PRISONERS, DIPLOMATS, AND SABOTEURS: AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE DIPLOMACY OF CAPTIVITY DURING AND FOLLOWING THE KOREAN WAR

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
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<td>CCUF</td>
<td>Chinese Communist United Front</td>
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<td>CCYL</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Youth League</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency (USA)</td>
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<td>CID</td>
<td>U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIE</td>
<td>Civil Information and Education Section</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIF</td>
<td>Custodian Forces of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPV</td>
<td>Chinese People’s Volunteers</td>
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<td>CPVA</td>
<td>Chinese People’s Volunteer Army</td>
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<td>CWIHP</td>
<td>Cold War International History Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRK</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUSAK</td>
<td>Eighth US Army in Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>FECOM</td>
<td>Far East Command (US Army)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRUS</td>
<td>Foreign Relations of the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff (USA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KKK</td>
<td>Ku Klux Klan</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>Kuomintang [Chinese Nationalist Party]</td>
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<tr>
<td>NKPA</td>
<td>North Korean People’s Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNRC</td>
<td>Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>People’s Liberation Army (China)</td>
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<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner of War</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSB</td>
<td>Psychological Strategy Board (USA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea (South Korea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC</td>
<td>United Nations Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>USIA</td>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
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<td>USIS</td>
<td>United States Information Services</td>
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Chapter I
Introduction

At the close of World War II, the victorious Allies grew polarized along East-West lines. The story of the “Cold War” is the story of a contest for the supremacy of two distinct ideologies: democratic capitalism and international communism. A cold war as a historical novelty, characterized by historian John Lamberton Harper, lay in the fact that the protagonists preferred “to engage each other through proxies, via their intelligence services, using economic and psychological warfare, and in the arena of world public opinion”. ¹ The purport of this definition was vividly manifested in a frenetic and costly campaign by the great powers to win the hearts and minds of the prisoners during the Korean War.

Prisoners of war became the prizes in the great-power contest between the United Nations countries and Communist China. The Chinese attempted to convert captured U.N. soldiers to prove the hypocrisy of American democracy, whereas the U.S. tried to expose the bankruptcy of communism, especially in reference to the “Chinese People’s Volunteers,” fighters in the Chinese Liberation Army who were enlisted by force or lies. The prisoner-of-war issue was bound up with national prestige and legitimacy, as well as Cold War ideology, and was so critical during the conflict that it almost singlehandedly torpedoed the prospects for an armistice.

This crucial issue, which remained an unresolved for more than two years in Korea, was the problem of the repatriation of prisoners of war. The question of whether or not prisoners of war should have a choice in deciding their own postwar fates was a long-disputed point among the belligerents. This issue became the biggest stumbling block in reaching a truce agreement, as both sides were unable to find a solution. The Communists insisted that every prisoner be repatriated when the hostilities ceased, while the U.N. powers refused to agree to forcible repatriation.

Drawing on local, national, and international news stories; newly declassified documents; memoir literature and biographical works from both U.S. and Communist Chinese prisoners; and historical documents, this dissertation argues that in the maneuvering of the issue of the prisoners of war, the United States gained an upper hand over Communist China, despite the stereotypical labels often attached by Americans to the Korean War as a “police action,” the “war we [the U.S.] didn’t win,” and the “forgotten war”. China yielded on the crucial issue of voluntary repatriation and lost two thirds of the captives to the island of Taiwan. In contrast, only a small portion of Americans, the infamous twenty-one non-repatriates, chose to stay with China rather than be repatriated to the United States at the end of hostilities. Despite these non-repatriates, the behavior of U.S. soldiers captured during the conflict was exploited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the U.S. military to fortify the domestic ideological apparatus in the aftermath of the war.

**Historiography**

The recent decades saw an outpouring of literature considering the no-longer-forgotten war. Classic scholars in the Korean War studies include Bruce Cumings and widely-cited general histories of the war by T. R. Fehrenbach. However, historians usually left detailed accounts of the struggles and politics within the prison camps out of the geopolitical analysis. The grand narrative of the Korean War and emerging Cold War in East Asia usually inadequately addresses the human face of the war and the individuals it involved. As Monica Kim points out in her dissertation,

What has been lost in the histories of the Korean War is the human terrain of war and politics, a way of defining the global order by determining the order of relations—between states, between states and individuals, and between individuals and the international community.

