwise revert to civilian status and later return south as “civilians” if they wished). Finally they proposed that both sides accept the principle of full repatriation and make it specific in the armistice agreement by writing in the figures, that is, about 11,000 on the one hand and 132,000 on the other, to be repatriated.

Hickman, the senior American staff officer, pretended to agree to this but said the figures “may not be exact after certain adjustments are made.” When pressed to state what adjustments he had in mind he made the following reply, according to the records of the first secret session.

“The only element I can think of is persons taken in custody since the effective date of the previous lists submitted by both sides. One other possibility would be wherein there were duplications discovered subsequent to the submission of our December 18 list To explain that a bit further, we

have had instances of POWs whom we have captured from your side who at one time gave one name and later gave a different name, so that the individuals were processed two times. By processing, I mean the preparation of the required notifications form which our side formed to send to Geneva....”

At face value this was a reasonable, logical statement. Only alterations to the list would be addition of those captured since the exchange of lists on December 18, and the deletion of those registered twice. Hickman concluded by adding, “Obviously final agreement to this concept would be contingent upon the acceptability of the revised lists to both sides.”

Hickman made a supplementary statement in the same session that was even more explicit. “We seek to ensure the return to our side of all the captured persons of our side and to ensure the return to you of all the captured personnel held by us, except those released because they originally resided in the area of our side. In this latter connection, the figure of 132,474, set forth in your principle of 21st March (when the Korean-Chinese staff officer originally proposed checking the lists on the basis of data already exchanged – Authors) does not fully reflect all pertinent factors. This figure includes approximately 16,000 persons who are residents of the area of our side. Therefore it should be reduced by this number.

“Once the numerical adjustments are agreed to,” Hickman went on, “it would be desirable to revise the lists of POWs previously submitted, to reflect such adjustments, as well as deaths, escapes and so forth. On the basis of these revised lists, there should be no trouble in agreeing upon a principle of repatriating all POWs in the custody of each side at the time the Armistice Agreement is signed.”

After further discussions, we find Hickman saying, on April 1, “We indicated at the beginning of our executive sessions (secret sessions – Authors) that we considered 132,000 failed to take into consideration all pertinent factors and therefore would be likely to be too high for an exact figure. We indicated that possibly 116,000 would more nearly indicate the magnitude of the exchange...”

Hickman then asked for a recess so that both sides could check and revise their lists on the basis of residence, deaths, escapes, newly captured prisoners and duplications, to arrive at an exact figure. He proposed the inclusion in the draft Armistice Agreement of a paragraph stating that both sides “shall release and repatriate all prisoners of war held in custody at the time the Armistice is signed and becomes effective. The release and repatriation of such persons shall be effected on the basis of lists which shall be checked by and mutually agreeable to both sides prior to the signing of the Armistice.”

Hickman then added two “understandings.” The first was a rewording of the Korean-Chinese proposal that Korean prisoners and civilian internees need not be repatriated if they wish to remain in the area of their original residence and the second that all prisoners should be repatriated except those who could not be repatriated “without the use of force.”

This provoked three more days' discussion during which the Korean-Chinese delegates rejected the second "understanding" and agreement was reached on the draft principle and the first "understanding." Then the meetings recessed, on April 4, to enable both sides to check their lists.

There is not one word or line in the records of the secret sessions which suggested that the prisoners should be asked whether they wanted to be repatriated or not; there was no mention of the word "screening" during the 11 days of discussion. What was agreed was an accounting job to check the records as proposed by Hickman. The Americans said this would need a week and within a week the Korean-Chinese delegates had their lists ready, rechecked. Then the Americans asked for another eight days. Secret sessions resumed on April 19.

The Korean-Chinese representative gave the new figure of roughly 12,000 prisoners to be repatriated, an increase of about 1,000 over the December 18 list. In return, instead of the indicated figure between 116,000 and 132,000, Hickman flung down a list of 70,000, of which only 63,000 were from the original list of 132,000 and the remaining 7,000 from among the "reclassified civilians."

Hickman then made the scandalous explanation that during the two weeks' recess, the Americans had individually "screened" every prisoner to find out whether or not he would "forcibly resist repatriation." He claimed that as a result, 55,000 prisoners would face "death rather than repatriation" and blandly pretended that this "screening" had been agreed and intended when both sides agreed to check the lists.

In the following days the Korean-Chinese representatives tried to get the Americans to produce a list as agreed, based on the records of residence, deaths, escapes and duplication. But Hickman had his part to play. Washington had ordered that now was the time to slip the "Joker" from his sleeve and throw it on the green-topped table at Panmunjom.

After giving Hickman 24 hours' warning – and in spite of his protests – the Korean-Chinese representatives called off the secret sessions on April 25 and published a full account of what had happened in the conference tent. But what had happened on Koje did not emerge until a few days later and then created a scandal that hit the headlines of the world's press for the next two months.

During the two weeks of recess from April 4 to April 19, the American Command slipped the leashes from the Kuomintang and ROK bloodhounds on Koje and with Brigadier-General Dodd acting as Master of the Hunt, set about providing the right "value" for Hickman's "Joker." Dodd's job was to herd together 70,000 prisoners who would be kept on Koje Island to represent the prisoners who "wanted to return home" and remove the rest to the mainland and other islands on the pretence that under the "screening" process, they had refused to be repatriated. Under the muzzles of machine-guns, at bayonet point and lashed with whips, prisoners were herded into trucks and driven from Koje Island. But all the armed force was useless and Dodd failed in his job. The figures just would not come out right.



There is testimony from Korean and Chinese sources on Koje as to part of what happened during those two weeks. We have some confirmation from official accounts released many weeks after the events.

To continue the record of Compound 72, two of the officers of this compound, Chiang Tsu-chin and Chung Hsueh-yueh, were put ashore from an American boat on the west coast of Korea as secret agents, one disguised as a staff officer and the other as a scout of the Chinese Volunteers. These two agents were captured the day after they landed and were independently interrogated. They both testified that the Kuomintang leader of Compound 72, Wang Shun-ching, who was trained in an American school for agents in Tokyo, visited one battalion after another haranguing the prisoners, during the first week in April. He told them that the time had now come for them to step out into the open and make good the pledges they had given earlier. They must now take the final step and formally state they did not want to go home. In any case, he told them, it was quite certain that they would be killed if they returned to the mainland.

But if they wanted to go to Formosa, the Americans would first send them to Cheju Island and then on to Chiang Kai-shek's last stronghold. He told each group in turn that they would be formally asked for their decision on the next day. But that same night, the prisoners were hauled out one by one from their tents and interrogated by the secret agents. Surrounded by guards armed with clubs, daggers and bayonets, the menacing question was flung at each prisoner, "Do you demand to go to the mainland?"

"The worst among the interrogators," Chung Hsueh-yueh, said, "was a 4th Battalion man, Chang Yin. If any prisoner said he wanted to go back home, he was grabbed by the guards and Chang Yin would slash him with his dagger and rub ground pepper into the wounds. While the prisoners shrieked in agony, Chang Yin kept shouting, 'Do you still want to go back to the Communists?' All those from the 4th Battalion," Chung went on, "who still wanted to return home, were herded together. Some were killed that night. They were all beaten and then kept separately with almost no food at all."

The other agent, Chiang Tsu-chin, was a minor official of Compound 72 Headquarters. He testified that he was present when Li Ta-an, deputy to Wang Shun-ching, the Compound Commander, personally interrogated a Chinese volunteer prisoner in the presence of an American officer. As the volunteer firmly replied to every question that he wanted to go home, Li Ta-an grew angrier and angrier, shouting that the only Chinese government was the Kuomintang government; all Chinese must obey Chiang Kai-shek; to demand to return home was an act of rebellion against the law. The volunteer shouted, "I have a 70-year-old mother at home and I demand to go back to the mainland. Can this be against the law?"

Chiang Tsu-chin continued, "Li Ta-an pulled out his dagger and started stabbing the boy. With every blow he struck, he yelled 'Do you still want to go to the mainland?' and with the blood

pouring from him the boy still cried back, 'I do. I do.' And he kept saying this until he died from Li Ta-an's stabbing."

As promised, the formal "screening" was carried out on the day following this softening-up process. Once more "Regimental Commander" Wang Shun-ching made a speech. This spokesman for "humanitarianism" told the prisoners with a mocking grin that they would have an absolutely free choice in the screening process. "But then," said Chiang Tsu-chin, "he suddenly pulled out a dagger and waved it. He shouted, 'I won't stop you from going back to the mainland but this blade won't let you go. Yesterday more than 30 prisoners in Compound 86 said they wanted to go back and they were dead before they reached the door. We finished off several others last night.'"

After this display, the Americans carried out the screening, solemnly putting the question of whether or not the prisoners would resist repatriation "forcibly." Although they had suffered months of unremitting terror, climaxed by the previous evening's "night of the long knives," and although the Kuomintang guards were hovering in the background, these two agents tell of the prisoners at the screening places shouting, "I want to go back to the mainland," of their being seized, clubbed, thrown into trucks and driven away.

Chiang Tsu-chin learned from a Korean chaplain that those who were driven away were taken to Compound 71, the "Graveyard," where more than a hundred were killed and wounded. After the screening in Compound 72 was finished, Chiang heard intermittent machine-gun fire over a period of several days from Compound 71.

This process was duplicated in the compounds holding Korean prisoners. From the many individual stories of those days, it is only possible for space reasons to record one or two of the most typical.

A number of prisoners managed to escape from Koje in May, while the Americans were still busy transferring the so-called "anti-Communist" prisoners from the island, and one of these was Corporal Choi Song Ok, who escaped on May 7, reaching North Korea soon after.

Corporal Choi describes his compound as dark, ill-ventilated and without bedding, with torture rooms and chambers where prisoners were scalded and sometimes killed with live steam. There were four gallows. It was a replica of the Seoul gaols with its multiple gibbets.

"Like the other captives," Corporal Choi said, "the Americans tried to make me sign the so-called 'petition in blood,' but I refused.

"On April 14, Brigadier-General Dodd, Camp Commander, a colonel and three other officers came to the compound and we were assembled to listen to Dodd, under heavy guard. Dodd told us that all prisoners were to be re-registered and forms were handed round to be filled in and

signed. Dodd said that the US Army Command wanted to release those prisoners who were willing to serve the United Nations forces and so they were required to sign the petition.

“In a moment all of us were on our feet, shouting ‘Send us home! We don’t fight for the Americans! We won’t join the UN forces! Send us home! Stick to the Geneva Convention!’

“The guards crowded round while Dodd was hustled away and then the Americans opened fire. There were 18 killed and 37 wounded.

“Next day the screening was carried out. I wasn’t even asked whether I wanted to go home or not. An American colonel in charge of the screening asked me whether I knew which prisoners were members of the Nodong Dang (Korean Party of Labour – Authors). I said I didn’t know. Then he asked me who had started the ‘riot’ against Dodd on the day before. I said I didn’t know. Then the colonel said, ‘I’ll give you 800 dollars and release you if you give me the names. You can live a free life in Seoul afterwards.’ I told him again I didn’t know.

“He kept putting these questions and getting angry when I said I knew nothing. At last I said the Geneva Convention didn’t even require me to answer such questions. I was dragged out of the interrogation room and down some steps into a dark basement. I could tell from the groans that some of my comrades were there. I was stripped naked by the American guards and bound. Then they started clubbing and whipping me. I heard others being whipped nearby.

“I fainted several times. They poured hot water on me and my flesh was raw and burning. Then they whipped me again. When I fainted again they poured more water and kept on whipping me. In the end they were tired and flung me into a tiny cellar where I could not turn round. As they left me they said I would be electrocuted if I refused to tell who shouted at Dodd. But they never got a word from my lips.” Corporal Choi managed to escape in time to save his life.

Privates Li Hun Si and Yung Chang Il also from Compound 76, escaped three days earlier than Choi. Their stories tallied exactly with the accounts of “screening” methods given by the Chinese agents from Compound 72. In a joint statement published in the Korean press on May 22, 1952, they testified to fabricated “blood petitions,” forcible screening, maltreatment and third degree questioning.

All of the many people we interviewed who had come from Koje agreed that every device of mental and physical pressure was brought to bear on the prisoners to renounce their rights. Placards and banners hung everywhere urging the prisoners to serve Chiang Kai-shek or Rhee. But any person advocating repatriation was branded an “agitator,” dragged out and summarily dealt with. These statements are obliquely confirmed by the American Command itself in an announcement made on April 25 that for the prisoners’ “own safety,” they had ruled that prisoners “should not discuss the matter with others or make known their decisions” before the “individual interviews” were held. According to this official announcement, each prisoner “was called forward individually and interviewed in private.”

The American magazine *Newsweek* disposed of any faint doubts that might have existed as to the purpose of “screening” and where the orders originated, in an article in its issue of April 21, but actually printed while the prisoners were being herded into different groups on Kojé. *Newsweek* wrote: “The official list of Communist POWs is being whittled down and Washington hopes it can be reduced still further.”

We have only a fragmentary picture of the events on Kojé during those weeks in April, but the pattern is very clear. From American sources in addition, we know that a massacre occurred on April 10, “in sight of Brigadier-General Dodd” (as the US news agencies reported it) in which 33 prisoners were shot dead and 57 injured. All news of this massacre was suppressed by the Americans during the “screening” and recess. If this news had leaked out at the time that Hickman played his “Joker” that only 70,000 prisoners were willing to return, world reactions might have wrecked the entire American policy. Like many more shootings, that of April 10 would never have been announced, had not some journalist got on its trail a month after it occurred and lodged stories with the censors, which were delayed for a week. (The “United Nations” pressmen, apart from a few restricted visits in January, had not been allowed on Kojé. During April, the most stringent security regulations were enforced to keep them off the island and at no time were they ever permitted to talk to prisoners despite repeated requests from both prisoners and press.)

First reference to the April 10 massacre came in a Reuter despatch from Kojé on May 24 and said: “The Command hushed up the information at the time, and throughout this week refused correspondents permission to file the news when they learned it from local sources.... Officers said today that the North Korean riot leaders had ordered bodies of the wounded to be dragged back into their huts during the fighting and shooting. United Nations forces have not yet entered the compound which a Communist political committee still controls....” Reuter stated that the shooting started over the refusal of the compound inmates to hand over a “seriously wounded” prisoner who had been shot earlier by a South Korean guard.

All agency reports of this affair were carefully doctored stories, squeezed out by the press after six weeks of silence including one week of suppression by the censors. But one thing comes clearly through all the different versions – that the camp guards in order to enter the compound and kidnap prisoners for “screening” had first fired into it from outside. Without question there had been shooting from the outside before the main massacre started.

These conclusions are confirmed by the extremely casual report of the ICRC dated May 12, 1952 which comments briefly on the April 10 massacre. It was caused by the American and Rhee troops opening fire on unarmed prisoners in Compound 95, because they had refused to allow one of their wounded comrades to be moved away, according to the ICRC report. It does not attempt to explain what had caused a man inside the compound to be wounded, but laconically says, “Trouble followed, in the course of which the American troops opened fire in which ROK troops joined. As a result there were wounded and dead amongst the prisoners of war and the

guards.” (The report adds, referring also to the shooting on March 13: “In the dual circumstances, it appears that the firing constitutes a violation of Article 42 of the Geneva Convention of 1949.”)

Through the guarded nature of these highly censored and tendentious reports it is still possible to conjure up the scene – the sniping through the fence at some spokesman of the prisoners; then attempts to get his wounded body for some undisclosed purpose and the cold-blooded mowing down from outside of defenceless men in a barbed wire stockade for refusing to betray one of their representatives.

But even clearer is that the April 10 shooting was another illustration that the prisoners could only defend their interests by shedding their blood. Only by mass refusal to be “screened,” by refusing to be deported from their compounds and from the island, could they make a last ditch effort to protect their right to return home. And the events that followed showed that scores of thousands of other prisoners, well organised and disciplined, standing like rocks, bare-handed in front of the American machine-guns, refused to allow the screening gangs into their compounds. They resisted every trick, blandishment and violence. But many thousands were driven by force from their compounds and the island. Countless others were tricked into leaving by the lie that they were being moved to camps further north to facilitate their exchange. Still others were told that the move was their first step in actual repatriation, which it was said, had already begun.

The lie that 132,000 prisoners and 38,000 “civilian internees” (the latter figure had been produced by Libby as a substitute for the original 44,000 prisoners whose names had been deleted from the lists) had all been “individually and privately” interrogated, and the lie that 100,000 of them had refused to be repatriated, was soon to be exploded in a most dramatic fashion.

## CHAPTER VI

Washington fell into another of its periodic panics when the Korean-Chinese delegation put an end to the secret sessions on April 25 and allowed the world to see what was going on. Hickman at first refused open sessions and demanded an indefinite recess in the talks, but this also looked so bad for the Americans that on the following day, Admiral Joy asked for a full dress meeting of chief delegates to be held on April 27. This was agreed and the biggest crowd of top-line newsmen ever to be seen in Panmunjom came along to what was expected to be a crucial session of the talks. The Americans called off the meeting an hour before it was due to begin. Washington seemed to be trying to decide what could be the next step in view of the public alarm over the latest American action.

For in the meantime, important extracts from the records of the secret sessions had been published widely enough to expose American double-dealing in the conference tent. American efforts to suppress these records failed because pressmen accredited to the Korean-Chinese delegation handed the information to the “UN” pressmen at Panmunjom.

When the top-level meeting took place on the following day, April 28, the Americans once again displayed an owlish preference for darkness. For a nation that makes a fetish of publicity, this continued reticence mirrored the fact that the Americans felt how dangerous it was to expose their actions to the light. On April 28, Joy hinted at an important compromise and again asked for the sessions to be held in secret. While reluctantly agreeing to secret top-level negotiations General Nam Il pointed out that the Korean-Chinese delegation was “willing to settle questions irrespective of the form of meetings...” and that the real question was “rather of the sincerity with which the two sides strive to solve questions.”

The meeting therefore went into secret session and Joy presented the ultimatum that never varied in substance from that day until October 8, when the Americans broke off the talks. It came in the form of the infamous “package deal” in which Joy offered to withdraw American objections to the construction of airfields in North Korea during an armistice, if the Korean-Chinese side would withdraw the nomination of the Soviet Union as one of the neutral supervisory powers. The price of this “deal” was in terms of human flesh: the Korean-Chinese side had to abandon their prisoners and accept the return of only 70,000.

As if to emphasise the entirely unprincipled nature of this typical American horse-trade, Joy said it had to be accepted as a whole or not at all. He thus admitted that the Americans had held up the talks for months on two issues – airfields and the nomination of the USSR as a neutral inspector – purely for bargaining reasons and with no principle involved. And Joy made it clear that if the Korean-Chinese side was not willing to abandon its prisoners, America would then make issues of “principle” out of the other two objections and use them to block the agreement.

As the records show, Nam Il met Joy’s requirement on neutrals on May 2 but flatly rejected any bargain with the lives of the prisoners. He reiterated that the internationally agreed principle of the return of all prisoners of war must be kept. From that moment, the only issue preventing the armistice in Korea was the Made-in-USA issue of prisoners.

Meanwhile the Americans were going ahead with the next stage of their plan and while Joy drearily repeated each day his ultimatum that unless the Korean-Chinese side accepted the return of only 70,000 prisoners the war would go on, the wires were hot with code messages from Washington to the capitals of America’s “allies.” The talks were still in secret session but the Americans had already leaked the main outlines of the “package deal.” On May 7, Joy demanded an indefinite recess in the talks until the Korean-Chinese side accepted this ultimatum. On the same day General Nam Il told Admiral Joy that he was no longer prepared to allow the Americans to continue to deceive the world, and released the full details of the American ultimatum.

Now it became clear that Washington had been preparing one of the biggest propaganda drives ever staged. On May 8, one after another, within a few hours, Truman, Ridgway, Acheson, Van Fleet and the Canadian and British foreign ministers Pearson and Eden, with a host of lesser

“UN” marionettes, dutifully announced their unqualified support “to the end” of Joy’s ultimatum – accept 70,000 prisoners or the war goes on.

It was a planned showdown. As one crony of Ridgway, Howard Handleman, then Far Eastern Director of *International News Service*, wrote: “The rush of statements from Tokyo, Washington, London, Ottawa and other UN capitals was a concerted effort to coerce the Communists and win world support.” At the same time “well-informed sources” were threatening to carry the war into China and the obedient Anthony Eden was viewing the scene “with growing anxiety.” In the western press, dollar-corrupt correspondents complimented the American Command on its “generous” proposal and gleefully sounded off that “world Communism” had suffered its biggest propaganda defeat when 100,000 prisoners refused to go back to their homes. It made no difference that not one of these correspondents had been to Kojé or spoken to a prisoner. But as the rising din reached its most deafening note, the news came that pulled the handle out of the Washington propaganda barrel-organ.

At almost the same moment on May 7, that Joy was touching off the “concerted effort to coerce the Communists and win world support,” Brigadier-General Dodd, Commandant of Kojé Island, was captured by his own prisoners. And as the reports began to pour into the news desks and out of millions of loud-speakers, the world learned that in self-defence against brutal American violation of their rights the prisoners had taken control of the Kojé Island camp.

Bit by bit the lid was lifted and the unsavoury stench from the Kojé brew could be publicly smelled. Dodd and General Colson, his replacement as camp commandant, admitted massacres, forcible screenings, forcible drafting of prisoners as cannon-feed for Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek. The “UN” Command had been telling plain lies when it stated that all prisoners had been screened, for the prisoners, hemmed in as they were with tanks and flame-throwers, had united to try to prevent any further “screening.” It became clear that the “screening” teams with their whips and thumbscrews were not able to enter 17 compounds on Kojé Island, which were estimated to contain something more than 80,000 prisoners. And with the capture of Dodd, it was no longer possible for the Americans to hide what was happening.

The prisoners knew that to capture Dodd was a dangerous move. They already had enough experience to realise that such an action was certain to bring bloody reprisals down on their heads. But they exposed the lies that were being told and let the world public know what was going on in their desperately courageous bid to assert loyalty to their homeland.

As the Dodd scandal unwound, the Americans were forced to admit that they had not “completed” their work of coercion. They claimed to have “screened” some of the prisoners who remained on the island but the realities there showed clearly that the whole American policy had broken its teeth on the united courage and firm discipline of the prisoners.

Represented in these compounds were almost half of the entire prisoners and most of the 112,000 listed by the Americans as KPA personnel. The Chinese had been moved to Cheju Island by that

time together with all prisoners the Americans claimed to have screened. It was, indeed, the large removal of the prisoners from Kojé that decided the remainder that the time had come to make a stand, whatever it might cost, because the only way to ensure their return home was to resist screening and forced deportation. This was the reason for Dodd complaining to the press that he would need 5,000 troops “to enforce interrogation.”

When the Americans flung their ultimatum on the table at Panmunjom, Joy was pretending that all prisoners had been “screened” but at the same time was sending urgent signals to Ridgway to provide the proof and the figures. Ridgway was putting pressure on Dodd, who was desperately trying to clear up the last stage of his assignment. But the prisoners, knowing that their fate would be exactly the same as that of their comrades in the “screened” compounds had no intention of making Dodd’s assignment easy.