The historiography surrounding prisoners of the Korean War has centered on negotiations of the armistice. Scholarly articles and significant monographs like Rosemary Foot’s *A Substitute for Victory* employed only western materials.

Based on interviews with POWs and survivors of the captivity experience in Korea, Carlson’s *Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War* stood up as the best lengthy and detailed account of individual experiences. Among the twenty-one non-repatriates, white American Morris Wills, African-American Clarence Adams, and Briton Andrew Condron provide the most detailed and informative autobiographical accounts. Basset and Calson (2002), Spiller’s oral histories, and many survivors of the POW camps wrote detailed memoirs of their confinement and how they coped with their

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imprisonment. However, these autobiographical accounts did not adequately situate the stories of the POWs of the Korean War in the grand narrative of the Communist regime and emerging Cold War in East Asia.

The political benefits reaped by the Communists from the twenty-one American “turncoats” who refused repatriation in 1953 were of much greater significance to them than any intelligence data they might have gained. The reported collaboration of American prisoners with their captors touched off a controversy in the United States that raged for years. The writings of Eugene Kinkead convinced many Americans that this conduct was inexcusable and the result of social and moral decay in this country. Adam J. Zweiback does an excellent job of intricately analyzing the domestic roots and ramifications, providing tremendous insights into the way American society looked at the twenty-one.

A comparative perspective was presented in William Lindsay White’s book, *The Captives of Korea*, which was a study of both sides’ treatment of their captives and the behavior of the POWs.6 *Koje Unscreened* and *Plain Perfidy*, coauthored by Communist-sympathizing western journalists Wilfred Burchett and Alan Winnington, also provided useful but ideological slanted information regarding prisoners of war on both sides.7 Ron Theodore Robin’s fascinating work, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*, addresses the intellectual underpinnings of Cold War behavioral sciences and examines how American academic behaviorists reinforced their ethnocentrism and became instrumental in

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military-industrial complex. In particular, Robin adroitly analyzed how American government and military employed social science to influence and interpret enemy behaviors in the Korean War by waging psychological warfare and conducting studies on both American prisoners and Communist prisoners. Charles S. Young’s *Name, Rank, and Serial Number: Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad*, was a more recent attempt to compare the POWs’ experience on both sides.

Under the aegis of Wilson Center, a new generation of scholars of international history emerged in the aftermath of the ending Cold War in Asia and Europe. These scholars employed both Asian and western materials and advocated a multi-archival approach to the international history of the Cold War. The rise of the Pacific Century and booming Chinese economy created new interest and even a sense of urgency in the West to better assess and understand Asian and Chinese perspectives more completely.

Well versed in English and East Asian languages, a new group of scholars have added fresh perspectives to the historical research of American foreign relations and have stimulated the study of the prisoner-of-war issue during the Korean War. With innovative pioneering approaches, Hajimu Masuda examined how the war “functioned as a catalyst in the crucible of the postwar world and contributed to the materialization of the Cold War world”. He wove together a collection of local histories and contended that ordinary people participated and promoted the suppression of different ideas and practices to attain “order, unity, and a sense of national pride.”

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9 Charles Young, *Name, Rank, and Serial Number Exploiting Korean War POWs at Home and Abroad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
11 Ibid., 189.
Monica Kim have been among those advancing the study of POWs. Chang argues that the majority of Chinese prisoners who made decisions in the prison compound followed the “choice of prison compound leaders, for reasons of conviction, interest calculation, coercion, and threat of retribution from leaders”. Chang is critical of early U.S. POW policies and argues that Nationalist agent infiltrators played a decisive role in mobilizing formerly Nationalist soldiers to go to Taiwan. Monica Kim blended analysis on empire building, decolonization, and memories with the POW interrogation reports, offering a transnational perspective on the studies of Korean War POWs.