Because of their refusal to allow interrogation teams inside the compounds, the prisoners’ already meagre rations were cut in mid-April. Instead of rice, they got barley and their soup was uneatable. On April 29, they grabbed one of Dodd’s deputies, Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur Raven, pushed him into a chair and demanded that he should eat a bowl of stinking bean soup that was their daily fare. Raven could not swallow it but was released on the promise to restore the rice ration.

Pressure to enforce “screening” went on, but the prisoners had worked out a plan for a brilliant counter-attack. Word was secretly passed round the compounds through the prisoners’ system of communication that Dodd himself must be captured.

From accounts by American pressmen, confirmed by POWs who escaped after the incident, we have a clear picture of this amazing episode which followed. On May 7, Dodd accompanied by Raven, went to harangue the prisoners of Compound 76 through the barbed wire fence. While he was hectoring the prisoners inside, a group of prisoners came up outside the compound, carrying freshly emptied buckets from the latrines. They were returning to the compound so the gate to the outer fence of barbed wire was opened by the armed American guards. The first few prisoners of the “honey-bucket detail” advanced to the gate of the inner wire fence. As this swung open, the remaining members of the detail dropped their buckets and grabbed both Raven and Dodd. Dodd was hustled into the compound but Raven managed to grab a gatepost while a guard jabbed his bayonet through the face of the prisoner who was holding him. The prisoner guards swung the inner gate shut and Dodd was a captive. Bewildered, the American guards swung their weapons to their shoulders and aimed, but the heroic Dodd shouted at the top of his voice, “I’ll court-martial the first man who shoots.” He took no chances on the accuracy of his troops.

A few minutes after the trap had been sprung, enormous signs around Compound 76 warned, in English, that Dodd would be killed if any attempt were made to rescue him. Dodd was allowed to send out a note saying that he was all right and later admitted that he was well treated from the moment he was taken captive. In a statement after his release he said, “During my entire stay in



the compound, I was treated with the utmost respect and courtesy and my personal needs were looked out for.”

Dodd got a badly-needed lesson in human behaviour and dignity from the prisoners, which seemed to make an impression even on that dull product of American militarism. No revenge was taken for all the physical and spiritual indignities the prisoners had suffered. Their leaders were correct, courteous but determined and Dodd was informed that any attempt to use force to rescue him would lead to his death. He was asked to arrange for two delegates from each of the other Koje compounds to be brought to Compound 76, where a conference would be held to discuss grievances and settle the terms on which he would be released. Dodd sent a note – later a telephone was installed for him – and the conference took place in the hall where the CIE’s blood-spattered classes on American “democracy” were formerly held. Here Dodd received, probably for the first time, an object lesson in real democracy.

Dodd sat at the conference and heard a series of reports given by representatives of each compound – a concentrated and unvarnished tale of murder, torture, thuggery, rape (for there were delegates from the women’s compound present), and of the unrelieved brutality of the men under his command. If there were any feelings left in the man, unless he were something carved from granite, the factual recital of these enormities must have made an impression. Perhaps for the first time, also, Dodd began to understand the quality of the people that his government was trying to crush and perhaps, beyond his frantic anxiety to save his life, he felt another emotion, of shame.

Outside the conference, prisoners paced on guard, wary of any attempt at rescue. Outside the compound jeeps carrying high-ranking American officers dashed about in wild panic as plan after plan was drawn up for forcible rescue. But whenever the execution of such a plan appeared imminent, a howl of dismay over the phone from Dodd led to its cancellation. Washington, Tokyo and Munsan – Joy’s headquarters – were in jitters and orders flooded in on Van Fleet at Seoul to rescue Dodd at all costs – including presumably, Dodd’s life.

Some impression of the panic and frustration in the American military machine is achieved in Peter Kalischer’s account of the incident in the September 1952 issue of *Collier’s*.

“Barely an hour after the compound gates closed behind Dodd,” wrote Kalischer, “Colonel William Craig, General Yount’s chief of staff, arrived from Pusan by light plane to take command of Koje. He promptly went to the compound and ordered the prisoners to release Dodd unconditionally. They laughed at him...”

“The next morning, Brigadier-General Charles F. Colson, a much-decorated World War II veteran, arrived to take command. The 55-year-old chief of staff of I Corps had been handpicked by Van Fleet for the job of subduing Koje. With him came an infantry battalion. A company of tanks was on the way.

“Colson went at his job ‘like a ball of fire’ according to one of the officers in Koje at the time. He put the entire island on the alert and ordered every man to carry a weapon. He was going to stand for no nonsense – Dodd would be released immediately or else the troops would go in and get him, alive or dead. But there was a dreamlike unreality in the situation....”

In fact, the only reality was that the prisoners held Dodd. Colson sent several ultimatums, demanding that the Commandant be released, or else.... The prisoners left the answering of these ultimatums to the feverishly willing hands of Dodd himself, while they got on with their meetings. Tanks patrolled the road outside but Dodd was still humbly listening to the reports from the compound delegates. On the third day of Dodd’s captivity, Van Fleet arrived on Koje, fuming and spluttering. He departed a few hours later still fuming and spluttering. Surrounding the compound was the newly arrived infantry battalion backed by armoured cars and tanks. A “final ultimatum” was sent in that Dodd must be released by 7 p.m. on the night of the Van Fleet visit – May 9th.

The prisoners continued their meeting, Dodd attending. At the expiry time of the “final ultimatum,” all reports having been heard, and a drafting committee having framed the terms for Dodd’s release, these conditions were being put to a mass meeting of all the inmates of Compound 76 for approval, amendment or rejection. The “final ultimatum” was ignored. After the finishing touches had been put to the draft conditions, the conference adjourned, late on the night of the 9th, hours after the expiry of the “final ultimatum.” Next morning the demands were handed over for transmission to Colson who had been confirmed as Dodd’s replacement as commandant of the island.

Framed though they are in clumsy English, the prisoners’ terms mirror the shocking conditions on the island and the prisoners’ high political understanding and morale. They did not ask for better food, for tobacco or improved living conditions, though every justification existed for such demands. They raised only the basic demands for the right to live and enjoy human dignity. All that they asked was framed on the spot, under the eyes of Dodd and with him participating in all stages of the work. Nothing was dictated from outside as the Americans later tried to allege. Elected delegates from 17 compounds, who had never met on Koje before listed the most outrageous of the conditions that existed in each section. They demanded:

1. The immediate cessation of barbarous behaviour, insults, torture, forcible protest with blood writing, threatening, confine, mass murdering, gun and machine-gun shooting, using poison gas, germ weapons, experiment object of A-bomb by your command;
2. No more voluntary repatriation;
3. No more screening and re-arming of prisoners;

4. Recognition of the POW representative group and close co-operation to it by your command.

Next came the curious period during which Colson in effect negotiated through Dodd to write the terms which Colson was prepared to grant for getting Dodd free. In the meantime he issued two more ultimatums for “unconditional release,” with deadlines, which were ignored. According to western correspondents, barred from Koje but massed at the headquarters of Yount in Pusan, and Van Fleet in Seoul, the agreement finally signed by Colson was first cleared personally with Van Fleet and so had even greater weight.

Colson’s reply dealt with each of the four points raised by the prisoners.

“With reference to your Item I of that message,” reads the agreement, “I do admit that there have been instances of bloodshed where many prisoners of war have been killed and wounded by United Nations forces. I can assure you that in the future the prisoners of war can expect humane treatment in this camp according to the principles of international law. I will do all within my power to eliminate further violence and bloodshed. If such instances happen in the future I will be responsible.”

On the second Item, Colson hedged. “That is a matter which is being discussed at Panmunjom. I have no control or influence over the decisions at the peace conference,” he stated. In his reply to the third Item, Colson admitted the fact of forcible “screening” and the drafting of prisoners into other armed forces. “Regarding your Item III pertaining to forcible investigation (screening),” he wrote, “I can inform you that after General Dodd’s release, unharmed, there will be no more forcible screening or any rearming of prisoners of war in this camp, nor will any attempt be made at nominal screening.”

Colson also agreed to the fourth demand, recognition of the prisoners’ representatives.

In evaluating American military honour in the light of later events, it is important to recall that even according to American accounts, this document reached its final form only after 12 hours’ drafting and re-drafting in which Dodd, Colson and General Yount at Pusan all played an active part, with constant reference back to Van Fleet at Seoul. It was the document of four American generals, including the commander of all “UN” ground forces in Korea. Colson sent in the first draft at 10 a.m. on May 10 and the finished product was finally accepted by the prisoners by 9.30 p.m. that day.

Dodd was immediately set loose, unharmed and probably more thoughtful. He shook hands and exchanged military salutes with his captors when they escorted him to the gates of the compound. Within a short time, 25-foot signs were hung on the barbed wire, quoting the terms of the agreement. Dodd’s kidnapping was an incident unique in the story of prisoner of war camps. Nothing like it happened in the Nazi concentration camps or in the prisoner of war camps during the two world wars. It was carried out by men of iron nerves, deeply conscious of their responsi-

bilities not only to their comrades on Kojé, but to their homeland. They remained cool and unruffled throughout and quietly continued their discussions despite the most violent threats.

The dignified and calm handling of the affair by the prisoners – which could not be suppressed even by the biased western news agency reporting – evoked admiration and sympathy among all but the most blindly prejudiced people. No attempt was made to humiliate Dodd. He was even spared the discomfort of spending three days on the diet that he provided for the prisoners. In a private tent, with mats on the floor, a proper bunk to sleep in and with flowers on the table, he ate the three hot meals that the prisoners permitted to be sent in every day by his own cook. The prisoners arranged for cigarettes, mail, extra blankets and a daily change of clothing. And there must have been the strongest temptation to let the Camp Commandant get along for three days on the prisoners' own gritty mash and stinking soup – without a smoke. His personal possessions, taken away on capture, were all returned to him. Slight scratches he received in the scuffle at the compound gate were treated by the compound doctor.

Dodd seems to have left the compound with a mild glow in his heart from the first man-to-man talk he had ever had with “Communist” patriots.

Even after he had been grilled for days at Van Fleet's head-quarters, he still turned up with an enthusiastic account of his treatment. Pressmen were barred from seeing him until his story was adequately edited. Then after days of waiting for promised interviews, Dodd was put up to read a prepared statement to the press. At the end of the statement, someone said “No questions” and Dodd was hurried off.

Mark Clark, who took over Ridgway's job during Dodd's detention, suppressed the news of Colson's agreement for three days. Then it hit the world with the impact of an atom bomb on the White House.

In Panmunjom the impact was no less. With their “Joker” outplayed by the prisoners themselves, the American delegates were stopped in mid-stride. Explanations were impossible to give and Admiral Joy fell back on the formula, repeated daily, that Korean-Chinese requests for some accounting for the Kojé events were “Communist propaganda” denoting that the Korean-Chinese delegation had “no sincere desire for peace.” He kept repeating this until May 22, when he handed his job over to General Harrison with the words, “May God be with you.” Joy's task of steering the talks on to the rocks was done.

Outside in the road, shamefaced “United Nations” pressmen, lost for words after the shattering exposure of the reality of “screening,” “no forced repatriation” and the other paraphernalia of Kojé, carefully avoided meeting correspondents accredited to the Korean-Chinese side, with whom they had argued, gossiped and exchanged news and views for almost a year.

## CHAPTER VII

Part of the truth was out and newspapers normally friendly to the United States both inside and outside the country were openly jeering at what they considerately defined as more “bungling.” Lessons were beginning to burn themselves into the public mind:

There had been brutalities and massacres committed by American troops on Koje;

Prisoners had been “forcibly screened”;

The “UN” Command had dealt in outright lies when it claimed that all prisoners on Koje had been “screened” at the time the figure of 70,000 was handed to the Korean-Chinese negotiators;

Prisoners of war were being impressed into military service while still in custody, contrary to the Geneva Convention;

American activities on Koje were contrary to international law.

Washington was again caught in a whirl of contradictions and denials. Ridgway, on his way back to Washington from Tokyo when the Colson admissions were published, told the press that “any repudiation of the terms laid down by the POWs would be liable to have an impact on the armistice talks.” But Washington was out for blood. The Pentagon could not even wait until there was time to organise a blood-letting among the prisoners. Scapegoats had to be found at once and sacrificed.

Dodd and Colson were both sacked and broken to colonels. General Yount was severely reprimanded and sacked. Control of the prisoner camps was taken away from Van Fleet soon after. Mark Clark was ordered to drag American honour still deeper in the dust and repudiate the agreement negotiated by Colson. In place of Colson, an old friend of Chiang Kai-shek’s was put in charge of Koje and ordered to “use maximum force” to break the will of the prisoners. Brigadier-General Boatner, the new appointee, was a swaggering, pot-bellied failure of World War II. His only successful action in that war was against American troops who had dug themselves into an airfield at Assam in protest at being sent back into the jungle to fight the Japanese. Most of his time during World War II was spent in training Kuomintang troops for action against the People’s Liberation Army. He was just the type to revel in recouping his previous military record in action against unarmed, half-starved prisoners. “Bull” Boatner, as one of the authors knows from personal contact with him during the Second World War, is a spiritual twin of the most brutal type of Nazi general.

Colson’s promises of more “humane” treatment were contemptuously brushed aside and United Press reported from Koje on May 16, that Boatner was backing his policy “with sandbags, pill-boxes and relocated fire-power.” Boatner told UP that “prisoners of war do not negotiate,” and UP went on to describe the preparations made by the “Bull.”

“Pill-boxes have been set up at key points.... Two or three United Nations soldiers man each of the pill-boxes around the clock. Trucks carrying quadruple fifty-calibre machine-guns stand guard outside the compounds, 22 tanks with their crews aboard stand ready for action at a moment’s notice. Boatner ordered guard towers at corners of compounds moved back about 50 feet, giving gunners a wider range of fire....”

During the third week in May, Boatner’s forces on Kojé were increased by the US 87th Airborne Infantry Regiment, Greek, Canadian and British units, bringing combat strength up to over one division.

In an effort to terrorise the prisoners, Boatner put yelling paratroopers lunging with bayonets at the air, gas-masked troops practising hand-grenade throwing and flame-throwing tanks in daily displays outside the compounds. But neither Boatner nor any of his men dared to step inside. And the prisoners, watching the preparations, began to dig defensive positions.

On May 17, United Press carried a curious but very illuminating little item, quoting an American officer from one of the new camps on the mainland at Masan, to the effect that “the next riot by Communist prisoners might be at one of the new Allied camps containing captives who have chosen not to return to their homelands...” The mainland camps which had only been established a month before, were supposed to contain only those prisoners who “preferred death to repatriation.” This UP story was at once denied and long hand-outs were given to the press about the peace and calm and beautiful conditions in the mainland camps, “where the barbed wire is only knee-high.” But the press were banned from further visits.

Three days later it was announced that 86 prisoners had been killed and wounded in a hospital compound holding prisoners at Camp No. 10 on the mainland near Pusan. First official accounts claimed that the trouble arose from “a fanatical handful of prisoners resisting proper medical treatment.” Then came the usual contradictory stories as Mark Clark’s headquarters tried to cover up the embarrassment caused by such an incident in a so-called “anti-Communist camp.”

Van Fleet’s headquarters issued a statement quoted by Reuter on May 20, which said, “...these agitators were part of a group of non-patients who ordinarily work as attendants at the hospital. ...” and went on with the breath-taking contradiction: “...all prisoners in the compound were told to move into an open area to avoid possible injuries in any disturbances that might be created, Only three obeyed. The UN guard detail composed of combat-wise American infantrymen then moved in to enforce order....”

A “fanatical handful” turned out to be 1,597 out of the total 1,600 in the compound – all classified as “anti-Communist.” As the full story dribbled out, it was seen that the patients in Camp 10 were, as usual, resisting being “screened” and troops were sent in to enforce the process, after the patients had been starved for a whole week to break their spirit. Reuter carried the following story from Pusan on May 22:

“The camp authorities cut off food supplies a week before the rioting at the big Pusan hospital two days ago, it was revealed during Van Fleet’s visit here today. Officials said the prisoners had resisted screening on the question of repatriation and later opposed segregation of troublemakers. On May 12, food was stopped and the prisoners were told they would eat when they obeyed orders....” How the battle of fully armed troops against invalids and cripples was fought, is described by a despatch from Associated Press from Pusan on May 20.

“A combat-tested infantry battalion reinforced the camp guards. Tanks rumbled past the compound. The prisoners were told if they did not come out of the compound they would not eat.... Of 1,600 patients and non-patients in the compound, about 1,100 participated in the fighting. A group of amputees were among the most aggressive of the fighters.” (Another correspondent described the amputees hopping about and resisting bayonet charges with their crutches.) AP then quoted the Commandant of the US troops – a “hero” by the name of Lieutenant Colonel Hatfield as saying, “We subdued the amputees and closed off one section of the camp. We took the compound by stages, a little at a time. We kept pushing them back and finally got them in a corner. It was over in one hour and 15 minutes....” AP concluded by quoting the Camp Commandant Lieutenant Bostic as saying, “There are now 5,500 prisoners in the camp and all of them are pro-Communist.”

This was the type of battle that “Bull” Boatner was to fight with such zest. Heavily armed troops against unarmed patients and cripples who had been starved, in order to enforce the right to “ask” them if they wanted to go home or not! This was of course a violation of the pledge given that there would be no more “screening.” And more than that, in all these events the Americans were arrogantly behaving as though international law did not exist for them. After this grisly incident in Camp 10, the ICRC felt compelled to draw the Americans’ attention politely to the fact that the Geneva Convention had been violated again.

The ICRC report to Mark Clark on May 24, 1952, once again made liars of the American Command, which had claimed that the incident had been restricted to one compound and that “only bayonets” were used. The report points out that “the withholding of food and water from the Prisoners of War in the three hospital compounds of UN Prisoners of War Enclosure No. 10 constitutes an infringement of Article 26 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949, paragraph 6, which reads as follows: ‘Collective disciplinary measures affecting food are prohibited.’” The report adds that the violation in this case was the more serious as it was applied to hospital patients, post-operative cases, tuberculosis cases and amputees. The second violation mentioned by the ICRC was that concussion grenades were used against patients causing “at least one death and several wounded.”

Little now remained of the American claim that they had “screened” all the prisoners and removed from Koje only those who had said they would commit mass suicide if they were sent home.

On the island “Bull” Boatner had let loose reckless terror in preparation for the full-scale assault on the compounds. In a document that was smuggled out of the compounds on May 23, we have a precious description of what was happening on just five days in the second half of May. An extract of this document is given at the beginning of Chapter I and its whole contents were broadcast to the world just two days before Boatner made history by ordering modern all-out war against the prisoners in Compound 76. No doubt many of its 6,223 signatories died in the slaughter. Here we quote only those parts relevant to Boatner’s actions. It is addressed to:

“Dear Comrades-in-arms and brothers” and continues:

“... Since the American POW Camp Commandant Boatner, executioner and hangman, came to Koje Island, we are facing unprecedented danger of our lives.... Death is coming nearer to us every moment. Not a day, not a night but the sacrifice of some of our comrades occurs. The American guards, armed to the teeth, are repeatedly committing acts of violence and barbarity against our comrades. They drag them out and kill them either in public or in secret with machine-guns and carbines. They drive our comrades by the thousands into gas chambers and torture rooms. Many patriots are loaded into iron barred cages of police cars and taken to the sea-shore where they are shot and their corpses cast into the sea.

“Here are some instances:

“On May 19 in POW Compound 66, the American devils resorted to the lowest trickery. They falsely announced that those POWs willing to return to North Korea should assemble before their own barracks by 7 p.m. ready to embark. Without exception all wanted to go home. While we were getting into line and shouting ‘How are you, our beloved fatherland?’ American troops opened fire with machine-guns, and, using flame throwers and even tanks, killed 127 of our comrades and wounded many more.

“On May 22 and 23, the American military police committed bloody slaughter in Compounds 62 and 73. Those killed in the slaughter had refused to go to the permanent pill-boxes, the ‘log and earth’ pill-boxes and the ‘watch-towers.’ Eighty-eight comrades were killed and 39 were wounded with machine-gun fire and hand grenades.

“On May 23 too, American executioners beheaded four patriots from Compound 76 and exhibited their heads in public by hanging them on tree branches to intimidate the ‘disobedient’ ones. Just now American torturers in Compound 16, made 18 of our comrades blind by applying electric current to them. At present as we write this letter, May 24 is still to come but we know that new forms of mal-treatment, torture and persecution are awaiting us....”

Those who signed this letter on May 23, had every reason to express their foreboding, “May 24 is still to come.” And June 10 and many other bloody days were still to come.



Boatner was bellowing that he was going to split the prisoners up into smaller compounds and forcibly continue “screening,” while western news agencies reported almost daily killings and woundings of prisoners, and troops from five other nations were transferred to the island for Boatner’s “show-down.”

The island was in a state of siege with raids into compounds by troops with bayonet-tipped rifles, hurling tear-gas grenades to try to bring out prisoners as “samples.” While at Panmunjom the American delegates daily repeated the brass-faced lie, known as such to all the world, that only 70,000 prisoners wanted to go home, the correspondents on Kojé (at last) were writing that 80,000 “fanatical diehard Communists” on the island were defying the authorities, and that 45,000 of them had never been “screened.”

A mock raid carried out in a deserted compound to terrorise the prisoners in a nearby compound was reported by Reuter on June 8.

“Steel-helmeted troops with fixed bayonets,” wrote Reuter correspondent Pringheim, “held their mock raid into Compound 74, empty since the transfer of a number of troops to the mainland. Donning gas-masks they threw tear gas to break up imaginary clusters of resisting prisoners. Tanks rumbled forward and knocked down brick walls of former prisoners’ quarters, supposedly holding entrenched diehards. Flame-thrower squads fired smaller wooden buildings. Observers commented that the demonstration showed Boatner’s plans for regaining uncontested control of the prisoners were prepared for any eventuality.... “

The AP comment on the mock raid was that “...if the Communist prisoners in Compound 76, who watched the tanks crumble a tin-roofed concrete building and flame-throwers shoot rays of fire into piles of rubble, were concerned, they failed to show it. A few even laughed at this manoeuvre, directed on the spot by Brigadier-General Thomas Trapnell of the 187th Airborne troops.”

The following day, more heavy concrete and brick buildings were crushed to the ground by heavy tanks when Boatner ordered the entire 187th Paratroopers Regimental Team to carry out a full-dress rehearsal for the next day’s performance. Significantly, brick, concrete and wooden buildings in Compound 74 were described by several Korean escapees as those housing torture chambers and gallows. On an island where housing was a problem, there is no logical explanation for the destruction of these solid buildings. But if Boatner thought that his actions might lead to an international inquiry, it would have been well to dispose of such evidence. And such an inquiry was being canvassed at the time.

General Mark Clark had announced to the press in Tokyo that “the maximum amount of force will be applied” against the prisoners.

Boatner explained what it meant to the ranks. Corporal John Frederick Jollymore, a section leader of “B” Company, 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment, says that Boatner visited

the Canadians' camp on Kojé on June 3 to outline his methods. Boatner climbed on the bonnet of a jeep and gave the Canadians a pep-talk, during which Jollymore quoted him as saying: "I don't want you to shoot the prisoners, slash them with your bayonets or butt them with your rifles, but if you must shoot, shoot to kill, kill, kill." Each time he said the word 'kill.'" Jollymore said, "he struck the palm of one hand with the fist of the other." (Jollymore was captured after returning to the front from Kojé and with other Canadian former guards was interviewed by the authors.)