Despite the excellent aforementioned work, scholars have not yet fully explored the choices individuals made, and the options provided by the nation-states, and the intriguing connection between individual stories and national histories. Immanuel C. Y. Hsü predicted as early as 1979 that “The study of Chinese diplomatic history must be multi-archival, multilingual, interdisciplinary, intercultural, and interideological”. In his 2009 article, Thomas W. Zeiler points out that the innovation of diplomatic history lay in three directions: “traditional realism’s engagement with ideology (mentalities), the embrace of international history, and the study of culture and identity”. Zeiler lamented, “While the methodological renaissance has expanded the playing field of approaches, actors, topics, and interactions, the study of U.S. foreign relations remains recognizable, with its power-and-policy oriented focus”. In “The LaPietra Report,” Thomas Bender challenged the historical profession to rethink national boundaries and personal identities

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12 Cheng David Chang, “To Return Home or ‘Return to Taiwan’: Conflicts and Survival in the ‘Voluntary Repatriation’ of Chinese POWs in the Korean War” (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2011), 16.
15 Ibid.
in a globalizing world, especially in the “cross-national,” “transnational,” and “comparative” frameworks:

both the nation and the other historical phenomena we examine must be resituated in larger contexts because the movements of people, money, knowledges, and things are not contained by single political units…. Now we must extend our analysis of those histories to incorporate an awareness of larger, transnational contexts, processes, and identities.16

The study of the prisoner-of-war issue through multiple perspectives remains remarkably understudied. Updated scholarship is needed in the burgeoning literature on POWs to reconstruct the turbulent history of the Korean War POWs, as well as how they served as “political pawns to be exploited in the propaganda, public opinion, and bargaining facets of modern limited war”.17 In particular, focus should be placed on how to use Chinese language scholarship, sources, and voices to bring them into a dialogue with western sources and to synthesize both into a coherent narrative of these prisoners of war, not only from a top-down perspective, but from a bottom-up lens as well.

**Approaches and Significance of the Study**

This dissertation brings an important human and personal dimension to the history of these POWs through the integration of rich oral history and memoir material from the U.S., Great Britain, Taiwan, and China. At the same time, it offers a fresh look at the complex history of prisoner-of-war policies and the camp politics of the Korean War.


This dissertation seeks to trace the history and scale of POW policies back to WWII and show how both sides improvised to adapt to new situations arising in the prison camps. It deals with how both sides engaged in wars of words at the armistice table and how propaganda wars raged in the media outlets to influence world opinion. It furthermore discusses the war to win “hearts and minds” of captured enemy soldiers in order to demonstrate the superiority of one political system over the other. Additionally, it shows how the prisoners of war transitioned from traitors in the eyes of one side to “heroes” and “peace-fighters” to the other side. These roles were molded and manipulated by nation states.

What gives this dissertation its originality is its effort to illuminate many of the complexities and ambiguities surrounding the task of managing and repatriating prisoners of war by nation states driven by conflicting ideologies and agendas. The dissertation presents a transnational history of prisoner of war issues through three distinct yet interconnected narratives. It opens with the experience of U.N. prisoners and follows the Chinese’s administration policy; then it traces the journeys of prisoners of Communist China and North Korea and the rise of “anticommunist righteous men” in the prison-of-war camps. Finally, the explanation sessions are examined as the “last battle of Korea,” when both sides waged psychological warfare to win the allegiance of the professed non-repatriates.

This project studies world affairs from the bottom up and advances new interpretations and directions for studying Cold War in Asia. In particular, this dissertation reintegrates the experiences of the prisoners into the grand narrative of the early Cold War in East Asia, which brought to the forefront the social tensions and
frustrations in the prisoner-of-war camps. It combines the study of elite policymakers and their decision-making processes with the study of social acceptance and participation in the construction of the Cold War in East Asia through an emphasis on personal stories and the voices of ordinary people. It also delineates the contours of the actions, journeys, struggles, and thoughts of prisoners of war, especially their own interpretations of the meaning of captivity and humanitarianism.

Beginning with materials like memoirs and oral histories and continuing with prisoner testimonies recorded in intelligence files, interrogation reports, and newspaper publications and U.S. military documents, this project studies world affairs from the bottom up and advances new interpretations and directions for studying the Cold War in Asia. Both the political convulsions within the United Nations camps, agitated by Communist agents and Taiwanese translators, and the formation of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and heated fist-fighting over food in the Chinese-run camps, bring a human face to the Cold War in East Asia.