Boatner ordered his troops to assault Compound 76 in the early morning of June 10, personally directing the operation from a hill overlooking the compound. On Kojé there were no Heartbreak Ridges to storm, with well-entrenched and hardened soldiers awaiting. Here was a battle to gladden the hearts of students of Superman and Joe Palooka, a battle without danger, with certain victory at the end, but still with plenty of blood. A Reuter eye-witness account describes this battle of a modern military machine against starved men armed at best with bits of tent poles but mostly with only fists, as follows:

"...North Korean prisoners answered with complete silence an ultimatum from Camp Commandant Boatner to transfer quickly to smaller compounds nearby. Tanks using flamethrowers then tore gaps in the barbed wire fence and troops hurled a barrage of tear-gas and concussion grenades in an attempt to force prisoners out of buildings and slit trenches into the open.

"Reports reaching Boatner's headquarters in a nearby hill said the prisoners were holding out with improvised weapons. The troops advanced with flashing bayonets.... Black smoke obscured the action as the prisoners fired their own buildings.... (One wonders how the Reuter correspondent, safely in Boatner's headquarters, could determine that it was the prisoners and not the flame-throwers that fired the buildings. In other reports it is clear that the Americans fired the buildings and that prisoners were inside.)

"As the roar and flash of concussion grenades continued, crowds of prisoners began racing forward with their hands clasped behind their heads," the Reuter report goes on. "Prisoners, stumbling and gasping from tear gas were herded into groups of 150, in new cages, stripped of clothing and given a new issue. Six thousand troops guarded all island roads in the area or were stationed around and inside the embattled compound...."

As "Bull" Boatner saw the pitiful procession of gasping, bleeding prisoners staggering out between writhing clumps of wounded and dying, he slapped his thighs and roared "Hot dog! Hot dog! Look at them coming out!" Boatner had scored the first military victory of a miserable career, against unarmed and imprisoned men. AP's correspondent glories in the fact that the prisoners were killed and wounded by bayonets and grenades and not by bullets.

"... The paratroopers had bullets in their rifle magazines but not in the chambers," AP reported and continued with sickening zest. "Not a shot was fired. They charged with their bayonets and ripped the Reds to pieces as the Communists hid in trenches surrounding their wooden buildings.

The prisoners locked themselves in wooden buildings. The paratroopers cut holes in the buildings with axes and tossed in tear gas and concussion grenades....” When the gas and smoke had cleared, 41 prisoners lay dead and 279 wounded, according to the press agencies. One American hero had suffered – killed by his own concussion grenade, which had bounced back off a building, and incidentally making nonsense of the American claim that concussion grenades are “not lethal weapons.”

World opinion was shocked by never-ending reports of American violence on Kojé. In minds all over the world Kojé became added to the list of names which are accepted as symbols of human frightfulness – Guernica, Lidice, Dachau, Belsen, Buchenwald. Even the most pro-American press in Britain and other countries allied with America, had to take into account the rising public feeling and condemn the massacres. Protests from leading public figures and democratic organisations all over the world found their expression in such a vehement wave that in Great Britain, Churchill had to pretend to take notice. To divert the storm of criticism, he sent Minister of Defence Viscount Alexander and Minister of State Selwyn Lloyd to Korea. But nothing of all this world-wide disgust penetrated into the primitive skulls of “Bull” Boatner and his colleagues.

Alexander and Boatner went to see the Kojé aftermath and the visit was described by Reuter on July 16: “Alexander wanted to be shown the compounds where the deaths took place and wanted full details. General ‘Bull’ Boatner roaring with laughter stood on top of Communist trenches in the wrecked compound, describing the operation. Alexander grinned as Boatner said, ‘It was a wonderful show. A wonderful operation.’ As Alexander stood and listened to Boatner, there was a continual chant in the background of nearby Communist prisoners defiantly singing songs....”

Alexander was impressed by Boatner’s “victory,” but elsewhere in the western world, people were revolted by the ferocious display of American “humanitarianism” and particularly by the ghoulish gloating over the killing of defenceless prisoners, whose only offence was their demand to be treated as human beings and strictly according to international law. Truman, impelled by the wave of horror that swept the world, tried to get some of the blood off his hands by inviting Sweden, Switzerland, India, Indonesia and Pakistan to send a team of observers to Kojé to testify to the innocence of American behaviour. But being made the means of whitewashing such atrocities was too much for these nations to swallow. Except for Pakistan, they coldly refused, and their refusal reflected the universal disgust at the continual slaughter. It was the most stinging rebuff that Truman suffered in his career as President.

Compound 76 was written in neon lights throughout the world. But then a silence fell over the island. “Bull” Boatner’s methods suited Washington, but they were bad for publicity. Compound 76 was only one of 17 still housing prisoners on Kojé Island. What happened in the others? This can best be told by a group of Canadian soldiers, including Jollymore, who served on Kojé during those days.

## CHAPTER VIII

When Canadian troops were ordered to reinforce American guards on Kojé, the Canadian government made a formal protest to Washington – not because the government objected to its troops taking part in the butchery but because the troops were ordered there without consultation with Ottawa. Nevertheless this protest did express the general feelings of horror at what was happening on Kojé and it did express the feelings of Canadian officers and men who were sent to the blood-stained island. They wanted no part in “cleaning up the bloody American mess” as they openly put it. But the 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment was sent to Kojé at the end of May and stayed there for six weeks until it was moved back to the front in mid-July. Later some of the troops who had personally taken part in massacres on Kojé, were captured during the fighting on the central front in October 1952 and ended up in POW camps in North Korea. Three of these men – Corporal Jollymore, mentioned earlier, and Lance-Corporal Bell and Private Allan – have given valuable eye-witness accounts of what went on in compounds other than 76 during those days after the June 10 massacre, when silence fell over the island.

These men were sickened by the part they had been forced to play on Kojé Island and were especially moved by the contrast between what they had seen and done there and their own treatment in North Korea. Bell for example, was heavily wounded in the leg when captured and had been hospitalised for two months with medical treatment which he described as “couldn’t be better.” These men, like the rest of their comrades in “B” Company, asked to be returned to the front when they found out the sort of work they were expected to do on Kojé. They were glad of the chance to meet the authors and expose the “filthy business.” They told their stories with an impersonal “military” accuracy that lends greater force to the horrors they described than any emotional embellishments could achieve.

On June 12, a unit of the Canadians, using “riot” tactics taught by the Americans, made a foray into Compound 66 to grab about 50 prisoners for a “sample screening.” Corporal Jollymore, a handsome, well built Canadian, described what happened after the foray, in which about 30 prisoners were wounded, apart from those they grabbed.

“The fifty-odd prisoners who had been crowded together and moved from the compound were taken to one of the tents that had been used as sleeping quarters for the guards,” Jollymore explained. “Then they were taken inside one at a time and questioned. One of our men who had managed to see what was going on inside said that he saw a prisoner, who appeared to be arguing with one South Korean officer who was questioning him, receive a blow on the face. Later, after a few more questions, an MP sergeant came up and started hitting the prisoner with a rubber hose. Up to that time all the questioning had been done by the Korean officer, but an American captain started questioning the prisoner using the other officer as an interpreter. He asked the prisoner:

“Where is your home? When were you taken prisoner? Are you a Communist? If you are given freedom will you fight for South Korea?”

“The prisoner’s hands were tied to the edge of a table. He was then beaten again with the rubber hose and after more questions, sharpened match sticks were forced between the nails and the fingers of his hands.”

Lance-Corporal William Bell, from the same company and battalion as Jollymore also went into action in Compound 66 on June 12, after the foray mentioned by Jollymore, and took part in a massacre which was never announced to the outside world.

“On June 12,” Bell related, “myself and a group of other fellows were sitting in our tent in camp when we were called out to go to the compound, as there was trouble there. Lieutenant Clark and Sergeant Juteau were in charge of us, 30 in number and when we arrived at the compound, there were 30 British troops also. I could see the prisoners waving banners and singing and they seemed very angry.

“We were briefed very quickly by Lieutenant Clark on what we were to do inside the compound. I felt very excited and did not like the job and neither did most of the other fellows. We went into the compound in two lines and threw some tear-gas grenades at the prisoners. We were armed with rifles, sten guns, gas and concussion grenades. This did not have much effect on the prisoners and we were ordered to fire at their legs. We fired about five rounds each and the prisoners broke up and went to their tents.

“I would estimate that there were 20 killed and 30 or more wounded. It is possible that I killed one or more in this action.”

Day by day, the agony continued on Kojé with prisoners mown down for no other reason than “singing songs” or “displaying banners,” beaten and prodded with bayonets for refusing to answer questions, whipped and tortured if they gave the wrong answers.

Bell described another “incident” in Compound 66 on June 16, in which about 30 Canadian and 40 British troops were involved. This time, the Canadian troop was commanded by a Lieutenant McDonald and a Sergeant Rennie, and the men were wearing gas masks. The troops were ordered to take action because the prisoners were again “waving flags and banners.”

“About 30 or 40 concussion and tear-gas grenades,” said Bell, “were thrown towards the prisoners who were about 20 yards away. I was kind of excited and nervous as I think the rest of the guys were also. We were ordered to fire at the legs of the rioters but it is hard to hit the exact spot firing from the hip and with gas masks on. It is possible that I killed one or two prisoners in this riot. The prisoners hesitated before falling back and dispersing and about 15 or 20 were killed and the same amount wounded....

“We loaded the dead and wounded into an ambulance and returned to our camp where we sat around and discussed the riot over the free bottle of beer we were given. Our officer asked us what we thought of the whole affair. Everybody said they were nervous and wished he would pick someone else if there were more riots. Everybody wanted to get away from Kojé and back to the unit in Korea. He said he didn’t blame us and that the Americans sent us to Kojé and our own government didn’t even know we were going until we got there....”

The term “riot” used by the Canadian prisoners is picked up from the official usage by the Americans who thus try to justify the massacres. But it is plain from all these dry dispassionate accounts that in fact it was used to describe the display of banners by the prisoners, or singing or at the very most, shouting their objections to being “screened.” As to how a “riot” started, we have a revealing description from another Canadian, Private Thomas James Allan, of the same Company as Bell and Jollymore.

“It was on the 21st of June,” he recounted, “that we moved Compound 66. The British were lined up on one side of the road, the Canadians on the other side. The American screening officers were by the road and some of them were inside the tents to do the screening. There was a Korean interpreter with the officers. The POWs were brought out of the compounds in groups of a hundred at a time. They would walk down the road between us and the British. One of the POWs would go to where the screening officer was and the others were told to stand back about ten yards.

“The officers would ask them if they wanted to go back to North Korea or if they wanted to stay in South Korea and become anti-Communist. If they said they wanted to go back to North Korea, then they were threatened by what would happen to them if they didn’t sign their names to the paper that they wanted to stay in South Korea.

“If they still refused, then I saw them being hit over the head and face and their bodies. They had their arms twisted behind their backs and if they still refused then they were taken away in another truck to the ‘Monkey House’....

“While this screening was going on, the POWs were yelling at us that they didn’t want to be screened and a riot started over it. To break it up 30 Canadians and 30 British were ordered into the compound. There were 100 POWs lined up inside the compound and yelling they didn’t want to be screened. So the Canadians and British threw gas and concussion grenades over the fence at them before they opened the gates. Then they went into the compound in four groups two of them Canadian with Sergeant Rennie in charge of one and a sergeant from 5th platoon in charge of another and a lieutenant in charge of both. He ordered them when to shoot and when to throw hand grenades. It took about 20 minutes and there were ten POWs killed and 30 wounded....” Corporal Jollymore was among those who were sent into the compound. He said the POWs locked arms and tried to make a human chain, three or four rows deep – but they had to retreat. Each man was issued with three tear-gas grenades and two concussion grenades.

“The prisoners,” he said, “milled around looking at our forces. They seemed surprised and fearful at what they saw and I guess I don’t blame them.... I was moving my section through the gate and could see the smoke caused by the tear gas, and fragments of dirt being lifted into the air from the exploding concussion grenades....”

Jollymore went on to describe how they boxed the prisoners in and got 60 or 70 of them out of the compound. In this case, presumably because they were “rioters,” the prisoners were not marched to the screening tent described by Allan but were loaded into trucks and taken to a small compound tucked away in a valley. Jollymore and his men rode with the trucks “to keep the prisoners quiet.”

“We turned them over to some MP guards,” Jollymore continued, “but because the driver had to wait, I had a chance to see what was being done with the prisoners. They were put in one of the inner compartments already half crowded with prisoners. At the same time several men were taken from the compound and I could see them being led to a tent next to our truck. I spoke to one of the guards who said that inside the tent the men were being screened.

“I saw a South Korean officer enter the tent. One prisoner was taken inside and I thought it was for screening. That was until I heard him scream. I took a glance at the prisoners. Some just stood looking at each other and others hung their heads.

“The prisoner that had screamed was in the tent possibly ten minutes when he was brought out and another taken in. The one who had screamed was holding his arm and once in a while he doubled over, but from the distance I couldn’t see the extent of his injuries.

“We didn’t move off in the truck for about another 15 minutes but during that time two other prisoners had gone through the tent. One I could see leaning against the edge of the tent being sick and holding his stomach, but the other didn’t appear to be in any pain. My belief at the time was the second prisoner, seeing what happened to the others, decided to stay in South Korea.

“One of the guards at the compound got a lift on our truck and when I asked him about what I had seen, he said that I should see it around here sometimes. It gets really rugged....”

Each of the Canadians frequently mentioned the “Monkey House,” to which those POWs who refused to answer any questions were taken. They described it as a long, barn-like structure with no windows in it. Although none of the three Canadian prisoners said they had been inside, they each knew that it was a torture house. Prisoners were thrown into cages in which there was just room to lie down and were frequently hauled out for torture. Each prisoner was held in solitary confinement there. Jollymore said one of the security guards had told him that prisoners there were put in “some sort of screen” and that the guards walked overhead “on some sort of structure.” Escaped POWs had described something almost identical with this but the “screen” was in fact a cage of barbed wire just big enough for a man to squeeze into, and the guards walked and jumped on the cage until the prisoner’s flesh was in tatters. (The Canadians probably did not re-

veal all that they knew of the infamous “Monkey House” and in general their descriptions were those of men whose sensitivities had been dulled by too frequent participation in the Koje brutalities.)

A more detailed description of “screening” was given by Bell who on at least two occasions actually took part in a screening process, in Enclosure 3.

“On July 10,” he said, “I was among 50 Canadians and 75 or more Americans to assist in the screening. I stood with an American guard beside a table where an officer sat asking the prisoners questions. The prisoners outside were waving banners and singing. About 25 American guards went in and clubbed and bayoneted the men who were carrying banners, and wounded them.

“The prisoners were told to stop their noise and co-operate, or they would be sorry. Their names were called out and they came forward to where the officers sat and asked questions such as:

“‘Are you a Communist? Do you want to stay in South Korea?’

“In three or more cases where a prisoner did not answer, I was ordered to hit the prisoners with my rifle butt and in nine or more cases, I was ordered to use my bayonet and draw blood.

“On the second day,” Bell continued, “the prisoners who didn’t answer the second time a question was put, were bayoneted in the arms or shoulder and then taken to the compound so the others could see what happened for not co-operating.

“There were 12 cases where the prisoner did not answer the second time and the officer told me to bayonet them in the arms or legs. I bayoneted the 12 prisoners and drew blood....

“About 30 prisoners who would not co-operate even after beatings and being bayoneted were taken away in a large truck to the main interrogation camp. Fifteen prisoners were taken to the centre of the compound and shot in the lower part of the body, and the other prisoners were told they would get the same or worse if they did not co-operate. After that there was no more trouble, except for a few, maybe eight or nine who refused to sign against their will and were taken to the main camp.”

The prisoners had the option to be shot in the compounds, for refusing to be “screened” or tortured in the “screening” rooms. And they were to be “screened” time and time again until they came up with the right answers or were taken away to the “Monkey House.”

Types of torture which the Canadians knew were regularly employed during “interrogations” were whipping, beating on the soles of the feet, sharpened matches inserted under the fingernails and then lighted, fingernails pulled out, beating on the back near the kidneys with a heavy rag ball swung on a rope, starvation and worst of all – the steam chamber, where prisoners were put



under steam heat until they were broiled. (Escapees testified that many prisoners were scalded to death in the steam chambers.)

Jollymore described an incident on July 7, when he was on his way back to his camp for lunch. "I decided to take a short cut through the compound," he said. "It took me through a clearing at the back of our camp, and just as I rounded a vacant village and came into view of the compound I saw something which was no less than medieval torture. Prisoners were being lashed with bamboo poles.

"Each of them was strapped to a horizontal line like a clothesline that ran over the prisoner's head. The guards were lashing them with all their force. When the prisoner's legs buckled with pain, the line would sag with the weight of his body. They must have been strong men, maybe proud, because even though the blood was soaking through their shirts I never heard any screams...."

On another occasion Jollymore saw a group of ten prisoners lined up against the back wall of a vacant village. He described what followed.

"There were two groups of Americans, one beside a truck which had a machine-gun on the back and another about 50 feet from the prisoners. The captain who appeared to be in charge said something to a couple of the soldiers and they laid their rifles down and took some sacks from the back of the truck and placed them over the prisoners' heads. One of the prisoners was crippled and stood with a crutch.

"After the soldiers had come back to the main group, a prisoner started shouting. It sounded like 'American killers, aggressors' and the prisoners started moving towards the guards. The captain yelled at the group on the truck and the machine-gun started firing. Everyone fell but one prisoner, who was still alive. The captain spoke to the man beside him and he took aim and fired."

But whatever they did, the Americans failed to break the will of the prisoners of Kojé. Only a handful broke under the torture. The "sample screenings" showed the Americans that they could never achieve their aims. At first, stories were fed out to the western news agencies that the "sample screenings" showed that a large proportion of the 80,000 prisoners who remained on Kojé would "forcibly resist" repatriation. But since the whole press of the west had been screaming for a month about the "80,000 diehard Communists on Kojé," this was too absurd to try to put over and the reports were amended to say that "at least 5 per cent" would "resist repatriation." Finally the news agencies announced that 78,000 had demanded to return to North Korea. No statement was made about how many of 2,000 others were still alive.

More juggling with figures had to be done at Panmunjom as a result of the unbending stand of the prisoners. On July 25, the American delegates announced that a new calculation showed 83,000 prisoners as wanting to go home. This was the absolute minimum figure that could be produced in view of the Kojé events and the world publicity they received. The Americans had

already announced that over 6,000 Chinese were demanding repatriation. The press had given out the figure of 78,000 Korean prisoners on Kojé. By whittling down this figure to 76,600 and adding to it the 6,400 Chinese the delegates produced the figure of 83,000. They conveniently overlooked the fact that the former figure of 70,000 had included 7,000 “reclassified civilians” who had been moved from Kojé before the June 10 massacre. And among other things they “forgot” the “riots” among the “anti-Communists” on the mainland.

Only one “screening” was carried out in which the results, if not the methods, were subjected to the searchlight of publicity – that carried out on Kojé after the June 10 massacre. And the results – according to American figures – showed that slightly more than 2 per cent “resisted repatriation.” (That percentage would certainly include many who died in the massacres and many Syngman Rhee agents.)

The only other case which we know from official American reports is that of the Hospital Camp on the mainland, classified as “anti-Communist,” where 1,597 out of the camp’s 1,600 inmates of one compound faced death rather than permit screening. And the officials at this camp after 86 prisoners had been killed and wounded admitted that the 5,500 prisoners in its three compounds were all “pro-Communist.” (This is presumably another figure that did not register in the US adding machine when they gave the new figure of 83,000 on July 25.)

These are the only two cases publicised by the press. In one case 100 per cent of so-called “anti-Communist” prisoners and in the other case 98 per cent of “screenees” demanded to return home. But the Americans offered to return only 80 per cent of the Koreans and 32 per cent of the Chinese prisoners, if the figure of 132,000 is taken as the basis.

In connection with this farce, there were some interesting observations made by a William Stevenson, who travelled as an aide to the British Minister of State Selwyn Lloyd on the latter’s visit to Kojé. Stevenson later published his impressions in the *Toronto Star Weekly*, a leading, conservative Canadian paper, on November 22, 1952.

Both the Minister of State, Selwyn Lloyd and Stevenson, wrote the latter, found that those prisoners who have stated they do not want to return home did so only because of “physical threats – often carried out” (a nice diplomatic term for torture) by Chiang Kai-shek agents. Stevenson reveals that the US Command tried to prevent him and Selwyn Lloyd from visiting Kojé.

“Some idea of the effectiveness of Formosan interference in Korea was offered,” he wrote, “when I was the only newspaperman to enter a Kojé compound over which the Anti-Communist Youth League exerted control. An attempt was made to dissuade Lloyd from entering by General Edward H. Lastayo, US Second Logistics Command.

“One of his subordinates, Colonel Joseph James explained: ‘The Anti-Communist Youth League wields discipline here and punishes anyone who gets out of line.’”

What is the Anti-Communist Youth League? Stevenson answers the question. The League was modelled on the Hitler Youth by South Korea's last Home Secretary, Lee Bum Suk, who himself spent a lengthy exile in Nazi Germany.

Stevenson mentioned one compound of 10,400 prisoners where it had been declared that a "unanimous" vote against repatriation was recorded, as Stevenson states, "because of the physical threats – often carried out – made by league members against any dissenter. Much the same situation prevailed in other 'anti-Communist' compounds," Stevenson continued, "where the Chinese Nationalist instructors had told prisoners: 'Ask to go to Taiwan or you will stay here and rot....'"

Stevenson's visit was short and he and Selwyn Lloyd were carefully shepherded past anything they should not see, but even so he was able to at least get a faint smell of what was going on there. He unhesitatingly blamed the methods employed at Koje for the "prolonged deadlock in the Korean truce negotiations."

From whatever the source of the information, escaped prisoners, smuggled letters, captured UN troops, International Red Cross reports, eye-witness accounts by journalists accredited to the UN in Korea, the story of Koje is the same. Each account falls into its allotted place in the mosaic of unrelieved terror, bloodshed and deceit – deliberately conceived and carried out as a definite policy which could only have one aim and end – the wrecking of the truce talks, the continuation and expansion of the Korean War.

## CHAPTER IX

As the Americans never tired of telling the world, the object of the barbarities that have been described was to enforce the "principle of voluntary repatriation." It was said that the United Nations (sic) Command, for "humanitarian" reasons, could not send the prisoners back to be massacred. And the reason for this was that the prisoners had turned "anti-Communist" under the "educational" programme of the CIE on Koje and were thus in danger of reprisals.

This noble sounding "principle," voluntary repatriation, for which the Americans drove tanks through international law, the Geneva Convention and all civilised custom, is not some new and advanced "humanitarian" ideal, just discovered by the Americans. It is itself a criminal violation of the Geneva Convention.

In drawing up the Geneva Convention in 1949, the 63 governments taking part, including America, foresaw the danger of powers which held prisoners in custody, using their control over the prisoners to try to subvert them from loyalty to their own homelands. And so these governments took specific measures to make such acts illegal. The Geneva Convention provides for the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war immediately following an armistice and it was drawn up to contain specific provisions preventing any violation of this principle. In particular

the Geneva Convention made illegal the sort of violation of this principle which “voluntary repatriation” represents.

At the meeting which framed the Geneva Convention (The Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1949), the delegates of the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain were all concerned to ensure that no loophole should be left in international law for any power to detain prisoners of war after hostilities ended, no matter what the pretext.

As a result, Article 118 was unanimously adopted and reads:

“Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities....”

The Article then refers to the duties of the detaining powers in immediately drawing up a plan of repatriation and apportioning costs for the repatriation, based on agreement between the powers concerned. The last sentence of Article 118 reads:

“The conclusion of this agreement (on costs) shall in no circumstances justify any delay in the repatriation of prisoners of war.”

An attempt to write “voluntary repatriation” into the Convention was unanimously rejected by the three great powers. According to the minutes, at the 20th meeting on June 16, the Austrian delegate, Herr Bluehdom, proposed to insert an Article which would include the proviso that “prisoners of war however, shall be entitled to apply for their transfer to any other country which is ready to accept them” – in other words voluntary repatriation.

Mr. Gardner, for the United Kingdom, was the first to reject this. General Sklyarov, for the Soviet Union, agreed with Mr. Gardner and said he considered this “could be used to the detriment of the prisoners themselves and their country.” The US Delegate, Mr. Parker, the minutes record, “agreed with General Sklyarov.” The delegate for Israel was the only one to support the Austrian proposal, which was therefore dropped.

Not only was the principle of voluntary repatriation utterly rejected, but a special provision, Article 7, was inserted into the Convention to ensure that prisoners could not be coerced by the detaining power into “voluntarily” accepting any such proposition as giving up their right to return home unconditionally. It states:

“Prisoners of war may in no circumstances renounce in part or in entirety the rights secured to them by the present Convention, and by the special agreements referred to in the foregoing Article, if such there be.” (The foregoing Article provided that the belligerent powers could conclude special agreements regarding the treatment of prisoners as long as these did not “adversely affect the situation of prisoners of war, as defined by the present Convention, nor restrict the rights which it confers on them.”)

Articles 118 and 7 had not been included in the previous Convention of 1929 and were regarded as jointly providing great improvements in safeguarding the rights of prisoners – as a big step forward in guaranteeing their humanitarian treatment.

Article 7 was inserted precisely to avoid that which the Americans were proclaiming as their aim on Kojima Island. This was made very clear in a speech made by M. Pilloud of the International Committee of the Red Cross at the third meeting of the Joint Committee on April 29, 1949. Speaking on this Article, the minutes record that M. Pilloud (ICRC) pointed out that this Article was new, having been established after the Government Experts Conference, because it seemed necessary to protect prisoners of war, civilian internees and prisoners of war who were members of medical personnel, against the temptation of giving up their status for another, for instance that of a civilian worker, or to join the forces of the detaining power. *The ICRC had proposed at Stockholm that “protected persons should not be persuaded by coercion or any other forced means, to renounce the rights conferred upon them by the conventions....”*

It is important to note that the term “coercion” was deleted from the final text because delegates felt that it would be difficult to prove. It would always be possible for the detaining power to claim that the prisoners had decided on a course of action of their own free will and that therefore it was necessary to stipulate that “in no circumstances” could a prisoner give up wholly or partly his rights under the Geneva Convention.

It follows that if the “principle” of “voluntary repatriation,” “screening” and the rest were accepted even in the case of only one prisoner, all the rights secured to war prisoners by international law will have been torn up. This was the crucial issue that the Americans and their friends were trying to hide under the talk of humanitarianism and the lofty slogan “voluntary repatriation.” It would establish, as the Americans did on Kojima, the law of the rack and thumbscrew for all prisoners of war.

It is quite clear why the delegates at Geneva were so firm. Any departure from Articles 118 and 7 would mean in future wars that belligerents would be encouraged to bring moral and physical pressure on prisoners to become traitors to their own countries. The aim of the delegates was to protect prisoners from the fate that those on Kojima were to suffer.

Moreover, if a prisoner may give up “voluntarily” his basic right to return home, then he may also choose – equally of his own “free choice” – to starve, to do forced labour, to go without medical care, not to wear clothes, or anything else it suits the detaining power to force on him, under the pretext that the prisoner personally chooses to do these things.

Tattooing, blood-petitioning, to say nothing of shooting, and the many devices of physical pressure, including withholding of food, were all violations of international law used with the purpose of carrying out the main war-criminal act of “voluntary repatriation.” It is useless for those involved to talk sanctimoniously of “new principles.” The Geneva Convention “relative to the treatment of prisoners of war” was drawn up unanimously by 63 nations after years of prepara-

tion and four months of debate. It was signed by the governments of 61 nations, including all the great powers. It is international law.

Mr. Jean S. Pictet, Director of the ICRC, described the four years' work of preparation as that of completing and amending the rules of international law in the *humanitarian* field in the light of experience gathered during hostilities. Mr. Pictet wrote in the American Journal of International Law for July, 1951, the month the truce talks began, that "the conclusion of new humanitarian agreements has been the chief endeavour and care of the International Committee of the Red Cross for over four years in preparation for the making of the new convention." Now Washington, abetted by London, state that they wish to change the present law for "humanitarian reasons."

A handful of powers, acting illegally under the flag of the United Nations in Korea, and trying to overturn the international law signed by 61 nations, were prepared to commit any other illegal act to achieve their aim.

There are people who suggest that perhaps the Americans recognised, too late, that they had acted illegally in using mental and physical coercion on Koje.

If we can thus argue that covering up rape by committing murder is somehow excusable, then the questions must be asked: Did the Americans have some twinge of conscience for having tattooed prisoners with slogans insulting to their homelands and leaders? Were they serious in their concern that several tens of thousands of prisoners might suffer reprisals for having been so tattooed, if they returned home? Were they so worried about the results of their "political" experiments that they were willing to kill many more prisoners and throw away the lives of many more thousands of their troops?

The case of Chang Wen-jung provides the answer to these questions.

We mentioned Chang Wen-jung in the first chapter and described how he became a squad leader in Compound 72 and was taken on December 13, 1951, to Tokyo for training as a secret agent.

Chang and four others were taken by boat to Pusan and were put on board a transport plane. It was only two days after they disembarked from the plane, that Chang and the others discovered that they were in a Tokyo training school for secret agents. They were warned that they would be killed if they failed to co-operate or made any attempt to escape. After two months' training they were registered by the Japanese-American instructor as "intelligence personnel" of the United Nations forces. They were flown to Korea and on February 19, 1952, at about 3 a.m., Chang Wen-jung and five other former prisoners were put on board a C-46 transport plane to be dropped behind the line in Koksan County, North Korea. They were clad in the uniforms of the Chinese People's Volunteers and threatened that if they did not report back to a certain intelligence unit, south of the battle-line by a given date, their names would be announced over the radio as prisoners who had volunteered for the American intelligence service and the "Comm-

nists” would be sure to kill them. If they performed their duties well, they would be promoted and need not do such work again. This was to be the final test of their “loyalty” to Chiang Kai-shek, the final proof that they had really turned “anti-Communist.”

To make sure that they jumped at the right place, the plane that carried them also carried a “jump-master.” In this case it was Master/Sergeant David T. Harrison, serial number RA 20454295, aged 30, of Box 122, Yadkinville, North Carolina, USA.

“My job,” said Harrison, “was to alert the agents as we got near the dropping area, hitch their ripcords to a line inside the plane and make sure they jumped at the right moment. On this occasion they were carrying rifles, grenades and long cloth bags filled with rice. They should have been carrying messenger pigeons and I brought rubber bags but the pigeons didn’t turn up at the scheduled time so we took off without them. The first four agents dropped on schedule. I noticed that one of the last two was real small and intended to send him first so if he hesitated the bigger one could push him out. But the little one made such a fuss that I let the big one jump first. Then the second one jumped but as he went out the door he threw a hand grenade back into the plane. It went off, and that’s why I’m here.” Harrison was a prisoner of war in North Korea by this time.

The small agent was none other than Chang Wen-jung. The grenade wrecked the rudder control of the C-46 and wounded several crew members. Jump-master Harrison parachuted to safety – as did Chang Wen-jung – who immediately went and gave himself up to the first unit of the Chinese Volunteers he could find. Chang had been sickened to death by the Kuomintang and American methods and planned to take his revenge at the first chance. And as Harrison was the first to admit, the revenge was effective.

Harrison said he had taken part in 14 missions to drop agents over North Korea and in every case the agents were escorted to the plane by a guard with a pistol in his hand. There had been cases of these “agents” jumping off the trucks bringing them to the plane and trying to escape, Harrison said. His impression was that every agent was reluctant to board the planes.

The last, ironic touch to the Chang Wen-jung story was applied when General Nam Il asked General Harrison (who replaced Admiral Joy as chief American negotiator) to account for a number of prisoners whose names were on the lists handed over by the Americans on December 18, 1951, but missing from later lists. Harrison’s explanation was that a number of the prisoners had “escaped.” And included in the list of “escaped” was the name of Chang Wen-jung and the other air-dropped secret agents who had parachuted with him. Harrison was stonily silent when pressed for an explanation of the strange circumstances in which these “escapees” had turned up.

Only one penalty is recognised in international law for espionage in wartime – death. The American Command had sent scores, even hundreds of prisoners of war to what would be – if the penalty were exacted – almost certain death. Master/Sergeant Harrison himself said he had

dropped almost 40 reluctant prisoners over North Korea as secret agents. A very high proportion of those unwilling “spies” promptly gave themselves up to the first friendly unit.

The Americans have tried to pretend that reports of air-dropped agents are inventions, on the grounds that it would be foolish to use unwilling people as secret agents. The answer seems to be that they use many in the hope that a few get back or transmit some information before they are picked up. One of the characteristics of the war in Korea is that westerners cannot be used as spies, their appearance gives them away at once, and the Kuomintang specialists of Kojé have no stomach for such dangerous work. And even if they had, it would be useless. The only agent who could possibly survive among the Chinese Volunteers would be a former member of the Volunteers and familiar with the up-to-date political terms that have become part of the swiftly-changing language of the Volunteers. The few hand-picked and trained Kuomintang members specially sent for the work at first, were spotted before they had spoken a dozen sentences. The same thing applied to the Rhee agents in the Korean People’s Army. Because their bearing and language are not right, they have a very short life as secret agents. Lack of success with such agents seems to have made the Americans turn in desperation to using “converted” Volunteers and KPA men even at the risk of a high proportion of desertions.

It is a fact, proven by the existence in the hands of the Volunteers and KPA of large numbers of such former prisoners, that the Americans were very willing to send them back at gun-point and at the gravest risk of their lives, as spies. That they were sent back at gun-point – as not only the agents allege but the airmen who transported them confirm – is beyond question. And they were sent to face the internationally recognised penalty of death.

The authors have interviewed many such agents and seen the tattoo marks of the Chinese characters for “Oppose Communism Resist Russia” (Fan Kung Kang Wo) clumsily altered in an attempt to make them look like flowers and other designs before the men were sent back as spies. This would of course be an additional hazard for these men, unless they gave themselves up. If they tried to operate with regular units, they would never be able to undress. Tattooing is a rare and despised thing in both China and Korea.

It is a war-crime, a violation of the Geneva Convention, to make use of prisoners as spies, and the sending of scores of such prisoners to what the Americans must assume to be certain death, exposes the cynical hypocrisy of their boasted “humanitarian” principles. For the American Command, with their glib phrase that they cannot “force a single prisoner to return at bayonet point,” when it suited them voluntary repatriation meant dumping prisoners at gun-point from aircraft with the firing squad as the recognised penalty for capture. In fact, as we saw, these unfortunate victims of US “humanitarianism,” when they surrendered or were captured, were met with human understanding based on the knowledge of what had been happening on Kojé.

But the Americans had far bigger plans for the prisoners than merely using a proportion of them as secret agents. By mid-August, 1952, it was announced that 27,000 “reclassified civilians”



from the original 44,000 whose names the Americans had deleted from the lists had been “released” or as the official statement issued with the announcement said, were “turned over to responsible Republic of Korea Government (Rhee regime – Authors) agencies.” Earlier, on June 27, United Press had reported a South Korean government official as predicting that “a large number of the 27,000 civilian internees... will volunteer for the Korean army.”

Handing over these prisoners to the Rhee regime was another violation of the Geneva Convention. Drafting them into the Rhee army was not only a further violation of the Convention but a breach of the agreement which the Americans had helped to draw up in Panmunjom, stating that released prisoners would take no further part in hostilities in Korea.

Before long the authors had the dubious pleasure of interviewing a number of these former prisoners, after they had been press-ganged into the Rhee army and then captured by the Korean-Chinese forces during the Americans’ costly fiasco of an offensive in the late autumn of 1952. Their accounts confirm yet another of the long list of violations of international law by the Americans.

This particular violation is regarded as one of the most serious. According to the Geneva Convention, Article 129, the signatory governments are bound to prosecute any persons responsible for such serious breaches – in this case presumably the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and the “UN” commanders in Korea.

Already the American Command has broken 67 of the 143 Articles of the Geneva Convention relating to war prisoners by its actions on Koje. By insisting on “voluntary repatriation,” it has announced in advance its intention of breaking several more.

“Grave breaches” which oblige the government concerned to bring to trial those responsible, are listed in Article 130 as:

“...wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, compelling a prisoner of war to serve in the forces of the hostile power or wilfully depriving a prisoner of war of the rights of fair and regular trial prescribed in this Convention.”

Far from punishing any officers for these grave breaches, the world knows that the only officers who were punished on Koje were Generals Dodd and Colson for having pledged that in future prisoners would receive “humane treatment” in conformity with international law.

## **CHAPTER X**

While the American Command punished generals who promised to observe international law, it rewarded “Bull” Boatner who turned Koje Island into a charnel house. The general who spilt the most blood in the shortest time was promoted to major-general and given a “soft” job in the United States. Boatner held a press conference in early September in San Antonio, Texas, where

he again gave a display of his personal contempt for humanity. His windy boasting of his Kojé triumph, typical of the American military outlook, concluded with the sentence, "If you get a zealous Communist with a red hot poker and a gun behind him, he starts right away showing more zealousness."

Article 13 of the Geneva Convention rules that: "Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated. Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in its custody is prohibited and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention."

Boatner had not introduced the "red hot poker and gun" regime on Kojé Island, but he perpetuated it and it did not cease with his recall. He was replaced when the American Command announced that the POW camps were "under control," the prisoners had been herded into smaller compounds and "screening" had been completed. When the American delegates at Panmunjom produced their figure of 83,000 prisoners as the "maximum" willing to be repatriated, on July 25, the "screening" was said to have been finished. But it is obvious from all the known facts, that plenty of "whittling down" still had to be done, and so the terror on Kojé and the new camps to which the prisoners had been taken, never relaxed for a single moment.

Day by day the events made liars of the American Command. Two days after the "final figure" of 83,000 was handed in, eight prisoners were killed and wounded at the Nonsan camp on the Korean mainland where, according to an 8th Army statement, the only inmates were "those who would forcibly resist repatriation." Two and half weeks earlier 24 prisoners had been wounded in the same camp.

All through August, there was scarcely a day passed without prisoners being killed and wounded in the "anti-Communist" camps on the mainland. Even according to American releases there were 128 prisoners killed and wounded during August, but there is no way of knowing the real figures. Reasons given for these killings were, "attempting to escape," "prisoners were milling around," "singing Communist songs," "demonstrating in defiance of orders" – strange reasons for the wholesale murder of "anti-Communists." When Rhee announced in the first week of September that 26,000 KPA prisoners had written "blood-petitions" begging for "their immediate release so that they can be used most effectively in the Korean war," one of the reasons became clear. For these were among those classified as prisoners of war by the Americans and not to be confused with the 27,000 "civilian internees" who had already been handed over to Rhee.

In September also, the Americans began to hand out reports almost nightly of prisoners "committing suicide." They were found hanging by the neck, strangely in those very camps where the inmates had all supposedly refused to be repatriated and "would rather commit suicide than return home." (This sudden incidence of suicides is not strange to anyone familiar with the Kuomintang technique. Chiang Kai-shek made it a standard practice, after he broke the anti-Japanese United Front with the Communists in the 1940's and was rounding up all progressives in the area

he controlled. Chiang's secret police would make a swoop on some university or factory, arrest known democrats and leave one or two swinging from the rafters as a warning to others who were not on his lists. Such murders were invariably announced as "suicides.")

Other "suicides" were taking place in the Koje compounds and, considering the unwavering fight that the prisoners there had made for the right to be repatriated, it is easier to imagine that "suicide" was a convenient way of disposing of the prisoners' leaders at the same time providing a warning to others not to step into their shoes.

Officially the American attitude towards the prisoners is admirably expounded in a communiqué released by the Allied POW Command as late as January 17, 1953, which was reported by Associated Press as follows:

"A North Korean POW suspected of being a Communist sympathiser died Thursday after anti-Red captives beat him up. The prisoner died from his injuries at 3.30 a.m. at UN Camp Number 5 at Sang Mudai. The Allied Command said prisoners who did not want to go back to North Korea 'meted out swift justice' to the fellow captive before guards could remove him from the stockade."

The words "meted out swift justice" and "suspected of being a Communist sympathiser" are directly quoted from an official "UN" (American) Command Communiqué. It is well for the world to ponder the full implications of the attitude that is here so brutally exposed. To hint at wanting to go home was to be regarded as a "suspected pro-Communist" and to be so suspected was enough for the "UN" Command officially to describe bludgeoning to death as "justice." But such beatings to death, as we know, were not inflicted by fellow prisoners but by the camp guards and by agents infiltrated among the prisoners under American instructions or indulgence.

In September, the total number of killed and wounded was 97 according to American sources. It was noticeable that more attention was being directed to the Chinese prisoners on Cheju Island. A total of 63 Chinese Volunteers were reported as having been wounded on Cheju during the last ten days of September. It was very soon to become evident that this was a dress rehearsal for one of the most shocking of all the slaughters of 1952.

On October 1, American troops opened fire on Chinese prisoners who were dancing and singing in celebration of the third anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic. Even the Western news agency reports show this was a deliberately planned massacre in which 56 were reported as killed and 120 wounded.

"American soldiers rushed into the compound to quell a demonstration celebrating the third anniversary of the Communist regime in China. Two Americans were slightly injured," cabled United Press Correspondent Wendell Merick in a despatch from Cheju shortly after the massacre. "A prison spokesman said most of the dead were killed by rifles and carbines, but that 'many died of bayonet wounds....'"

This ghastly violence, at the time when the Americans were entering their last stage of breaking off the Panmunjom talks for the sake of “humanitarian” principles, drew such shocked reaction from the world that the Americans were forced to change their story. Wendell Merick sent out an amended report that the butchery was to prevent “a mass outbreak by 5,800 Chinese prisoners.” He quoted Major-General Thomas Herren as saying that “the Communists planned to break out and join the Red guerrillas in the Cheju mountains.... Two platoons of American infantry of about 70 men moved into the compound and in the savage 15-minute, close order battle with brick-throwing Chinese armed with spears and barbed wire flails, quelled the defiant Reds and prevented the planned break.

“Colonel Richard Boerem, Commander of the Cheju City POW camps, said,” the UP story continues, “UN prisoner of war head-quarters learned of the planned break on August 24. Plans were made immediately to stop it.

“The riot was touched off when prisoners in an enlisted men’s compound threw rocks at an American guard in what apparently was supposed to be the signal for the mass break with the nine other compounds in the enclosure. But Boerem said the move into Compound 7 broke the back of the planned Communist revolt...”

In passing on this frantic absurdity to the public, Merick has clearly tried to salve his conscience by the use of such words as “apparent” and “supposed.”

We are invited to believe that the “UN” Command had known for five weeks of a planned breakout. Article 42 of the Geneva Convention states: “The use of weapons against prisoners of war, especially against those who are escaping or attempting to escape, shall constitute an extreme measure, which shall always be preceded by warnings appropriate to the circumstances.” It might be supposed that if the camp authorities had learned of a planned escape, the Camp Commandant would have informed the prisoners that he knew of the plan and that force would be used to prevent it. He would have stationed extra guards where they could prevent escapes – outside the compound – and perhaps reinforced the already formidable barbed wire fences. Instead, it is said that the only preventive plan made was to order guards into one section of the compound on the day of the alleged escape attempt and to mow down the prisoners at close range.

However, the rest of Merick’s despatch makes clear how farcical was the tale of the mass breakout. He goes on:

“Boerem said the signal for the beginning of the breakout by 5,800 hard-core Chinese Reds came at 7.30 a.m. when each of the ten compounds raised a pole and a red flag inside the barbed wire enclosure. They began singing Communist songs. Boerem then delivered to the compound orders he had prepared, telling the prisoners that according to the Geneva Convention, raising flags without permission is illegal....” (The prisoners refused to lower the flags.) “...with bayonets and rifles, 70 or so soldiers then flushed the Chinese from behind walls and out of the buildings and trenches... the defiant prisoners had wired up two barbed wire gates. As soldiers were cutting

these open, they were met with volleys of rocks from the prisoners. ‘They were like bees from a hive,’ said one soldier. American guards replied with volleys of fire and stormed into the compound....”

A microscopic search in the Geneva Convention will not produce an Article forbidding the display of flags. In fact, the display of flags on national days had been permitted to the same prisoners. Two months earlier, on August 1, the Chinese on Cheju had celebrated Army Day. The *New York Herald Tribune* carried, on August 27, a story from its correspondent Mac Johnson to illustrate the passive resistance of the Chinese prisoners. He said that on August 1, the prisoners were given permission to raise a flag-pole “twice as high as their tents” but they had raised a flag higher than the American flag and excused themselves by saying they thought what was meant was a flag-pole “twice the length of a tent.” The reason for the different reaction towards flying a flag on August 1 and October 1 is not to be found in the Geneva Convention.

The official American tale of desperate prisoners being quelled in a break-out is also given the lie by a report of the Cheju incident from Reuter correspondent.

“The camp, built on a narrow plain between mountains and the sea,” reported Reuter, “appeared to have been specifically prepared by the Communists for such an attack. In the compound where the fighting took place, the Chinese had been constructing winter quarters to take the place of the huts where they have to live. The wall had only been built up to the waist and was in an excellent position for the *defenders* to make fortifications during the attack....”

Both the Reuter and UP reports stress the defensive nature of the prisoners’ actions. Prisoners planning a mass break-out would scarcely take the precaution of wiring themselves in and preparing protective ditches and walls, and they would not have to be “flushed out from behind walls and out of buildings and trenches,” as the UP report said.

Officially the Americans claim that “only rifles and bayonets” were used. But it is not possible for 70 Americans, in 15 minutes, to have killed and wounded 176 men in close action with such weapons, and have only two of their men slightly injured. Obviously the machine-guns from the watch towers were brought into action.

Public opinion was more stirred by this massacre than by any of the previous ones and the correspondents in Tokyo and Korea were showered with demands from their head offices for explanations. In response to many such queries whether it was true that Mark Clark had issued “shoot-to-kill” orders, UP from Tokyo sent out an explanatory cable to all UP newsrooms stating, “we were badgering everybody for the reason why GIs didn’t use concussion or tear-gas grenades and why they fired, killing 51 (the number listed at that moment – Authors), when the attack against them only lightly injured two soldiers. Unquotable officers in the POW Command say there are such shoot-to-kill orders and that they come from higher up. GHQ was equally curious why the slaughter occurred. It was apparently unnecessary.”