This dissertation also makes a contribution to the historiography of the Korean War and the larger international context of the Cold War. Mainly I used sources of Communist China to challenge, engage, and reinforce the western sources, as well as to pinpoint subtle differences within the western bloc. I consulted secondary works from authors in various countries and incorporated the most up-to-date scholarship in English and Chinese; additionally, I used archival materials from the United States and Mainland China. My dissertation research has taken me to the Truman Presidential Library, the Eisenhower Presidential library, the National Archives, the Hoover Institution, the Harvard-Yenching Library, and the Foreign Ministry Archives of the PRC. I also
consulted digital archives in databases such as the Declassified Documents Reference System—U.S. (DDRS) and the Digital National Security Archive (DNSA). Sources used in this dissertation were also from a diverse range of resources in Chinese and English, including individual soldiers’ briefing reports, previously classified government documents and analysis, eyewitness accounts, as well as U.S. diplomatic records for information about POW policies and practices. I selected new stories from the United States, British Commonwealth (Great Britain, Australia, and Canada), People’s Republic of China (Communist Asia), India (neutral Asia), and Hong Kong and Taiwan (anticommunist Asia). I have also inserted into the narrative black-and-white historical photos, political cartoons, and posters.

This dissertation also emphasizes the previously neglected role of India in the Cold War struggle. India’s neutrality diplomacy in ending the Korean War conflict, particularly in the prisoners of war entanglement, has often been overlooked. The Korean War was the first occasion in which modern India played a major role on the international stage. Differentiating from both the western democracy and Communist China, modern India had a distinct voice advocating a noncommunist Asian perspective in the Cold War. The Korean War served as a testing ground for India to practice her independent stance, striving to maintain a balance between the commonwealth and nonalignment movements in Asia, as well as serving as a mediator between Communist China and western democracies. India’s policy of neutrality played a critical yet understudied and understated role in ending the Korean War.

Regarding Taiwan’s hidden role in the war, this project may be a not-so-subtle nod to Chang’s dissertation on the Chinese prisoners of war and the role Taiwan played
in the Korean War. The United States placed the responsibility for the escalating violence within the camp on the shoulders of Taiwan, as well as Communist China. Both states and individual prisoners of war made choices that led to solidification and fortification of the Cold War division in East Asia. This dissertation further argues that the “freedom of choice” bestowed by the American state turned out to be an ideological straightjacket for many individual soldiers on both sides.

The most provocative part of the dissertation is the demonstration of the connections between legitimacy and power. The struggle over prisoners of war hinged on the legitimacy of the Cold War regimes and on nationalism in Asia. Taiwan and the People’s Republic were engaged in the unending Chinese civil war and in fierce rivalry for the legitimacy of representing the people’s will in China. The individual POWs who made life-risking decisions, either voluntarily or under duress, found their lives convulsed by the East-West confrontation that nearly divided the world into two oppositional camps.

For the majority of Chinese references and resources, I have used the Pinyin system for translation. However, in some cases, I defer to the more common, well-recognized spellings of Chinese places and names, such as Chiang Kai-shek, etc. I have kept references of people and places as they appear in primary documents.
Chapter II

“Segregating” by Race, Rank, and Nationality:

China’s Failed Ideological Indoctrination During the Korean War

“Now is your opportunity!” The recorded voice of Major Edward Moorer, from the U.N. Command explainer group, came from a loudspeaker truck outside a prison compound under the neutral supervision of Indian troops in Panmunjom. It was the last day of the ninety-day explanation period, December 23, 1953. “Now is the time!” Moorer’s reassuring voice continued. “Come forward and inform the guards nearest you… Indian guards will protect you…. You have nothing to fear.” The American team used a loudspeaker broadcast to make the final call to the North Camp run by the Chinese People’s Volunteers. One day earlier, each of the twenty-two G.I.s had received a letter from Gen. Mark Clark, the United Nations Commander in Tokyo, to appeal them to come home.