There is little room to doubt that Mark Clark directly and specifically qualified himself for future trial as a war criminal by issuing such orders. This is further established by a UP report from Tokyo on October 3, that a spokesman for Clark had said in connection with the Cheju shooting, that while “there was no specific order to ‘shoot-to-kill,’ local commanders might have so interpreted the order which Clark had issued on his arrival last May to ‘use any force necessary’ in enforcing the UN authority over prisoners.”

Even the excuse that the prisoners had prepared weapons was later exposed when General Herren admitted that the prisoners’ quarters had been searched on the night previous to the shooting and no weapons were found. He added that there “was no comparison between the weapons the Chinese used and those used by the North Koreans on Koje on June 10” – although the press description was the same in both cases. In fact, the only weapons that the Chinese had to defend themselves against the attack were a few rocks lying around the uncompleted buildings. Dig as deep as they could, no press correspondent who probed the tale of the “breakout” could find the answer from Herren or Boerem to the key question – why did not the prisoners in the other nine compounds seize this golden opportunity of the guards being involved in Compound 7 to put their so-called escape plan into operation?

There can be no doubt that the first explanation made to the press was the correct one. A few hours after the massacre, before Boerem got his cue from General Herren, he told the press that the “prison command was preparing for an incident after turning down a prisoner request to hold celebrations for October 1....” If the word “massacre” is substituted for the word “incident” this report exactly tallies with the facts – it is the truth.

But the question still remains: Why was the massacre “necessary”? Boerem states that flags were hoisted in all ten compounds but action was taken only in one. There is no explanation why Compound 7 was selected. From what immediately followed at Panmunjom, no other conclusion can be drawn but that quelling a National Day celebration was only a pretext and that once again we have to look to high American policy for the key to this otherwise insoluble problem.

October 1 is the most important holiday of all in People’s China. In Cheju Island the thoughts of the prisoners were with the happy folk, including some of their own families and friends, who were marching under a sea of red silk in Tien An Men Square in Peking, greeting Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the other leaders of all political parties in China. October 1 is the Chinese people’s symbol of their release from foreign rule and the scourge of feudal landlordism. With or without permission the Chinese would sing and dance, even in Cheju on that day, and the Americans knew it.

American policy demanded that the UN General Assembly, due to meet on October 14, must be faced with the accomplished fact of wrecked cease-fire talks. From July onwards the Americans had been declaring breaks in the talks of one week at a time without the agreement of the Korean-Chinese side, and had indicated in every possible way that the negotiations were finished.

But the Korean-Chinese delegation would never rise to the American provocations and declare the talks off. The Americans always tried to avoid taking the final step of breaking off the talks because it looked bad in the eyes of public opinion. They wanted to provoke the Korean-Chinese side to do it instead.

The technique of provocation was not a new one. Among the almost daily pinpricks and pressure to end the talks there had been many notable provocations such as the bombing of the Korean-Chinese delegation's headquarters, the shooting of a child on the conference site within 24 hours of it being confirmed as a neutral area, countless bombings and strafings in Kaesong and the bombing of the Yalu River power stations. The last case, as Indian delegate to the UN Assembly, Krishna Menon, pointed out, was at a moment when delicate diplomatic negotiations to solve the prisoner of war issue were in progress and Western sources claimed were within sight of success.

No doubt the Americans still believed that a provocation sufficiently grave would force the Korean-Chinese delegation to snap the last thread holding the talks together and still leave the Americans free to claim that the talks had been broken off by the other side. The previous large-scale massacres of war prisoners had all been against Korean prisoners. This time it was doubtless hoped that the provocation might be more effective if directed against the Chinese and to make it doubly effective, the day chosen was China's National Day.

But the desired result was not forthcoming. Conscious of their responsibilities to the whole world, the Korean-Chinese delegation had met previous provocations with the statement that they would never be responsible for the breaking off of the talks and they held to this principle in the face of this most extreme of all the provocations.

As a result the American delegates had to expose themselves completely, in advance of the General Assembly meeting. A week after the massacre and six days before the Assembly met, they themselves broke off the talks and made it clear that they never wanted them to re-open.

"Voluntary repatriation," the truce-wrecking policy laid down by the Joint Chiefs of Staff 18 months earlier, had finally borne fruit. But it was a fruit that had hung too long on the bough and rotted before it ripened. Eighteen months of political learning from the American stalling at Panmunjom, the massacres, germ warfare, more massacres, the bombing of Pyongyang and the Yalu power plants, napalm, more massacres, threats of the use of atomic bombs and extending the war to China, had brought the world's public to a sharpness of understanding and a keenness for peace that provided new problems. And still there remained for the Americans the problem of dealing the final – or perhaps not even the final – blow to peace in the United Nations.

## CHAPTER XI

"...The order for ruthless and energetic action must be given at the slightest indication of insubordination, especially in the case of Communist fanatics. Insubordination, active or passive resistance, must be broken immediately by force of

arms (bayonets, butts and firearms)... Prisoners of war attempting to escape are to be fired on without previous challenge.... The use of arms against prisoners of war is as a rule legal....”

No, these are not the words of Ridgway, Mark Clark, Van Fleet or Boatner. Except for the change of one word, this was a quotation used by Judge John J. Parker, a US member of the Nuremberg tribunal, which helped to send to the gallows Keitel, Kaltenbrunner and Jodi. Instead of the word “Bolshevist” in the original, we have substituted the word “Communist,” to bring it into line with dozens of similar statements made by “UN” commanders in Korea. It was an order issued on September 8, 1941, for the treatment of Soviet prisoners, by General Reinecke, head of the prisoners of war department of the Nazi High Command. The order was approved by the above named generals and became key evidence in sending them to the gallows.

Orders such as this were recognised as war crimes under international law in 1945-46 and punished as such. Since then the Charter of the International Tribunal of Nuremberg has been accepted as part of international law. And since that Tribunal sat, the Geneva Convention has been adopted, after discussions lasting more than four years.

The officers responsible for the massacres of Korean and Chinese prisoners and for the policies that led to those massacres are not less guilty than Keitel, Kaltenbrunner and Jodi. Under international law, and under United States law, the American government is bound to bring these men to judgment.

But in fact the slaughters and the orders for them did not arise from the aberrations of American generals. They were geared to a specific schedule of political manoeuvres and also fitted exactly into the general policy of making “Asians fight Asians.”

By the time the Americans broke off the talks, they had publicly announced that the prisoners had been divided into two groups – the “anti-Communists” said to be refusing to be repatriated, and the “diehard Communists,” as all prisoners were called who insisted on going home. But even after that forcible segregation and its results on world opinion, the Americans were still not content to let matters rest.

Two distinct pressures were still exerted on the prisoners with unrelenting ferocity. The “diehard Communists” were still being “screened” and “re-screened” in further efforts to force their “conversion.” Identical pressure was being applied to the others to force them to take one more “final” step – to join the armed forces of the “UN” (Syngman Rhee’s army) and of Chiang Kai-shek. This pressure was violently increased after the disastrous American man-power losses in the October-November, 1952, offensive on the Kumhua front.

“Voluntary repatriation” had achieved its political aim of wrecking the truce talks and the war could go on. But more cannon fodder was needed and the best part of a potential of ten divisions existed among the prisoners of war.



During October, the Americans announced that the remaining 11,000 of the former 38,000 “re-classified civilians” would be handed over to Rhee for “release,” which meant for press-ganging into the Rhee army. This again displays American disregard for arithmetic. They never admitted holding 44,000 but at one time said 7,000 of the 38,000 wanted to be repatriated. They now said the entire 38,000 were to be handed over to Rhee.

From the sort of excuses given for the continued killings and woundings of prisoners during October, there can be no doubt that the prisoners were still being “screened” and were still not coming up with the right answers. UP reported from Kojé on October 13 that seven prisoners were wounded while they “were being moved from one compound to another.” On the following day four prisoners in one compound were wounded because “they protested against the removal of one of their companions for questioning” and fifteen were wounded in another compound for protesting against the removal of four of their comrades “for questioning.” A week later another nine were wounded at Pusan on the mainland because they refused to form work details due to their comrades having been taken away “in a routine transfer.” (It should be noted that using typical press-gang tactics, one way the Americans tried to “capture” prisoners for “screening” was to grab work details while they were outside the compound.) Finally by killing and wounding 75 prisoners on Kojé because, as the “UN” Communiqué said, “prisoners started drilling in their compound,” the Americans capped what their own figures show was the bloodiest month of all.

The shocking total of prisoners killed and wounded during October was 506, according to American figures – an average of 16 every day. All through November and December, the shootings went on, and it was notable that during this period there were several incidents on Pongam Island where the attention of the executioners seemed to be directed to the “civilian internees.” Syngman Rhee appeared to be having difficulty in persuading the last 11,000 to be “released” to join his army. The “UN” Command decided to discipline these reluctant prisoners on Pongam in an effort to speed up the recruiting campaign.

American troops killed 87 and wounded 115 Korean prisoners on December 14, in the bloodiest massacre they had yet admitted. Once more the excuse was that the prisoners had staged a mass escape attempt, about which the “UN” Command had been forewarned but had taken no action to prevent. Once more the troops that did the shooting were inside the stockades and there were no prisoners outside the compounds. No correspondents were on the spot but from the reports they wrote later from Pongam it is perfectly clear that the “mass escape” excuse was as false in this case as it was in the case of Cheju.

In explaining the “mass escape attempt,” the propaganda service of the US State Department, USIS, on December 15, quoted the “UN” Command as saying that the prisoners “organised drills and demonstrations in each of the six compounds on Pongam in defiance of lawful orders. The Communists then moved according to plan, the Command said, to the top of a high terrace where they hurled a shower of stones at ascending US troops.”

Was this high terrace a point from which prisoners could leap in a mass escape attempt? It appears not. Just as it is clear, even from the USIS report, that the prisoners, far from trying to escape, retreated into the compound in front of the advancing troops and answered rifle fire with stones.

For an eye-witness account of this “mass escape” attempt, UP correspondent Fred Painton on October 16 quoted the island commander in charge of the blood-letting, Lieutenant Colonel Miller. “They were standing in rows four ranks deep with their arms linked,” Miller said, according to Painton’s report. “They were singing and swaying back and forth. After our first volley, the wounded were held upright and kept on singing. Ones that were down were pulled up by the arms... when my men tried to remove the dead and wounded after the battle, the prisoners lay on the ground with locked arms. Our men had to force them apart.” As on Cheju Island, it seemed that the prisoners adopted curious procedure for a mass escape.

Painton’s report goes on. “...He (Miller) said the prisoners made a ‘tremendous noise’ by singing prohibited Communist songs, cheering and chanting slogans. Miller, an expert on tactical problems, said the terrain was the reason the prisoners got such an edge over their captors that bullets became necessary. The slope where the prisoners have their compounds and barracks rose upward at a 30 degree angle. It is terraced to allow construction of barracks and other installations. Miller said, ‘It was a tactical situation in their favour. They were perched 15 feet higher than my troops with their backs against the barracks’ walls...’.”

And there we have it. Faced with troops advancing and firing on them, the prisoners retreated until they could retreat no longer. With their backs to the barracks’ walls, they linked arms and sang until the bullets cut them down, just as the victims of the Nazi gas chambers linked arms and sang until the gas choked off their voices.

“The Communists stood straight up,” Miller said, “and made no attempt to dodge the bullets fired from light machine-guns, shot guns, carbines and rifles at less than 30 yards. Some tried to fight hand-to-hand with the UN guards.”

What a picture of the depraved mentality of the American military mind is given by this brief description! Miller had no idea that the picture he was drawing was of the courage and proud dignity of the prisoners faced with such Hitlerite barbarity.

The Pongam massacre took place because the Americans were meeting resistance to their plan of turning over the remaining 11,000 “civilian internees” to be impressed into the Rhee army. According to American reports, this was the second large-scale butchery of “civilian internees.” But the reports of the ICRC show that this was by no means the whole story. Tucked away discreetly in their French language bulletins, which never seem to find their way into the press, the ICRC reported that four days after the prisoner lists were exchanged, on December 18, 1951, almost 800 of these “reclassified civilians” were beaten up, six were killed and 41 wounded by rifle fire

for protesting against being classified as “South Korean civilians.” They demanded their right to prisoner of war treatment as loyal members of the Korean People’s Army.

The spokesman for the prisoners repeated these demands after the incident when a representative of the ICRC went to investigate. He reported that the incident was caused by “the application of political coercion” on the question of repatriation. How did it happen?

The inmates of the compound had been lumped together as “non-Communist South Korean civilians.” They protested so strongly against this that the Camp Commandant told the ICRC representative that “half the prisoners had changed their minds after signing a declaration.” In order to “screen” them – or force them to change their minds back again – the Commandant sent in a team of Rhee guards to interrogate them. The prisoners objected and the guards withdrew.

They returned with 95 “anti-Communist” prisoners, according to the Commandant (according to our information they were members of Syngman Rhee’s fascist Anti-Communist Youth League – Authors), who tried to enforce the “screening.” They started by taking away 17 “agitators” whom they regarded as the prisoners’ leaders, to security headquarters and they arrested many others. They separated the other prisoners and one group was taken to a special building where they were unmercifully beaten with clubs and then forced to squat on the ground all night with their hands clasped behind their necks. The rest were forced to stretch out in their tents, face down to the icy ground, and remain there all night, with guards patrolling to beat them if they moved.

Next morning they were lined up and orders were given to start “screening.” When the prisoners still refused, the ROK guards opened fire, killing six on the spot and wounding 41.

During his visit in mid-January, the ICRC delegate was assured by the Camp Commandant that after this shooting, Compound 62 was regarded as an entirely “Communist” compound and that known “Communists” from other compounds would be concentrated there.

What shines through every line of this report was that in this compound, as in all others, a prisoner who demanded repatriation was at once branded as a “diehard Communist,” with all the brutal treatment that entailed. But even after officially acknowledging that all the inmates of this compound wanted to be repatriated, the Americans were again trying, within a month, to coerce these prisoners by individual “screening” and in the dead of night, to “change their minds.” For it was in this same Compound 62, that the American “Wolfhounds” attacked on February 18, killing 85 and wounding 129, as related in previous chapters.

That is the story according to the ICRC. But there are far more revealing reports available from some of these “civilian internees” who after being press-ganged into the ROK army and sent to the front, managed to cross the lines back to the Korean People’s Army. One of these was Kim Sung Tae, from Compound 64, POW serial number 94990. Kim had joined the KPA after Seoul fell in July 1950 and was captured by the Americans after the Inchon landing.

“Our life was nothing but misery and torture from the first days of our capture,” Kim said. “We were beaten, starved, tortured and made to work like slaves. We were treated worse than beasts. But we managed to keep our flag flying in the compound and we swore revenge. We kept our flag flying until June 1951, and then the Americans demanded that we pull it down and run up the flag of Syngman Rhee. Nobody could be found willing to do such a thing. There were 7,000 prisoners in our compound and they were all loyal to the KPA and the Fatherland. So the Americans sent in tanks, and troops with rifles and grenades and again demanded that we haul down our flag. We refused so they opened fire on us. Fifteen of our comrades were killed and I was among the 20 wounded.

“After they had torn our flag to pieces, they put up the Rhee flag and then our real misery began. We were forced to attend meetings, sing Rhee songs and recite stupid, disloyal verses and slogans. We were beaten on the soles of our feet with steel and bamboo rods for not singing or shouting loud enough.

“At the end of the year (after discussions had started on the prisoner issue at Panmunjom – Authors) we were told that the quickest way to go home was to sign a petition in our own blood asking for ‘voluntary repatriation.’ Otherwise, they said, we would all be kept there. We were told that anyone who wanted to go North could go if they signed the petition. But we were suspicious of this and very few signed. And the more they tried to force us the more suspicious we got,” said Kim Sung Tae, a bronzed, stocky Korean lad with suffering bitten into every line of his honest young face.

“Then in February they massacred the comrades in Compound 62, near ours and told us that we would get the same if we didn’t co-operate. Eight days after the shooting, the Commandant of our compound, Lieutenant Colonel Lim San Cho of the ROK army, came to us and said that all who wanted to go North could do so. Everyone shouted that they wanted to go, but nothing happened. In April he came again and told us the same thing. This time he said that those who wanted to go North should start moving out of the gates, but the guards were waiting there and when the first ones stepped through, the guards rushed at them, lashing out with their clubs and rifle butts.

“Everybody stopped for a moment. The gates were slammed shut and Colonel Lim shouted that everyone had made his choice and those who had stayed in the compound had decided to stay in South Korea. Those who had got out were dragged off and loaded into trucks. We never saw them again.”

In July 1952, the Americans started “releasing” the first 27,000 of the “civilian internees.” They were handled in 17 batches and Kim Sung Tae was in the sixteenth batch. (He had been in hospital because of injuries originally received in the incident over the flags. In hospital he and 200 others were automatically enrolled in the “Comrades Association for Exterminating Communists” and were forced to take an oath to join the Rhee army and fight “the Communists.”)

“My home was near Seoul,” Kim continued, “and with the rest of those in my batch who lived in that part, we were taken by train to Seoul and escorted to the police-station to register. An officer there read out the copy of the oath I had been made to take in the hospital and said I could return to my home only if I promised to carry it out.”

Kim Sung Tae returned to his village and the day after he arrived, a local policeman called and told him that he must register immediately as a second-class reservist. The policeman called every day until this was done.

“As soon as I was registered, he kept coming back and telling me I had two choices. I could enlist for the front or for the Labour Corps,” Kim said, adding that he chose the Labour Corps as the lesser of the two evils. He soon found that the “Labour Corps” was a camouflage name for HID, a hush-hush outfit of the American military intelligence. Within less than a month after leaving Koje, Kim Sung Tae was already at the front, after a very brief training for intelligence work.

A very similar story was told by Cha Kun Su, formerly of Compound 65, POW serial number 16584. In his case an American lieutenant colonel and an American priest had taken part in the almost daily harangues, urging the compound inmates to change sides. When he was “released,” he was ordered to report for military service or he would be regarded as a deserter and liable to be shot. On the day he went to Seoul for physical examination, there were more than 1,000 prisoners from Compound 65 going through the process.

Many former inmates of the “civilian internee” compounds have told almost monotonously similar stories, although they were released, press-ganged and captured at different times. They confirm everything known about these compounds from American and ICRC sources. There is only one distinction – the prisoners are able to tell what happens after they are handed over to Syngman Rhee. From their evidence it is clear that the prisoners were given the choice of being mown down in the compounds or being sent to the front.

The same batch of ICRC reports which carry the details of the brutality meted out to the “civilian internees” reveals many other massacres and incidents reported neither by the US Command nor in the press. In particular it mentions the killing and wounding of 125 Koreans, including women, for celebrating their National Day, August 15, 1951. It confirms charges that American NCOs entered women’s compounds committing rape, and other indignities such as – on the pretext of searching for stolen property – forcing women prisoners to strip nude. (Corporal Jollymore, the Canadian former guard on Koje, described instances in which American guards committed rape in the women’s compound on Koje. He also states that the women prisoners were in general reserved for officers, but other ranks “with influence” could also take part.)

As for the responsibility for all these crimes, the ICRC is obliged to state that “*these incidents were the result of serious prejudice on the part of the detaining authority.*”

Having regard to the known bias of the ICRC in favour of Americans, that must be considered about as grave a denunciation as the Committee could make, and certainly graver than any it made against the Nazis.

## CHAPTER XII

From time to time the American Command tried to divert public attention from the atrocities they were daily committing against prisoners by suggesting that all sorts of atrocities were being committed against American and other “UN” prisoners in North Korea. In fact, at the time the prisoner lists were exchanged, the American mouthpiece, Brigadier-General William Nuckols, expressed doubt to the “UN” correspondents at Panmunjom that any of the American prisoners were still alive. Truman went so far as to torture thousands of families to whom the lists had brought the first news of their loved ones, by broadcasting a “warning” that the “Communists” were probably playing some hoax; those listed might well not be alive and no false hopes should be aroused that their return was imminent. (The real reason for this broadcast does not have to be sought very deeply. Truman, knowing very well that there would be no armistice and that the talks were going to be wrecked precisely on this issue, did not want families and friends of prisoners pressurising him to bring the prisoners back home by getting a quick peace.) The Truman declaration followed the notorious Hanley report, which asserted that 8,000 American prisoners of war had been slaughtered in North Korea. Judged from their actions, it seems that the war-group in Washington would have been very pleased if there had, in fact, been no US prisoners. This would have removed at least one source of embarrassing pressure to reach a peace settlement.

This cruel propaganda balloon was soon exploded. The ace photographer of Associated Press, the world’s biggest news agency, happened to be a prisoner in North Korea. AP, always on the look-out for good news pictures, approached the authors of this booklet and asked if they could send a camera up to their captured photographer, Frank Noel. It was arranged in ten minutes on the spot – which was the strip of road opposite the conference tent at Panmunjom. As a result Noel soon received a press-camera and a good supply of film and flash-bulbs from Associated Press. During the next period Noel visited every POW camp holding American, British and other “UN” prisoners and shot hundreds of pictures.

Within ten days of the camera being handed over, every newspaper in the United States was carrying pictures of fat, happy-looking American prisoners and their daily activities in the camps of North Korea.

Not only did the papers in America and Britain carry these pictures but also *Stars and Stripes*, the US Army newspaper that goes to the troops at the front. *Stars and Stripes* later carried two full pages of pictures of the American star prisoner, General Dean, with huge banner captions saying “General Dean Fit and Well in Communist Camp” (General Dean had earlier been declared dead, and when his name was included as a prisoner in the list handed to the Americans,

Nuckols asserted that his name was only included as a bargaining counter and he really was dead.) General Dean was seen in *Stars and Stripes* in a neat pin-stripe suit, playing chess with his guards, eating, exercising and looking not only alive but very fit. It seems that when this issue of the GI's newspaper arrived on General Ridgway's breakfast table, he almost had an apoplectic stroke. His troops at the front might get the idea that surrendering was a better way out than laying down one's life in a war that no one was interested in fighting. All these pictures did not fit in with official American propaganda to the troops that the "Communists" would treat American captives in the same way as the Americans were treating the Korean-Chinese captives in Koje.

Ridgway issued orders right and left, banning further prisoner pictures in *Stars and Stripes*, banning further contact between the "UN" and "Communist" correspondents at Panmunjom on the grounds that "fraternising, trafficking and consorting" by the "UN" correspondents was "endangering military security." But Ridgway revealed the real canker that was gnawing at his heart when his order mentioned "the smuggling of cameras to the POW camps," as one of the reprehensible activities of the "UN" pressmen concerned.

Since the most important American news agency and virtually every paper in the US from the *New York Times* down were involved, the press had to fight back on this occasion. Ridgway was forced to withdraw his bans on "fraternisation etc." Up to the time that the Americans walked out of the talks and the contact between the pressmen at Panmunjom was thus broken off, the Noel pictures continued to flow into the American newspaper offices. Noel must have photographed almost every American and many of the British prisoners, many of them several times, up to the time contact was broken. These pictures spoke for themselves. The prisoners looked relaxed and happy, they were fat and well-clad. Such pictures and captions from a responsible member of the AP staff, made it clear that no prisoners of war in history had ever been so well looked after as those of the "UN" forces in North Korea.

The authors, between them, have spent more than six months at these camps and intimately know the conditions there. It is impossible to discuss them in relation to the Koje camps for they represent an entirely different world. And it is not the purpose here to deal with this world, other than to give a brief description in passing.

Most of the prisoners live in Korean houses in the pleasant villages along the banks of the Yalu River, among some of the most beautiful Korean mountain scenery. Prisoners are known by their names and not by numbers and adequate English-speaking staff are provided to prevent any language problems arising. Prisoners' personal property has not been touched. Many prisoners wear wrist watches, possess fountain pens and cigarette lighters. They retained their own uniforms on capture, but in addition are fitted out twice a year with new summer and winter uniforms. Their summer clothes are cooler and their winter clothes are warmer than the American or British issues. They have two suits of summer uniforms at each issue, to provide a change when they wash them. In winter they have huge quilted great coats in addition to their quilted jacket and

trousers. They each have warm quilted bedding and suitable footwear comes with the seasonal change of clothing. Fuel is ample.

Food, the most vital part of a prisoner's life, is far above the requirements of the Geneva Convention. It includes a minimum of three ounces of meat daily in the summer and six ounces in the winter, but since the prisoners mostly slaughter their own meat, the actual allocation is well above this. The rest of the diet consists of fish, chickens by no means rarely, baked and steamed bread, rice, fresh vegetables and, in season, eggs. Tobacco is more than ample, the ration being fixed at five ounces a week. Pipes and cigarette paper are also issued.

Religious and national customs are rigidly respected. Protestant and Catholic services are held each Sunday and Moslems (there are many Turkish prisoners) have their own services. Moslems, incidentally, who do not eat pork which figures largely in the diet of the others, are provided with beef or veal as often as possible and otherwise their diet is made up with goats and chickens. Moreover, the Moslems always slaughter their own meat, while the other prisoners in winter get already slaughtered carcasses.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of the camp life is the care taken by the camp authorities to provide the means for the prisoners to celebrate their own and each other's holidays, as well as joining in the celebration of the Korean and Chinese national days. On Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, New Year, Lunar New Year, and numerous other festival days, special feasts are laid on, with beer, wine and spirits, special foods and entertainments lasting for several days.

Democracy is the essence of camp life, with the prisoners electing their own platoon and squad leaders, their own committees to contact the camp authorities and committees for their clubs, messing, sports, recreation and other activities round which the life of the camp turns. Of all these, aside from messing, sport is the most important. Prisoners do no work which is not directly for their own benefit, such as cleaning their quarters, carrying rations from the trucks and in some cases cutting firewood. Generally, work details do not fall more frequently than once a week per man, except for the company cooks, who are volunteers in any case.

Emphasis is on healthy recreation, organised by the prisoners themselves with the equipment supplied in generous quantities by the authorities. The British in one camp, for example, have three foot-ball matches every day except in the coldest weather. The whole day is spent out of doors (they live in Korean style houses, with heated floors) playing football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, and in the summer, fishing and swimming.

For those who want to participate, there are educational classes – organised and led by the prisoners – which vary from camp to camp but overall include almost anything from handicrafts to foreign languages. All camps have well-stocked libraries with a limited but very reasonable cross-section of the best English language writers, Dickens and Thackeray, Twain and Dreiser and others. Many of the prisoners have first made the acquaintance and learned to love the best English literature in these camps. Political works are available for those that want to read them.(And



there is a big demand for theoretical works, especially simple treatments of Political Economy.) There are publications depicting life in the Soviet Union and China and British and American newspapers and magazines. News is broadcast daily, including the latest available sports news which, however, is sometimes sadly behind the events, since it mostly is culled from belated newspapers by the prisoners who edit the news bulletins. General news, as can be expected, comes faster on the world news networks.

One noteworthy achievement of the camps has been to draw out the latent cultural skill of the prisoners, who have organised their own bands, dramatic entertainment, choirs, wall newspapers and camp magazines. Incidentally, payment is made for all items contributed to and published in the camp magazine, in currency which can be spent at the camp "PX" stores on a wide variety of goods from apples and confectionery to wrist watch straps and vacuum flasks.

One of the authors was fortunate enough to have attended an inter-camp Olympic meet, which gave an impression both of the free and easy conditions of camp life and of the magnificent physical condition of the prisoners. This meet was certainly unique in the history of POW camp life.

The Olympic Games were held during 14 days in November, 1952, in brilliant sunshine on a huge playing field decorated with masses of coloured silk flags, evergreen arches and complete with the Olympic flame. The games included every type of track and field event and team events, basketball, volleyball, American and soccer football. Every camp had previously held its own competitions and sent the cream of its athletes to the central games which opened with an Olympic parade of the athletes, headed by a relay runner with the traditional flaming torch. Large contingents of prisoners came from the outlying camps, by boat up the Yalu River or by truck and were entertained royally during the fortnight of their stay.

Announcers broadcast the results and times of the events as they came on, with running commentaries on the sports history of the competitors. The fitness of the prisoners can be judged from the fact that many of the times were well up to international standards. The group of prisoners who co-operate to produce the camp newspaper, set themselves out to do a thorough journalistic job on the Olympics. By toiling throughout each night, they were able to have a daily Olympics news-sheet ready every morning, full of reports of the previous day's events, the day's programme and pungent comment on everything, all reported by the prisoners themselves. This paper was rushed over to the other camps, where the prisoners who had not been lucky enough to attend on this occasion were able to keep abreast of the struggle for athletic supremacy.

Organisation was superb right through the whole complex series of events. As soon as an athlete came off the field he was in the hands of the masseurs and, if scratches needed attention, the medical personnel were ready at all times. All the Korean and Chinese personnel in the area watched. There was nothing bodged-up about it. The athletes turned out in splendid singlets and shorts, with colours for the team games, all provided by the authorities.

The Grand Finale and prize-presenting was watched by the whole town as the athletes marched into the arena under silk flags and took their places in front of the judges' stand. Prizes were unexpectedly magnificent, brought from Peking and providing the prisoners with a glimpse of the beauties of Chinese handicrafts. There were silver and ivory cigarette holders, carved ivory, filigree and cloisonné trinkets, jade, gorgeous silks and tapestries, and hosts of items for women, brooches, umbrellas, handbags, and the rest, which the winners would be able to take home to their wives or girl friends. And the whole meet closed with a round of feasts with plenty of drinks and plans for future events.

There is no activity in these camps designed to subvert the prisoners away from loyalty to their own peoples and homelands. There is never a hint or an implication that a prisoner should change sides or renounce his right to repatriation. Quite the reverse: In the early days of the war when American captured troops (disillusioned by the fact that atom bombs, know-how, dollars and white skins had somehow not been able to save them from becoming captives of the Koreans and Chinese), were inclined to lie down and give up hope of life, it was the camp personnel who visited them and built up their morale by telling them to keep fit and well for their return home when the war ended. There was no interference by the camp authorities when these prisoners sent petitions to their governments urging that peace should be concluded in Korea on the basis that all prisoners, including themselves, should be repatriated. And the prisoners were able to contrast this with the massacre of prisoners on Koje for also wanting to be sent home.

Every policy in these camps is based on respect for human beings and on the belief that the common man does not choose of his own will to go thousands of miles to fight a people of whom he scarcely heard until he arrived in Korea. There could be no contradiction between the policy at the conference table and the policy in the POW camps – the return of all prisoners as soon as possible to their homes and families to lead a peaceful life.

### CHAPTER XIII

When the Americans broke off the truce talks, an approved armistice agreement had already been drafted by staff officers of both sides and drawn up in three languages, every word and comma agreed.

On the question of prisoners, Paragraph 51, Article 3 of this agreement, which is headed "Arrangements Relation to Prisoners of War," states:

"All prisoners of war held in the custody of each side at the time this Armistice Agreement becomes effective shall be released and repatriated as soon as possible. The release and repatriation of such prisoners of war shall be effected in conformity with lists which have been exchanged and have been checked by the respective sides prior to this Armistice Agreement."

This paragraph is in full accord with the provisions of the Geneva Convention. There is nothing in it to suggest that some prisoners should not be repatriated, or that any number less than all prisoners should be repatriated. Neither this paragraph, which is the key one, nor any other, contains any qualifying clause which suggests anything less than the full repatriation of all prisoners.

Paragraph 52 of the same Article was framed by the Korean-Chinese delegates in an effort to meet American objections that the return of more prisoners by one side than the other would provide a military advantage. It states:

“Each side insures that it shall not employ in acts of war in the Korean conflict any prisoner of war released and repatriated incident to the coming into effect of this Armistice Agreement.”

These are the only paragraphs containing questions of principle regarding the return of prisoners. The other paragraphs deal purely with matters of administration connected with the transfer of war prisoners.

For months before the American break-off, all 63 Paragraphs of the Armistice Agreement were complete and the only thing that remained to be done was for Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai to sign for the Korean-Chinese side in the spaces provided and for Mark Clark to sign for the “UN.” Hostilities would then cease within 12 hours of the signing. Both Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai announced their acceptance of the agreement but no similar acceptance was indicated by Mark Clark.

Instead the Americans abruptly and unilaterally broke off the talks after stating in advance that they had no intention of carrying out the agreement.

Every effort helpful to achieve a fair agreement acceptable to both sides, had been made on this as on other issues by the Korean-Chinese delegates. In addition to the parole of prisoners, it was agreed that Korean prisoners could return to their homes north or south of the cease-fire line if they wished.

In announcing their refusal to carry out the agreement, the Americans gave as their reason that they “feared for the lives” of those who had been forced to sign blood-petitions and had been tattooed while in their hands. To satisfy American “fears” a spokesman for the KPA and the Volunteers made a special announcement on behalf of Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai that it was known that certain prisoners while in captivity had been forcibly tattooed and made to sign documents under duress. The statement continued: “We know full well that such actions done while held, have never been done of their own free will, and also that all our people taken prisoner desire to return home. In the agreement with the other side, we have already guaranteed that, after their repatriation, all prisoners of war will reunite with their families, take part in the construction work of peace and lead a peaceful life.”

On October 8, the day chosen by the Americans to break off the talks, the Korean-Chinese delegates made a new proposal which included the main points of a previous American plan and which was a very great concession in the direction of meeting what appeared to be the American standpoint. Briefly, the proposal was that immediately the armistice went into effect, all prisoners should be brought to the demilitarised zone (which according to the agreement would be set up by the withdrawal of both sides' forces from the battle-line.) Here under the protection of their own side, the prisoners would be visited by joint Red Cross teams who would explain to them the terms of the Armistice Agreement and inform them that they were entitled to return home to a peaceful life. Then the prisoners would be classified according to nationality and residence and immediately released. The joint Red Cross teams would ensure that prisoners whose homes were in the north or south, regardless to which armies they had formerly belonged, would return to their homes if they wished.

General Harrison did not even listen to this proposal, much less discuss it. He fired off the old American ultimatum and stalked out of the tent, announcing that there would be no further meetings unless the Korean-Chinese side gave in to the American demand. News of the Korean-Chinese proposal was suppressed. Not a line of it crept into the press and the British Foreign Office had to admit that the only information they had of this proposal was what appeared in the London *Daily Worker*.

A week after the American walk-out, Generals Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai sent a letter to General Mark Clark. They requested that he should send Harrison back to Panmunjom so that "an armistice in Korea be speedily realised on the basis of the draft Korean Armistice Agreement." But the prospect of a formula that would "speedily" achieve an armistice was exactly what the Americans most feared. They had brought the truce negotiations to an end and they had no intention of starting them again. Harrison never returned to Panmunjom. But even at this stage, the Americans were too nervous of public opinion to declare the talks finished forever. They proclaimed that their action was an "indefinite recess"; the liaison officers of both sides still met occasionally to exchange letters and to investigate American violations of the neutrality agreements. Formally, talks were still in existence, but there were no talks.

In the meantime the question was being debated in the United Nations General Assembly. America's delegates made clear from the first that they were not going to use the UN sessions to try to get peace in Korea. By closing down the truce talks, America had faced the Assembly with the fact of continued war in Korea and Washington's policy was to muster support for enlarged and intensified war. In his opening statement Acheson made no reference to the Korean-Chinese compromise offer of October 8, nor to the letter of the two Commanders-in-Chief, which had already been circulated to the UN delegates. He made no reference to any effort to revive the truce talks, a fact which was widely and adversely commented on even in circles normally prepared to swallow any American line. Acheson cracked the whip over the heads of America's "allies" and demanded more gun-fodder. Further efforts to reach an armistice and even prospects of an armistice had been completely written off by Washington and the Pentagon.

“We must convince the aggressor,” Acheson asserted, “that continued fighting in Korea will cost him more than he can gain. This means training and commitment of troops and means food, clothing, material and money. I urge every member of the UN to look to its responsibility to support the common action in Korea....”

The theme of “more men and money for America’s war” was taken up by Hickerson, Acheson’s deputy, who a few days later cracked the whip even louder. “We intend to press hard in the General Assembly to get as many UN members as possible who have not done so to face up to their responsibilities in Korea. There should be more troops there now ready to continue the fighting as long as necessary....”

But the American “Joker” of voluntary repatriation, or as they now have re-named their invention “no-forced-repatriation,” turned out to have a lower value than they had believed. The American pro-war bloc was so jubilant over the apparent success of its truce-wrecking plans that they overreached themselves in their open enthusiasm for more and bigger wars. Western governments in general were under extreme pressure from their public to get peace in Korea and get it quickly. Although officially America’s “allies” had to pay lip-service to the “humanitarianism” of American policy, the public had been counting the corpses that this policy was costing. The sabre-rattling speeches of Acheson and Hickerson met with receptions that were cool to frigid. Even representatives of governments prepared to acquiesce in continuing the war felt that America should “observe the decencies” and cover up their aims in more diplomatic language – at least they should pretend to want peace.

So sharp was the reaction that in Acheson’s next speech, according to American agencies, he made several important, last-minute deletions, striking out his intended appeal for more troops and further military measures against Korea and China. As a substitute, and as the basis for pursuing the same policy less openly, Acheson insisted that the Assembly express a vote of confidence in American conduct of the war in Korea and of American conduct of the negotiations. But even this “good conduct medal” resolution, though most of the “Allies” promised support, looked as though it would have a very rough passage. The Arab-Asian nations, and even the Latin-American bloc showed signs of opposition. Some small nations, including Peru and Pakistan, made tentative feelers about first declaring a cease-fire in Korea and then solving the POW problem, but they were smartly slapped down by Acheson.

“Peace at no price” was the policy of the American delegates and they made little pretence to hide it. Even the faintest move towards peace filled them with horror and evoked threats and pressure against the “Allies.”

Two weeks after the session had begun, Vyshinsky, for the Soviet Union, proposed the setting up of a Commission of 11 powers to settle the Korean war and to arrange the peaceful unification of Korea. It would include states that had taken part in the war and others. Later he named the

United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, People's China, India, Burma, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, the Korean People's Democratic Republic and South Korea.

An interesting commentary, not only on the world-wide reaction to this constructive proposal of Vyshinsky, but also on the misgivings among important sections of the American middle-class, to the standard official practice of snubbing in advance all Soviet peace moves, was contained in an AP despatch on the Vyshinsky proposal, written on October 31. This well-informed report was also a warning that American policy had to find some alternatives to blatant and undisguised sabre-rattling.

“Despite the usual United States tendency to kill off every Russian proposal as a snare and a delusion,” commented AP, “Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky made a strong appeal to the mind of the world on the Korean question.... Vyshinsky's suggestion... sounds very reasonable to many both among America's allies and the neutrals.... You can expect considerable support from Asians, Middle-Easterns and Latin-Americans. And Britain has long been against any intransigence on the Allied side....”

The despatch went on to list most of the American arguments against Vyshinsky's proposal and pointed out that the objections were spurious. It warned that neutral nations were already joining in a movement to water down the American demand for a “good conduct medal” on its Korean performance.

“The Allies must keep their shirts clean in the eyes of the neutrals, and the US in the eyes of her Allies,” the AP report continued. “The Russian resolution is one of the least controversial they have ever introduced....”

This despatch – or warning – is an indicator to the way the more shrewd of American policy-makers were thinking. It was necessary to abandon the direct approach and find a new line. Even the “good conduct medal” resolution was doomed to failure. After days of pressurising in cigar-smoke filled lobbies, the maximum number of sponsoring states that could be rustled up was 21. For the Americans that awful moment appeared to be reached when control of the UN voting machine was slipping from their grasp. Support for the Vyshinsky resolution was evident among many delegations which normally voted automatically for the American “ticket.” Throughout Asia and the Middle East, and notably in India, the press was openly advocating the acceptance of the Soviet proposal. Typical of such comment was that of the *Hindustan Times*, one of the most influential of the Indian dailies, which urged UN members to accept the Soviet proposal “if the Soviets could be made to agree to a cease-fire in Korea on terms already agreed to by both parties, leaving the POW issue to be dealt with by the Commission itself.” This of course was precisely what Vyshinsky had proposed.

In spite, or perhaps because of the warm support in India for the Vyshinsky proposal, it was India that jumped in and rescued America from her dilemma. After more than a month of debate in the Assembly on the Korean issue, there was only one plan that commanded any support to end

the war – and that was the one put forward by Vyshinsky. America’s proposal was limited to demanding a pat on the back for past activities and what went with it, a clear road for anything Washington might feel disposed to do in the future. Vyshinsky’s plan was based firmly on international law, the Geneva Convention and the already-publicised draft Armistice Agreement. It commanded wide support among the Asian, Middle-Eastern and Latin-American countries and it made a strong appeal to world public opinion.

At this point the Indians put forward a new resolution, on November 17. It had two features which Krishna Menon, the Indian delegate, must have known beforehand could not be accepted. Contrary to international law, it recognised the principle of “voluntary repatriation” (under its new disguise of “no-forced-repatriation”), although it quoted almost too profusely from the Geneva Convention. Moreover it provided that one of the belligerents in the Korean war, the “United Nations,” would be the final judge on the fate of the prisoners. And the “United Nations” – as far as Korea is concerned – was the United States.

Although, as later events showed, this plan provided the perfect means for America “to keep its shirt clean” in the eyes of the neutrals and her Allies, Washington was taking no chances. Worried by the fact that Vyshinsky did not immediately give the Soviet opinion on the Indian plan, the Americans on general principles began to pour cold water on it. Behind the scenes, America still tried to push through the “good conduct medal” proposal. But other western powers, even those who had helped to sponsor the latter, began to back away from it. There were several meetings of the 21-nation sponsoring bloc, but this time even the cracking of the whip could not keep the partners lined up and the proposal had to be dropped.

Nothing was left but the Soviet and the Indian proposals. However far it fell short of America’s plans for extending the “hot war” in Asia, so soon to be announced by Eisenhower, the Indian plan provided a sure temporary measure for blocking an armistice. Still Washington made no move until Vyshinsky’s awaited announcement that it was unacceptable and then America became the most ardent champion of the Indian plan.

In an effort to bring this plan into line with the hopes of all the nations and peoples supporting his own proposal, Vyshinsky proposed amendments to the Indian plan which would have made it workable. On November 26, he proposed that the Indian plan be amended to provide for an immediate cease-fire; that the issue of prisoners of war must be dealt with in accordance with the direct stipulations and the general spirit of the Geneva Convention and that the four-power repatriation commission proposed by India, should be enlarged to the 11-power commission originally proposed by Vyshinsky, which would arrange not only for prisoner exchange but also for the unification of Korea.

Two days later, on November 28, Chou En-lai, China’s Foreign Minister, endorsed the Vyshinsky proposal for an immediate cease-fire based on the draft Armistice Agreement, with the setting up of an 11-power commission to settle the question of repatriating all prisoners of war and

“in the spirit of letting the Korean people achieve the unification of their own country under the supervision of this commission” to arrange for a peaceful settlement of the Korean question. The Korean People’s Government also endorsed the Vyshinsky proposal in similar terms.

India flatly rejected Vyshinsky’s amendments but showed herself perfectly compliant in accepting American alterations which would result in handing the Korean-Chinese prisoners of war over to the Americans to decide their fate.

While back-stage manoeuvring was going ahead to bring the Indian proposal fully into line with American wishes and give it, quite improperly, priority in the voting machine, a spate of oratory was let loose in the UN Assembly. Acheson, Warren Austin and others prated about the “humanitarian” ideals which would not allow them to agree to an immediate cease-fire while the fate of their prisoners was “uncertain,” and would not let the fate of any prisoners rest with an 11-power commission. Eden, Selwyn Lloyd, Hoppenot and the rest, their pockets newly jingling with American dollars for their own colonial wars in Malaya, Viet-Nam and Africa, produced variations of the same speeches – all notable for the nauseating repetition of the word “humanitarianism” and equally for the lack of any reference to the events on Koje, Cheju and elsewhere.

No misunderstanding of the Korean-Chinese viewpoint was possible when the UN General Assembly passed the Indian resolution. The powers concerned knew well that they were voting against a cease-fire in Korea and for continued war which in view of Eisenhower’s declarations, would be extended war in the Far East. The November 28 statement of Chou En-lai clearly affirmed China’s standpoint: “...both sides in the conflict should immediately cease all hostilities in accordance with the draft Armistice Agreement already agreed upon by both sides; that is, that both sides should cease all military operations by their ground, naval and air forces and that the question of repatriating all prisoners of war should be turned over for settlement to the ‘Commission for the Peaceful Settlement of the Korean Question’ as stipulated in the Soviet proposal....” Chou En-lai added that the prisoners’ question should be settled in accordance with the Geneva Convention and with international practice.

Completely ignoring this firm and peaceful statement, the General Assembly on December 3 steamrolled the Indian resolution through the voting machinery and solemnly sent it to the governments of China and Korea with the cynical preamble that it dealt with the prisoner question “under the terms of the Geneva Convention.” In fact the UN delegates concerned, and even Canada’s Foreign Minister Lester Pearson, who as President of the Assembly forwarded the message, frankly stated that “the principle of no forcible repatriation” maintained by the United States, was the sole basis for negotiating the Korean question.

Stripped of its fake-legal jargon the resolution of the General Assembly took over lock, stock and barrel the illegal policy of the United States, couched it in sly and tortuous phrases to deceive the public and added the extraordinary proposal that the “UN” as a belligerent should also have the part of umpire.



In a long and detailed reply to Lester Pearson on December 14, Chou En-lai pointed out that the Indian resolution provided that more than 100,000 Korean and Chinese prisoners should be technically “released” to a repatriation commission of neutral powers. Those “willing to go home” should be allowed to do so and those “unwilling to go home” should be delivered to the repatriation commission and later handed over to the “United Nations” for disposal. An umpire would be appointed and if there were disagreement on the umpire, the matter would be settled by the General Assembly. “The umpire is given a decisive role to play in the repatriation commission,” Chou En-lai stated. “The proposal to give the United Nations the final authority of appointing an umpire and the final authority of disposing of those prisoners of war allegedly unwilling to go home is really extremely absurd. Can it be that those delegates who sponsored and adopted this illegal resolution in the United Nations have really forgotten that the United Nations is one of the belligerent parties in the Korean war?”