Dressed in cotton-padded uniforms, twenty-two non-repatriated United Nations prisoners drowned out the U.N. tape recording by singing “The Internationale” and “Solidarity Forever” in both English and Korean. As a response to this appeal, the non-repatriated U.N. prisoners even demanded that their Indian supervisors censor their own

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18 The explanations for the U.S. and South Korean prisoners of war started on December 2, 1953.
20 Raymond B. Lech, Broken Soldiers (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois, 2000), 198.
mail so they would not receive Allied propaganda, which they claimed aimed to
“intimidate, slander, coerce and bribe” them. Called by The New Yorker magazine a
“one-camera media circus,” these Caucasian westerners not only wore blue Mao suits,
but they also seemingly turned themselves into converts of Communism by denouncing
their own countries and by mouthing Communist slogans.

South China Morning Post, a Hong-Kong-based newspaper, reported this bizarre
spectacle as follows: “Twenty-two American converts to Communism ignored their
country’s final plea to come home to their families today in a weird orgy of wild dancing
and singing of Soviet songs”. The same article further reported,

Nineteen of the 22 unrepatriated Americans pressed against the barbed-
wire enclosures that symbolised [sic. symbolized] their choice of
Communism and sang “The Internationale” as the last “come home” plea
came from a sound truck. Then they danced with themselves and with
South Koreans, five of whom wore gay women’s clothing, to primitive
music.

With arms locked to demonstrate solidarity, the seventeen Americans, one lone British,
and seventy-seven South Koreans sang the Communist anthem and stamped a Korean
folk dance, defying a final broadcast appeal from their home countries. “No such safe
opportunity to come home is likely to come again,” Moorer’s recorded voice warned, but
it was drowned out in a cacophony of deafening shouting and cascading noises.

Among the prisoners stood twenty-two-old Corporal Claude J. Batchelor from
Kermit, Texas, the professed leader of the original twenty-two non-repatriated Americans

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24 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
after Operation Little Switch. On January 1, 1954, he reversed his non-repatriation position and returned to America at the end of the neutral custody. Batchelor was not the first one to switch sides during the four months the non-repatriated were held under neutral custody. Cp. Edward S. Dickenson was the other American G.I. who initially refused and then reversed his position to accept repatriation while in neutral custody on October 20, 1953. At this point, Dickenson had already returned to the U.S. and married.

For many Americans and their U.N. allies, it was the prisoner-of-war issue of the Korean War that brought wars of ideologies to the forefront. Unprecedentedly, “What American POWs faced in Korea which was new, at least for Americans in the twentieth century, was a concerted attempt by their captors to influence them on ideological grounds.” In the press conference held in Panmunjom on January 26th, 1954, the twenty-one American G.I.s, one British marine, and three hundred twenty-five South Korean ex-POWs who rejected repatriation announced,

Here, in our life in the prisoner camps, we have experienced true democracy for the very first time…. Among ourselves, we have experienced true equality and international camaraderie… We have learned so many things here, and come to realize the kind of achievement when one person strives for mutual interests rather than self-interest.

As the postwar POW report prepared by the British Ministry of Defense put it, “It was the prison camps set up by the Chinese and North Koreans that became the battleground

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29 Chao xian wen ti wen jian hui bian, di er ji (Ren min chu ban she, 1954), 239; Yao Xu, Cong ya lu jiang dao ban men dian [From Yalu River to Panmunjom] (Ren min chu ban she, 1985), 173.
for this war of minds.”³⁰ Three years later, Walter Cronkite, an American broadcastjournalist, proclaimed on his TV network that “brainwashing” and the broader questionof “our preservation as individuals” had become “one of the underlying themes” of thetwentieth century.