Chou En-lai analysed in great detail the reasons why acceptance of the American ultimatum in its new “Indian cloak,” was impossible. “In reality, prisoners of war are those combatants of one side who are under the armed control and at the forcible disposal of their enemy and have no freedom. Release and repatriation is a right to which all prisoners of war of both sides are entitled as soon as an armistice comes into effect...” he said and listed many examples of coercion used against Korean and Chinese war prisoners. The United States, he said, “has in the prisoner of war camps under its control, placed large numbers of United States, Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek special agents posing as Korean and Chinese prisoners of war, to coerce prisoners of war to make declarations ‘refusing repatriation’... Prisoners of war who refused to submit were viciously beaten up by these special agents. And while these prisoners of war lay unconscious as a result of their serious injuries, these special agents took advantage of this either to tattoo these prisoners of war with humiliating marks of treason against their motherland against their will, or to dip the fingers of the prisoners of war in blood from their wounds, to forcibly affix their fingerprints to ‘screening’ petitions allegedly expressing ‘unwillingness to return home.’ These special agents even stained their own fingers with blood from the wounds of prisoners of war who had been cruelly beaten unconscious, to forge fingerprints.”

Chou En-lai charged that the General Assembly resolution had the aim of diverting the indignation of the world public from the criminal terrorism of the Americans. Even while the Assembly was debating the issue, the murder of prisoners was still going on. “According to figures revealed by United States and British news agency despatches alone, during the period October 14 to December 4, 1952, as many as 321 (the number known at that time – Authors) Korean and Chinese prisoners of war have been so killed and wounded. An average of six or seven Korean and Chinese prisoners of war thus fell victim every day. When you in the General Assembly adopted this illegal resolution, you pretended that nothing had happened, shedding crocodile tears and ranting about ‘humanitarian principles....’ All just people throughout the world cannot but be startled and stirred to anger at such degenerate actions of the General Assembly of the United Nations,” the Chinese Foreign Minister said. The deceptive argument that a commission

of neutral nations could handle the repatriation question was nullified by the presence of large numbers of planted special agents among the prisoners, Chou En-lai told Pearson. These agents would still be able to coerce the prisoners, whose state of mind had been complicated by the forcible tattooing and blood finger-printing. "Therefore," said Chou En-lai, "in a situation where prisoners of war are under the jurisdiction of a repatriation commission, it will be absolutely impossible to separate or isolate these agents from the Korean and Chinese prisoners of war. Only by directly delivering prisoners of war to their own side for protection can this be accomplished."

Moreover, said Chou En-lai, the capitulation of the Koreans and Chinese to American demands would make a cease-fire impossible and, in fact, the purpose of United States violence towards prisoners and their whole policy was aimed at wrecking the truce talks and prolonging and expanding the war in Korea. "... if we permit the ruthless subversion by the United States government of the principles of international law which safeguard international order and the human rights of prisoners of war, then the sufferings now visited on the Korean and Chinese prisoners of war will be visited to-morrow on the people of other nations who may become prisoners of war; likewise the calamities to-day endured by Korea and China as victims of aggression will to-morrow befall other nations in the world."

Chou En-lai then proposed the resumption of the truce talks at Panmunjom to bring about a complete armistice as a first step, based on the Armistice Agreement, with the question of war prisoners to be referred to the international commission proposed by Vyshinsky. Failure to carry out such a just policy would "all the more expose the United Nations as increasingly becoming a tool of the ruling clique of the United States in its preparations for war and for the extension of aggression. All those who support the war policies of the ruling clique of the United States must bear the grave responsibility for the consequences of such action," Chou En-lai concluded.

As a means to reach peace in Korea, the Indian resolution was from the outset farcical since both Chinese and Korean governments had announced in advance that such a plan was unacceptable. But the Americans were thereby able to claim virtuously that because the Koreans and Chinese had rejected the plan approved by the majority of states, the only thing to do was to intensify the war. And even before that vote was taken, General Mark Clark was digging round to find four more divisions for Korea.

The "Joker" designed by the US Psychological Warfare Branch and endorsed by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Truman and Acheson, had at last been played, and Washington had even succeeded in getting the powers which only three years earlier had enacted the Geneva Convention, to join them in violating its most important provisions. It had proved a costly trick. In the name of "voluntary repatriation" and pious phrases about the freedom and well-being of Korean and Chinese prisoners, more than 3,000 of those prisoners had been brutally done to death and wounded according even to incomplete figures given by the American press and the International Committee of the Red Cross; scores of thousands of Americans had been killed and wounded at the front as the result of using this "Joker," also according to minimised American figures;

countless Korean civilians had been wiped out in savage air bombings against civilian targets with the avowed aim of “bringing pressure on the talks”; germ warfare was carried out on a wide scale in North Korea and China and innumerable civilians in South Korea were butchered for alleged “partisan” activities.

As soon as the Indian plan was approved, the Americans cast aside any pretence at seeking peace in Korea and went straight ahead with their plans to enlarge the war in Korea and extend it to other parts of Asia. Eisenhower, after winning the presidential elections on the basis of his promise to end the Korean war, made use of the non-acceptance of the Indian plan by the Korean and Chinese governments as the main excuse to plan (a) American intervention in the “dirty war” being waged by the French against the peoples of Viet-Nam, (b) to revive the civil war in China by using American air and naval power to push the decrepit and discredited Chiang Kai-shek back onto the mainland, (c) to commit an act of war against China by laying down a naval blockade and (d) extending the Korean war by amphibian operations.

“Voluntary repatriation” by itself had been utterly discredited by the Koje events. It needed the Indian plan to carry it through and enable the governments of America’s satellites to continue the confusion of the public in the interests of America’s war aims. Whatever may have been the motives which inspired it, the Indian plan cleared the way for Washington’s plan of extended aggression in the Far East, with all its dangers of a new world war. The moves that Eisenhower took in that direction during his first month of office were the pay-off of “Operation Joker” – voluntary repatriation. Bloody Koje was one of the by-products of this sinister game of America’s millionaires to dominate the world or blow it to smithereens.

## CONCLUSION

The authors attended the cease-fire talks from the time they started until the Americans broke them off on October 8, 1952.

They were able to watch the day-by-day American tactics and manoeuvres at the talks. Unlike the “UN” correspondents they were fully informed and could always check points of fact with the records of the meetings. After the first few months, American aims were clear. They were to smash the talks and extend the war. But all the time the Americans were under the restraining pressure of world public opinion and their own allies. They could not openly wreck the talks without risking complete isolation.

As a result their tactics were to play for time and pretend to negotiate. Negotiating therefore meant for them, raising obstacles which they knew could not be accepted and which in the end could not be supported, and then relinquishing them under pressure of events or of public opinion. They never gave up one obstacle without raising another, equally unacceptable. At the end of this long line of obstacles, they had prepared one which they knew was insuperable – the retention of large numbers of Korean and Chinese prisoners.

There are many examples of these artificial obstacles of which we only quote one or two typical ones. At the outset of the talks they demanded 12,000 square kilometres of North Korea, north of the battle-line, as a “gift” while they publicly pretended to be asking for a cease-fire along the battle-line. When this was exposed, they broke off the talks and tried for two months to take this area by force. Only when their two major offensives of 1951 had been crushed did they return to the conference table. They abandoned their claim to 12,000 square kilometres and agreed to the Korean-Chinese proposal for a cease-fire line strictly along the battle-line-but they demanded Kaesong.

This demand for Kaesong, a city that was firmly in Korean-Chinese hands, was refused. After several unsuccessful attempts to take the city by force, they abandoned their claim to Kaesong but replaced it with the demand for unlimited supervision of North Korea, during an armistice of unspecified duration, including aerial reconnaissance and a ban on airfield and other construction projects.

During this period, they launched germ warfare on a large scale. This also failed and they backed down on these claims to interfere in the internal affairs of North Korea – but only when they had produced the “Joker” of voluntary repatriation. This was their last card and one they knew would not fail.

Their tactics in the truce talks and in the United Nations were identical – “peace at no price.” It was for this principle that thousands of prisoners were slaughtered.

On the other side, the Korean-Chinese attitude was made clear at the beginning. They wanted peace, and a peace that would guarantee a non-recurrence of the war. When the cease-fire talks began, their simple proposals could have brought about peace in a few days. They proposed a withdrawal of the forces of both sides north and south of the 38th parallel, the full exchange of prisoners, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea.

Their stand today is for an immediate cease-fire with the issue of prisoners to be settled by an international commission after the shooting stops. America’s policy is for more war, a bigger war, war with China and wars elsewhere in the Far East to commit China’s armies. It is easy for the world to judge which side wants peace and which wants war.

This booklet has presented the facts of American policy on the single issue of war prisoners, a limited task and its only one. But there is another and far more important side of the picture which must be mentioned to bring it to life.

The Americans tried on countless occasions to break off the truce talks. They raised the false issue of “voluntary repatriation” in January 1952. In February, the prisoners themselves exposed it as a bloody mask to hide their policy of extended war. Since that time, every effort made by the Americans to wreck the truce talks and intensify the war was countered by three factors: The enormous strength of the people’s forces in Korea; the limitless patience and remarkable negoti-

ating skill of the Korean-Chinese delegates and the bitter resistance of the public throughout the world to any policy likely to lead the world further into war. Every day thus gained for peace was of incalculable value in the major task of humanity – to win a durable peace. Every day gained still further upset the American time-table for world-wide aggression.

Millions of people in the world came to recognise for the first time during those months, the true face of American imperialism. At the same time the oppressed peoples in the colonial countries learned what giant forces had been set loose in China by the liberation of her people from the wedded evils of feudalism and foreign control. In Asia and Western Europe, too, the people contrasted the calm, fearless attitude of the Koreans and Chinese towards the Americans with the dollar corrupt servility of their “own” governments. They learned that for a handful of people in their own countries war is not dreadful but only dreadfully profitable and that peace must be defended in personal action against those forces that want war. Those lessons can never be unlearned and they will play a dynamic part in bringing peace to the world.

But although the ordinary people of America, Britain, France and the other “UN” powers learned much, their rulers saw nothing, learned nothing and forgot nothing. Incapable of realising what vast changes are taking place in the world, Washington interpreted every peaceful effort of the Koreans and Chinese at Panmunjom as a sign of weakness, and never gave up the hope of a military decision in Korea. Failure of offensives, of germ warfare, of their “strategic” bombing, only made them cling still tight to the war they could not win and to try to enlarge it into a threat that menaces the lives of all peoples in the world.

There is no unclarity about the standpoint of the Chinese and Korean peoples and their desire for peace – or their ability to defend themselves – so admirably summed up by Chairman Mao Tse-tung on February 7, 1953 in a speech to the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. He said:

“...American imperialism is insisting on keeping back the Chinese and Korean prisoners of war, disrupting the armistice negotiations and making wild attempts to extend the aggressive war in Korea.

“We want peace. However, so long as American imperialism does not give up its arrogant and unreasonable demands and its scheme to extend aggression, the sole determination of the Chinese people must be to go on fighting alongside the Korean people.

“It is not that we like war. We want to stop the war at once and leave the remaining questions for later settlement. But American imperialism prefers not to.

“Alright, then go on fighting. However many years American imperialism prefers to fight, we are ready to fight it, right up to the moment when American imperial-

ism prefers to quit, right up to the moment of complete victory for the Chinese and Korean people.”

There lies the choice – immediate cease-fire which the Chinese, Korean and all reasonable people want, or war spread throughout the Far East on the faked American-made issue of “voluntary repatriation.” By their actions, the ordinary peaceful people of the world can still ensure that the choice is peace and that the thousands of Korean and Chinese patriots who shed their blood on Koje did not do so in vain.

### THE AUTHORS

**Wilfred Burchett** has been a foreign correspondent for 13 years and is the author of a number of books on European and Far Eastern affairs.

Prior to reporting the Korean cease-fire negotiations for the French evening paper *Ce Soir*, Mr. Burchett had worked as a correspondent for *The Times* of London in the People’s Democracies. Throughout World War II, he served as a war correspondent in the Far East and Pacific areas for the London *Daily Express*, and after the war continued as foreign correspondent for the *Daily Express* in Berlin. In 1951 he went to Korea as correspondent for *Ce Soir* and covered the truce talks throughout. Wilfred Burchett was born near Melbourne, Australia, in 1911.

**Alan Winnington** has been in journalism for 17 years, the last 11 of which he has spent with the London *Daily Worker*. He was the only western journalist to cover the Chinese war with the People’s Liberation Army in 1948 and 1949. Later he was the first journalist to enter Korea from the north after the war began and to travel south with the Korean People’s Army. He covered the Korean truce talks from the beginning until the American walk-out. Mr. Winnington is 42 years old, London born.



If you have been moved by the tragedy of the Chinese and Korean Prisoners of war held on Koje Island, and their epic struggle for their right to return home, you can help to win their repatriation, and friendship with the great Peoples' Republic of China by joining the

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TOKYO, THURSDAY, JAN 31-(AP) -FRANK NOEL (PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAS BEEN HELD FOR 14 MONTHS IN A NORTH KOREAN PRISON CAMP, SENT OUT HIS SECOND BATCH OF PICTURES TODAY. HEAVILY CENSORED BY THE REDS, THE PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWED AMERICAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH PRISONERS OF WAR IN APPARENT GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS IN THE COMMUNIST NO.5 PRISONER OF WAR CAMP AT PYOKDONG NEAR THE YALU RIVER.

NOEL, WHO WAS CAPTURED AT THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR NOV. 29, 1950, SCORED A SENSATIONAL WORLD BEAT FIVE DAYS AGO WHEN HE MANAGED TO SEND OUT HIS FIRST PICTURES. NOW 52, HE IS KNOWN AS "PAPPY."

TODAY'S GROUP INCLUDED 22 SEPARATE PHOTOS--ALL CLEARED FIRST BY THE COMMUNIST CENSORS AT KAESONG AND LATER BY THE AMERICAN CENSORS IN TOKYO.

THE COMMUNIST CENSORSHIP WAS SEVERE IN SOME CASES. THE DEVELOPED NEGATIVES WERE CROPPED SHARPLY AT SPOTS. ONE PHOTO WAS RESTRICTED TO A SINGLE MAN.

LIKE THE FIRST GROUP, THESE WERE THE PRODUCT OF A CHAIN OF PROLONGED WORK AND NEGOTIATIONS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS AND CORRESPONDENTS COVERING THE PANMUNJOM ARMISTICE TALKS.

MAX DESFOR, THE AP'S PHOTO CHIEF IN TOKYO, HIMSELF A PULITZER PRIZE WINNER, SAID:

"PAPPY IS IN GOOD FORM. HIS NEGATIVES ARE SHARP AND CLEAR. ONE OF THEM IS SO SHARP YOU CAN ALMOST READ A COPY OF THE SHANGHAI NEWS TACKED UP ON A WALL. IN ANOTHER SHOT, SHOWING MEN PLAYING CARDS, YOU CAN SEE THAT THE CARDS ARE IMPROVISED FROM SOME KIND OF PRINTED CARDBOARD.

"IT'S JUST LIKE HAVING PAPPY BACK ON THE STAFF. WE'VE HAD 27 PICTURES WITH CAPTIONS FROM HIM IN THE LAST FIVE DAYS. THAT'S A GOOD AVERAGE FOR ANY WAR PHOTOGRAPHER EVEN WHEN HE ISN'T IN A PRISON CAMP."

AP CORRESPONDENT ROBERT TUCKMAN AND AP PHOTOGRAPHER ROBERT H. SCHUTZ FIRST BROACHED THE IDEA OF GETTING PICTURES FROM NOEL TO THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS ON THE COMMUNIST SIDE, PARTICULARLY WILFRED BURCHETT, CORRESPONDENT FOR THE LEFTIST PARIS NEWSPAPER, CE SOIR.

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO BURCHETT UNDERTOOK, WITH HIGH COMMUNIST PERMISSION, TO TAKE AN AP CAMERA AND KIT TO NOEL'S CAMP.

ON JAN. 26 BURCHETT HANDED SCHUTZ FIVE NOEL NEGATIVES PLUS SIX PICTURES OF NOEL HIMSELF TAKEN BY A CHINESE PHOTOGRAPHER. SCHUTZ CARRIED THESE TO TOKYO AND THEY WERE RADIOED TO THE UNITED STATES.



TODAY'S 22 CAME THE SAME WAY.

BURCHETT TOLD AP PHOTOGRAPHER GEORGE SWEERS TO BE READY TODAY, AND WHEN THE U.N. PARTY REACHED PANMUNJOM BURCHETT HANDED OVER THE NEGATIVES.

SWEERS RACED HIS JEEP TO SEOUL, WHERE AP CORRESPONDENT GEORGE MCARTHUR GRABBED THEM, HOPPED A PLANE TO TOKYO AND DELIVERED THEM TO

DESFOR AT TOKYO'S HANEDA AIRPORT. MINUTES LATER THEY WERE CLEARING THE U.S. MILITARY CENSORSHIP AND SELECTED PRINTS WERE BEING SENT BY RADIO-PHOTO TO THE U.S.

A172KX

FROM COMMUNIST HANDS IN NORTH KOREA TO PUBLICATION IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS TOOK NO LONGER THAN EIGHT HOURS.

WHY THE COMMUNISTS PERMIT SUCH A GOOD WILL GESTURE IS HARD TO EXPLAIN, EXCEPT THAT THEY UNDOUBTEDLY FEEL IT HAS SOME PROPAGANDA VALUE FOR THEM.

WHILE THE PHOTOS DO NOT PRETEND TO SHOW THE WHOLE TRUTH IN THE RED PRISON CAMPS, THEY DO SHOW THAT THE MEN PHOTOGRAPHED, AT LEAST, ARE APPARENTLY IN GOOD CONDITION, SEEM WELL CARED FOR, AND CAN STILL SMILE AND AMUSE THEMSELVES.

B1222PCS NM

X

AP NY 1 1984 ANSWERING

VIA TWX

SAN FRANCISCO JAN 25 1952

PLEASE GIVE TO MR GOULD--

TOKYO 26/1 NEWSPHOTOS FOR GOULD RESCH NEWYORK-- CHRISTMAS  
PIX PACKAGE CONTAINED FIVE NEGATIVES MADE BY PAPPY AND SIX IN  
WHICH HE APPEARS. NAMES AND RANKS OF SUBJECTS CHECK WITH ORIGINAL  
POW LIST HANDED OVER BY COMMIES WITH ONLY TWO VERY MINOR DIS-  
CREPANCIES. ALL BEING PRINTED NOW. WILL FILE RADIOWISE THE FIVE  
PLUS TWO OF PAPPY, IN ORDER THEY WILL BE FIRST TWO AMERICANS AND  
ONE BRITISHER PLAYING CARDS WITH A CHINESE VOLUNTEER. SECOND PAPPY  
PAPPY HOLDING CAMERA TALKING WITH WHITE ROBED MEDIC. THIRD, FIVE  
AMERICANS IN GROUP INTERIOR. FOURTH, AMERICAN SOLDIER LYING IN  
BED HAVING HAND BANDAGED ATTENDED BY TWO MEDICS AND A NURSE.  
FIFTH TWO AMERICANS FULL LENGTH WALKING EXTERIOR SIXTH, THREE  
AMERICANS FULL LENGTH STANDING EXTERIOR. SEVENTH, CLOSEUP HEAD  
SHOT PAPPY. SHOULD BE READY TO FILE IN ABOUT ONE HOUR, SUGEST  
IMMEDIATE REPLY IF IF WANT REVERSE ANY ORDER. EUNSON WILL CABLE  
LATER THIS MORNING BALANCE CLARIFYING MATERIAL PER YOUR OVERHEAD.  
I WILL NEXT MESSAGE FULL NAMES AND HOMETOWNS WHEN PIX FILED.  
MESSAGE FROM PAPPY SAYS QUOTE JUST GOT EVELYNS LETTER OF  
NOVEMBER 15--AND VERY GLAD. MADE A RECORDING TO HER AND YOU  
LAST NIGHT UNQUOTE. ENTIRE NOTE WILL BE FORWARDED WITH NEGATIVES  
IN TODAYS SHIPMENT. DESFOR

HAROLD TURNBLAD

FX JAN 25 JW1054APS NM

NY1-1984

AP SAN FRANCISCO FOR AP NEW YORK

PLEASE GIVE FOLOWING TO MR. GOULDS DESFOR MESSAGES"

"FILED SEVEN RADIOWISE.

INFORMATIVELY THESE NOT CLEARED BY CENSOR WHO WANTS COLONEL WELCH TO PASS THEM. CENSOR ON DUTY WILLING GO SO FAR ONLY TO OKAY TWO ON PAPPY. WE PRESSING HARD FOR CLEARANCE HOWEVER MY STAND IS THAT THESE NOT MATTER FOR U.N. CENSORSHIPS CITING GENERAL DEAN AS ONE PRECEDENT AND EASTFOTO DISTRIBUTION SAME TYPE PHOTOS OUT OF NEW YORK OR OTHER POINTS AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE." AS WE READ THIS PICTURES ARE ACTUALLY ON FILE. HOPEFUL FUMBLING BY CENSOR WILL NOT DELAY TRANSMISSION. WILL KEEP YOU POSTED. MEANWHILE ASKED EUNSON FOR STORY ON WHOLE PROJECT TO GO WITH PICTURES.

HAROLD TURNBLAD

MH1159APS

PLS ACK

OKAPNY

OF

ASG  
cc to FAR



Frank Noel, 52-year-old Pulitzer prize winner, is seen here as he holds once again the tools of his trade—a camera—at POW camp in North Korea. The camera was taken north to him from Panmunjom in a Communist courier after Reds approved scheme.



### By Clarke Bustard

#### All Photographs by Frank Noel, Prisoner of Reds.

**M**ONTHS of anxious waiting and dawning ended for many American families on January 20. For more than a year and a half prior to that time, there had been nothing of a substantive nature from behind the Communist lines in Korea to confirm repeated enemy claims that Americans held prisoner were being accorded civilized treatment.

Foremost in the minds of the great majority of relatives of American troops missing in action or acknowledged prisoners of war were the reports of the United States Eighth Army of mass enemy atrocities—reports that had caused a wave of revulsion to sweep into every corner of the nation. Denied visits by International Red Cross representatives and other responsible persons, the prisoners, for all we in this country knew, were being subjected to the same horrors associated with the horrendous prisoner camps maintained by the Japanese during World War II.

#### Outlook Grows Brighter

But on January 20, this outlook changed, supplanted by a much brighter picture. It was on that date that the first pictures made by Frank (Pappy) Noel, 52-year-old veteran Associated Press photographer, were transmitted from Tokyo to the United States. These were pictures of Americans held captive, pictures made by a recognized American photographer—himself a prisoner

—and accompanied by captions which served to allay the worst fears built up over the seemingly endless months.

Noel has been a prisoner for about 15 months. He was taken with a small band of marines in the area of the Changjin Reservoir in Northeast Korea in October, 1950. Not until the exchange of prisoner-of-war lists was made at Panmunjom on December 18 was there corroborative evidence that he was still alive. Once the fact was established that Noel was a prisoner, his associates in Korea went to work to put a camera in his hands once again.

#### Supplied Camera, Film

Arrangements were made with Communist correspondents at the Panmunjom truce site to intercede with enemy officials to obtain permission for a camera and film to be supplied to Noel. A courier was assigned, and the equipment handed him over a back fence at the truce site. (An agreement for "pooling" pictures had been dropped by unanimous consent of the major news services only three weeks before, thus giving Noel's service a world-wide picture "beat," if the photographs could be obtained.)

Five days after delivery of the camera, Noel's first batch of pictures was delivered back to Panmunjom, together with captions supplied by him which cleared both Communist and Allied censorship. Their receipt in this country was an event of major import, especially to the families of men held captive.

There were ominous undertones on February 7, however, when a statement was issued by the public information office at Tokyo to the effect that some newsmen had been abusing their privileges at Panmunjom. The statement mentioned "unofficial and personal arrangements with the enemy to deliver modern camera equipment into the prisoner-of-war camps . . . to receive photographs taken in Communist prison camps . . ."

This statement brought a sharp retort from the chief of the Associated Press bureau in Tokyo, who roundly criticized the public information chief, Colonel George P. Welch. In a statement issued the following day, the AP's Robert Euston said, "I personally gave Welch my word that the Associated Press made no bargain with the Communist correspondent who passed the camera along to Noel . . . We foresaw the heartwarming response with which the families of these unfortunate United Nations soldiers would receive the photos . . . Every photo . . . was submitted to censorship in Tokyo. News stories explained in detail how the camera was passed to Noel (and) were cleared by Welch's censors and seen by Welch himself.

... James Wells, of Mineola, Texas, is checked and looks a bit worried as he is given a physical check by a Chinese Red doctor. The doctor says that men in POW camps were getting expert medical attention from enemy.



Pfc. Frederick Brazee, of Terryville, Conn., smilingly displays a lipstick-signed letter he received recently from the 'girl back home' at the Pyokdong POW camp. Such messages are prized by men who have languished in enemy prisons for months without word from home.



Prisoners sport Communist winter garb. Lieutenant Harold Stahlman, of Nashville, and Captain Fred L. Speers, of Maryville.



Pfc. Billy Jones, Sonora, Texas; Cpl. Robert Crawford, Jr., Carthage, Mo., and Cpl. J. E. Hamon, Wadsworth, Ohio (from left), play a game at their POW barracks.

443WX  
A43KX (NOEL AHEAD)

BY ROBERT EUNSON ( GDC )

TOKYO, SATURDAY, JAN. 26-(AP)-FOURTEEN MONTHS AFTER BEING CAPTURED BY THE CHINESE IN NORTH KOREA, ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER FRANK NOEL GOT A CAMERA IN HIS HAND AND WENT BACK TO TAKING PICTURES.

THE 1942 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER IS STILL HELD BY THE COMMUNISTS, BUT HIS FIRST PICTURES, TAKEN INSIDE THE ENEMY PRISON CAMPS, CAME THROUGH TO TOKYO TODAY.

ALL OF THE PICTURES WHICH AP PHOTO EDITOR MAX DESFOR RADIOED TO SAN FRANCISCO, HAD TO PASS BOTH CHINESE COMMUNIST CENSORS AT PYONGYANG AND U. S. ARMY CENSORS IN TOKYO.

COMMUNIST CORRESPONDENTS TOLD THE AP'S ROBERT TUCKMAN AT PANMUNJON THAT CHINESE CENSORS WITHHELD SEVERAL OF NOEL'S PHOTOS.

NOEL, WHO IS A LEGEND AMONG HIS FELLOW PHOTOGRAPHERS, SUPPOSEDLY HADN'T HAD A CAMERA IN HIS HAND SINCE NOV. 23, 1950, WHEN HE AND A SMALL GROUP OF MARINES WERE CAPTURED NEAR THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR.

"HOW CAN THIS HAPPEN? HOW IS IT POSSIBLE? WHEN DO WE START, TOMORROW?"

THESE, ACCORDING TO WILFRED BURCHETT OF THE PARIS PAPER, CE SOIR, WERE "PAPPY" NOEL'S FIRST WORDS WHEN HE SAW THE FAMILIAR BROWN CARRYING CASE CONTAINING CAMERA, FLASH BULBS AND FILM PACKS.

THE EQUIPMENT HAD BEEN CARRIED SINCE THE ARMISTICE TALKS BEGAN BY ROBERT SCHUTZ, ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER FROM NEW YORK.

WHEN NOEL'S NAME APPEARED ON THE LIST OF PRISONERS THE REDS TURNED OVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEC. 15, SCHUTZ AND CORRESPONDENT TUCKMAN BEGAN TRYING TO PERSUADE THE COMMUNIST CORRESPONDENTS TO TAKE NOEL A CAMERA.

WHILE THE TRUCE DELEGATIONS WERE IN SESSION, TUCKMAN AND SCHUTZ SPENT MANY AN HOUR WALKING UP AND DOWN THE CORRIDOR AT PANMUNJON WITH BURCHETT AND WITH ALAN WINNINGTON OF THE LONDON DAILY WORKER AND CHU CHI-PING, OF THE TA KUNG PAO OF PEKING.

FINALLY, ON JAN. 2, BURCHETT TOLD SCHUTZ THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD

ARCKX

SO THAT OTHER CORRESPONDENTS AT FANMUNJOM WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT HE WAS DOING, SCHUTZ SLIPPED HIS CAMERA TO CHU OVER A FENCE IN THE BACKYARD OF ONE OF THE BUILDINGS IN THE CONFERENCE AREA.

THAT WAS THE LAST TIME SCHUTZ SAW HIS CAMERA. BUT TODAY HE FLEW TO TOKYO WITH NOEL'S PICTURES. THEY WERE HANDED TO TUCKMAN YESTERDAY AT FANMUNJOM.

BEFORE ENCOURAGING THE RED CORRESPONDENTS TO DELIVER NOEL A CAMERA AND PERSUADE THE COMMUNISTS TO LET HIM USE IT, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT HE WAS IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS.

PICTURES OF NOEL, RECEIVED IN HIS FIRST PACK, INDICATE THIS REPORT WAS TRUE.

"OUTSIDE OF NEEDING A SHAVE, HE LOOKS FINE," SAID PHOTO EDITOR DEEGER, A CLOSE FRIEND OF NOEL.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE SCHUTZ HANDED OVER HIS CAMERA HAS TO BE PIECED TOGETHER FROM INFORMATION WHICH LEAKED THROUGH TO CORRESPONDENTS AT FANMUNJOM.

FIRST THERE WAS A DELAY BECAUSE THE CHINESE PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAD AGREED TO CARRY THE CAMERA FROM KAESONG TO PYONGYANG DIDN'T GET HIS ORDERS.

WHEN THE EQUIPMENT REACHED PYONGTONG, WHERE NOEL IS HELD IN PRISON CAMP NO. 2, THE RED COMMANDER WAS MOST COOPERATIVE, REALIZING THE PROPAGANDA VALUE OF HAVING A PHOTOGRAPHER OF FRANK'S CALIBER TAKE PICTURES WHICH WOULD BE SENT TO THE UNITED STATES.

NOEL, WHO IS 32 AND KNOWN GENERALLY THROUGHOUT THE BUSINESS AS "PAPPY" WENT TO WORK IMMEDIATELY.

"I CERTAINLY WAS THE MOST SURPRISED PERSON IN THIS WORLD," NOEL SAID IN A LETTER TO TUCKMAN, WHOM HE HAD WORKED WITH IN ALBANY, N. Y.

AG/RX

NOEL ADDED HE WAS "VERY HAPPY TO GET MY HAND IN AFTER A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR.

"GOT A LATE START AND HAVE ONLY THIS ONE FILM PACK. THE FIRST FIVE WERE MADE IN THE HOSPITAL WHERE THE MEN HAVE PLENTY OF MEDICAL CARE AND ARE GETTING IN GOOD SHAPE. THERE WILL BE MORE OF THESE HOSPITAL SHOTS WHEN I GET A FULL DAY TO WORK. HAD HOPED TO SEND THREE OR FOUR PACKS IN THE FIRST SHIPMENT, BUT THE COURIER LEAVES EARLY IN THE MORNING.

"THE REST OF THE PACK SHOWS GROUP SHOTS, WHICH I DO NOT LIKE TO MAKE, AND THE NEGATIVES TO COME WILL SHOW SMALL GROUPS DOING SOMETHING, CHOPPING WOOD, IN THE GALLEY, PLAYING CARDS AND OTHER FEATURE SETUPS.

"THIS DEAL CERTAINLY IS A GOOD ONE AND I WILL TRY TO PRODUCE ENOUGH GOOD COPY AT THIS END TO WARRANT THE WORK YOU PEOPLE HAVE DONE THERE. THERE IS A WORLD OF GOOD COPY HERE AND TONS OF HOME TOURERS.

"IF I CAN GET ENOUGH FILM AND BULBS AND FRESH BATTERIES, I'LL KEEP THE FACTS GOING IN YOUR DIRECTION.

"I'M STILL PINCHING MYSELF.

"THE VERY BEST TO YOU AND SCHUTZ. WOULD WRITE MORE, BUT 'IN A HURRY.

"F. N."

FJG14PCS



AIR MAIL

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO

May 26, 1953

Executive Editor Gould  
New York

Dear Alan:

Here is a copy of the latest letter from Pappy Noel. It was written to Bob Tuckman on March 21. We thought you and Al Resch would like to see it and may be pass on to Mrs. Noel the extra copy we are enclosing.



Sincerely,

*Olen Clements*

Olen W. Clements  
News Editor

OWC:ty

*Copy to Mrs Noel - 6/1/53  
" & FAR "*

ROBERT EUNSON  
CHIEF OF BUREAU

So if you'll do this little thing for me Max, Eunson, Huth, Waugh, Boyle and about every body else in and out of the office, I'll owe you another debt of gratitude. I would love to have seen Whitehead when he came out with Ike. I love to hear Don sing his folksongs while Boyle gums up the atmosphere with his nickle cigars. It will be a wonderful day when I can see those hands again.

There is a good little library operating and I help pass the time reading. A good variety of material by Upton Sinclair, Steinbeck, Jack London, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, etc. etc. and a variety of pictorial magazines of which the Chinese do a very good job with theirs. The Czech and German magazines are my favorites as I see many places and persons I have made photos of.

The winter here was very mild, only a couple of weeks of real cold but our uniforms are warm and the quarters heated. That at least has been in our favor even if the Armistice talks were not.

I'm planning very strong on meeting Evelyn in Tokyo and after a few days there will be ready for a good sea trip back home and have been dreaming of a route through the Suez and Mediterranean and you can pass the word on to Resch and Gould that I'm ready, willing and rarin' to pick up where I left off anyplace. Evelyn has been a swell gal in keeping her chin up although I'm not surprised as she is of solid temper. She and Lady Gascoigne keep up quite a correspondence which started over my dog. Is Mrs. Lindsey Parrott still in Tokyo?

C O P Y

March 21 - 1953

Dear Stretch. Brother!

Your letter written the day after Christmas was a terrific shot in the arm to me! And I thank you many, many times for it and passing on to Evelyn and Gould about your short visit with Burchett. Burchett and I did have a couple of good visits and fun, especially appreciated when he showed up here as he and I knew each other in Berlin during the blockade days. He and Chu Chi Ping have a warm place in my heart and I hope someday to meet them under different circumstances.

Especially welcome was the good news about Jim Pringle being back on the job. The lucky stiff getting reassigned to Rome.

One thing I'm thankful for is my health is first class and also it is comforting to know the Chinese have very good medical facilities, just in case my frame should start acting up.

Tell Sweers if he still writes to any of the Star or Times crowd that I make a special effort for Pete Wellington to locate some POW's who live in Kansas City or nearby. I have not located many but I keep looking for them as Pete is one of my favorite ex-bosses and Kansas City a very pleasant memory and a town I'd like to settle in when that time comes about 20 years from now.

We are allowed 3 letters a month and I have been saving mine for Evelyn and she in turn passes on whatever little news I might have.

Tuck, there isn't a thing I need and I realize and appreciate very much the thought of the staffers wanting to send me something now and then. Anything I would ask for would be in the luxury department and we can make up for lost time in that division later, but good! I'm still so pleased over your letter, just like an 8-year-old with his first midget size bicycle. I've read it a dozen times. I'll be darn glad to see the clippings as that will give me some idea of how the copy was used. I've nominated you to be the vice-president in charge of "the very warmest personal regards" department. So if you'll do this little chore for me to the working stiffs such as Schutz, Achatz, Max, Eunson, Huth, Waugh, Boyle and about every body else in and out of the N.Y. office, I'll owe you another debt of gratitude. I would love to have seen Whitehead when he came out with Ike. I love to hear Don sing his folksongs while Boyle gums up the atmosphere with his nickle cigars. It will be a wonderful day when I can see those hands again.

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2-

Tuck, if you can locate Bob Blake, he was Public Relations when I was in Tokyo. I left my wrist watch and portable typewriter with him. The watch was a wedding anniversary gift Evy got for me in Switzerland and I'd like to have someone get it and send it on to her. Incidentally, Blake is oneswell guy and perhaps he has already sent it back along with the portable. Will see if I can get a letter off to Eunson and Al one of these days if I can think of anything new to write them.

I get in about a mile walk every day, around the lake edge, visit my donkey and nule friends. If the weather is nice, sit on a rock and do some reading or day dreaming. You'll probably see some photos one of these days of my favorite and championship baseball and volley ball teams in their new uniforms which were given to the Camp 2 teams who came here for an inter camp championship athletic meet. They look snappy and were also runner up for the basketball championship.

Tell Al and Bill Brown I'd like to be able to keep the groups down to no more than 4 men but due to the shortage of film get as many faces as is within reason, thinking more of numbers due to the parents and relations I have in mind.

So long for now, Tuck and again thanks muchly for the letter.

Noel.

27/12/1968

Dear Alan,

Merry Xmas and all that. Not to mention a hilarious New Year. Sorry you didn't stay a little longer in Paris. There were one or two little things I would like to have shown you.

At present I am in the old Corsair port of St. Malo. I don't know what the corsairs were like, but the lobsters, crabs, lamb and calvados are wonderful. Having a few quiet days over Xmas.

What I'm really writing about is the old question of my passport. Things are warming up. Not that I really count on getting it, but the possibility of shoving in pins and needles are increasing. After I secured the release of the "duck-feather king" from the NFL, things moved a bit. A high-level committee has been formed, headed by the former head of the Labour Party, Calwell and including the present deputy-head (I think) J. Cairns, various pasteurs, writers and so forth, to fight my case and present a petition to parliament when it meets in March.

Do you have the address of Andy Condon? What I would like would be a statement by him or one of his pals, to the effect of my real activities in the camps. After all I only relayed the news of the Panmunjom talks, brought them books, needles and thread and that sort of thing. Would one of them, or even more than one, say so? Anyway I would like to write to Andy, outlining what I need and have his reactions.

In Australia I am trying to do the same thing. Contacting the bird who went out on patrol sans teeth. After all what did we do for them. Beer and fags. In other words, I would like to have a well-documented dossier prepared in a quiet sort of way that would cut the ground from under the feet of the bureaucrats.

Also - do you have the exact quote from the White Paper? Or even the exact references to this so I could get a copy or have someone get quotes from it. I know I was accused of the dastardly crime of having interested myself in POW's mail! In a word, you can see what I'm after. Anything you can contribute in the way of ideas would be heartily welcomed.

Had a fabulous trip to New York. Received by the editorial boards of Life, New York Times, CBS, by U Thant (still secret as far as the press is concerned), by old left, new left, traditional left, more lunches, dinners, breakfasts than I could digest. Very interesting, very useful. Nixon wants to make friends with China. And end the Vietnam war. And all sorts of other things.

Let's hear from you.

All the best for 1969.

had previously known him from the Australian Embassy in Chungking.

(c) I deny having made any films on the POW camps, or of ever having made films with Alan Winnington. We were never in the POW camps at the same time. (d) I deny having drafted a statement for 23 American prisoners refusing to be repatriated. (e) I deny ever having sought "immunity" from prosecution firstly because I do not acknowledge ever having done anything warranting prosecution and secondly because it would be beneath my dignity. On the contrary I have repeatedly said - I enclose a press clipping to prove it - that if the Australian government has charges to make against me, let them make them and I'll fight back.

Burchett "elected not to return" is nonsense. I was settled down in Hanoi at that time with my wife and two children and had no intention of returning.

I enclose a copy of the original "Reporter" article to which I have recently made a 10,000 word rebuttal. Warner has lied, and demonstrably so in every paragraph and seemed incapable of getting the slightest fact, even the non-controversial ones - straight.

I hope to come to London on February 14 for a week and will telephone you for an appointment before I come.

Yours faithfully;

W.G. Burchett

P.S. I enclose some background on myself, my situation, the setting up of a Burchett Passport Committee, and a couple of letters from a cousin and supporter of mine to the Australian prime minister.

PSS Confirming what I said on the telephone, I would like you to undertake whatever action you think appropriate and see the Melbourne Herald, Warner and the distributors for whatever sum you think fit. I shall be responsible for whatever costs or fees are involved but I shall await your advice before a final decision on issuing a libel suit.

29/1/1969

Dear Andy,

As we are still in the month of January at the moment of writing, I think I can still wish you a happy and successful New Year for 1969. I am hoping very much that it is the year which will bring peace to the long-suffering Vietnamese people.

I got your address from Alan Winnington and for a very special reason which I set out hereunder as the legal experts say.

As you probably know, my passport was taken away because of the Korean business - I suppose. I actually physically lost the British passport I had been using on my way back to Hanoi after the 1955 Bandung Conference. I reported the loss to the British Consul and asked for a replacement. He referred the matter to London and the reply was that as an Australian, only the Australian government could give me a passport. That was in May, 1955. The Australian government has persistently refused ever since, without ever giving a reason.

At the moment, there is a campaign going on in Australia, about this, for the restoration of my constitutional rights, ~~and~~ including the issuance of a passport. A very high-level "Burchett Passport Committee" has been set up with people like the former leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Calwell, a number of Labour M.P's (including the present deputy leader of the Labour Party, Cairns,) ministers of religion, lawyers, writers etc.) in it.

The main, real charge against me that emerges in the press, where I have one or two real, fascist-type enemies, is that I "brain-washed" etc. and took part in the interrogation of British and Australian POW's in Korea.

I quote a few typical bits of rubbish:

" In 1953, the British Ministry of Defence accused Burchett of having 'actively engaged in brain-washing procedures' in prisoner of war camps where British and Australian prisoners were tortured...."

"Corporal George Smith of Florida said Burchett stood outside a prison camp and shouted insults at hungry Americans...."

"A ~~team~~ team of Australian investigators subsequently obtained affidavits from prisoners who had been interrogated by Burchett..."

And so on, and so on. The press in Australia is in general sympathetic to my ~~case~~ case. There was a devil of a row recently for instance, when Sir Oswald Mosely was allowed into Australia, while I am kept out. But the lie that I "brain-washed" POW's sticks.

Incidentally, the remark about the British Ministry of Defence is nonsense. The writer was in fact referring to the "Blue Book" on "Treatment of British prisoners of War in Korea", of which I enclose an extract sent me by Alan.

I was wondering whether you and - in case you are in touch with some of the other former inmates of the camps - could make some statement about my real role in the various visits I made. Of course I never took part in any interrogations or "brain-washing". On several occasions I collected books, needle and thread, flints for lighters and such things, a good proportion of them bought with my own money, but some of the books contributed by the foreign community in Peking, to bring to the camps.

What were the "lectures"? In fact I was allowed by the Chinese to inform the POW's that peace talks were going on, what was the state of the talks, and I believe I presented a very factual picture of what was the situation, exactly as I presented them in my newspaper articles and subsequent books. I remember getting a letter signed by the Camp Committee in Camp 5, thanking me for books and things. I took similar gifts down to Camp 1. But of course the letter has long since ~~been~~ been lost. It is true as the "Blue Book" states that I "collected prisoners mail" but this was exclusively to speed matters up. I think on several occasions I took batches of mail down to Panmunjom and handed it over to British correspondents there.

The British must have had precious little against me to have written off my activities in that three line reference, especially considering they went to some lengths to attack Alan. (Alan incidentally, and as you know, did get his passport back, but I am still away out in the cold.)

If you could do something along the lines I suggested, it would be a really tremendous thing and I really believe would just turn the tide in my fight. I leave it to you. I am in Paris "covering" the Vietnam peace talks, but I am now ~~able~~ able to come to England. Next time, we must certainly have a beer together. Write me anyway about

16/o Northwood Hall  
Hornsey Lane  
Highgate  
London, N.6.

February 6, 1969

Dear Wilfred,

It was nice to hear from you again after such a spell. I have, of course, followed your published pieces with interest.

After a couple of somewhat unsettled years finding my feet and taking up once again the threads of life here, I am now more or less flourishing in a reasonably favourable environment. Both Jacqueline and I are working, of course. It's the only way one can live a fairly comfortable life in London, anyway.

My apologies for being a wee bit late in getting this letter to you. Jacqueline was in the terminal stages of pregnancy. Our second child, a girl, was born at eleven a.m. this morning. Weight: 7\* lbs. Mother and daughter doing fine. Ian, our boy, will be nine this year.

Please don't forget to get in touch when you come to London. My phone number is FITzroy 2873. And if there is anything you'd like help with at this end - meeting you at the airport, transport, etc. - don't hesitate to let me know. You have no small number of favours totted up in my particular balance sheet; and I never was one to forget friends.

Looking forward to seeing you soon. Kindest regards to you and your family.

PS. I have written to several of the other chaps, and I think they will respond. How could they not?



710)



1G/6 Northwood Hall  
Hornsey Lane  
Highgate  
London, N.6.

February 4, 1969

To Whom it May Concern:

Whilst serving with 41 Independent Commando, Royal Marines, I was captured by Chinese and Korean forces in late November, 1950. Subsequently, I spent approximately three years as a prisoner of war in camps in North Korea.

In view of certain allegations and accusations made against Mr. Wilfred Burchett, an Australian journalist, that his visits to POW camps in North Korea were prejudicial to the interests of POWs of British, American, Australian and other nationalities, I wish to state most emphatically and categorically that my own impressions were decidedly to the contrary.

On the few occasions when he visited our POW camp, Mr. Burchett distributed to us gifts such as books, razor blades, lighter flints, draughts and chess games, playing cards, etc. Small things, to be sure, and in obviously limited quantities in relation to our numbers, but gifts which, in our difficult circumstances, were sincerely appreciated. Also, on at least three occasions which I personally can recall, he collected from us letters to our families and delivered them directly to British and US journalists in Panmunjon, thus ensuring speedier delivery and easing worried hearts in countless homes.

As to the so-called "lectures" which Mr. Burchett's detractors claim he delivered to POWs, these were nothing more pernicious than talks on the then current situation of the peace talks, and news of events in our own respective countries. Political "lectures" we certainly did have in the early days of captivity - but these ham-fisted efforts were delivered by Korean and Chinese political officers who, eventually, gave up the whole idea as a waste of time and left us alone. If Mr. Burchett had attempted to deliver political lectures to us, he would, believe me, have been given short shrift.

*Andrew M. Condron*  
Andrew M. Condron  
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