The imagery of the Korean War within the United States, as popularized by a1962 movie The Manchurian Candidate, was of the American soldier as a prisoner ofwar, who was defeated, emaciated, and possibly a brainwashed Communist sympathizer.Thousands of U.S. enlisted men who were taken prisoners spent two-and-a-half years inprisoner-of-war camps in North Korea. According to the official POW report, a total of7,190 Americans were captured during the Korean War.³¹ Among them, only 4,428eventually returned. An appalling thirty-eight percent of American POWs languished inthe hands of the enemy, almost four times that of American POWs during World War II.³² Not since the Revolutionary War had there been such a ghastly death toll.³³

Since Operation “Little Switch” from April 20 to May 3, 1953, when 149American prisoners of war among 684 U.N. POWs were repatriated, there were alreadyrumors that a few Americans had refused repatriation. The repatriates reported that morethan twenty Americans and one British prisoner had identified themselves as“progressives” and had refused to go back. Under the armistice terms, these prisoners

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³¹ United States Department of Defense, POW: The Fight Continues After the Battle; the Report of Secretary of Defense's Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War (Washington, DC, 1955), 8. Among the 7,190 prisoners, “6,656 were Army troops; 263 were Air Force men; 231 were Marines; 40 were Navy men”.
must be brought to the Panmunjom neutral zone, where the U.N. teams would be allowed to try to change their minds.

Referred to as “one of the greatest mysteries of our times,” the twenty-one Americans (including three African Americans) and one Scot turned their backs on their homelands and disappeared behind Red China’s “bamboo curtain” after February 24, 1954. After denouncing racism, capitalism, and McCarthyism before Chinese newsreel crews, these twenty-one non-repatriated G.I.s became “one of the most extensively studied groups in American history.” They were referred to as “GI Chinks” or “Chink lovers” by the repatriates, who said they were joining the “pinkos,” whereas the Chinese dubbed them “progressives” and “peace-fighters.” Never before in American history had a small group of G.I.s chosen to stay with their captors and participated in a propaganda campaign denouncing American involvement in the war. The British Ministry of Defense claimed to hold a better record of resisting Chinese political indoctrination, with the exception of Andrew Condron, who became the only British non-repatriate. Despite these men’s portentous profession to be Communists, their families still couldn’t understand why they chose China.

In the ensuing decades, numerous studies conducted by a vengeful nation eagerly searched for the proper explanations for its own fighting men’s idolization of an alien “religion”—Chinese Communism. Not surprisingly, America’s soul-searching was

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coupled with Communist China as the imaged enemy. As one 2008 *New York Times*
article put it, the 1950s America was consumed by the “fear of a strange enemy driven by
an alien ideology, killing Americans abroad, threatening Americans at home. And it
created a new terror.” A China under Mao, with its peculiar cruelty and terrorism,
possessed a “diabolic,” “fiendish” weapon in carrying out its own crusade against the
imperialist America. The so-called “brainwashing” was a Chinese invention to add to
the repertoire of Communist psychological warfare against the United States
worldwide. American GIs, rendered powerless with the presence of such a potent
weapon, hopelessly became “mentally and morally broken” after their capture.
Immediately after returning to the U.S., the repatriated prisoners were “alternately under
deep cover and then in the open for the most glaring and unfair publicity”. The media
insisted that they had accepted communist indoctrination and “brainwashing”. As a
result, almost all of the repatriated prisoners were extremely bitter and bewildered.

Rather than focusing on the suffering and hardships in captivity, this chapter
examines the policies adopted by the Communist China, revealing how a fledgling
revolutionary regime’s efforts to indoctrinate enemy soldiers proved to be a failed

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42 Ibid.
experiment. Despite an apparently enormous effort on the Chinese side, most of the U.N. prisoners balked at indoctrination into Communism. The dynamics with the Chinese-run prison compounds miniaturized the broader geopolitical situation of race, class, and nationalism. While Washington and Beijing furiously debated regarding the involuntary repatriation of prisoners, the prisoners themselves were faced with interpreting and reinventing their own version of humanitarianism in the midst of their extreme circumstances.

**Atrocity Charges and Leniency Policy**

In a 1953 U.N. report prepared by the U.S. Department of Defense, the American government charged that 29,815 soldiers and civilians were killed by “atrocity methods”. During the deadliest period of captivity, the winter of 1950-1951, 7,000 prisoners suffered a thirty-eight percent death rate, higher than that of the Confederacy’s notorious Andersonville prison camp. The factors affecting the prisoners’ health included cold weather, mistreatment, food scarcity, and disease (such as dysentery and beriberi). According to Roger P. Kyes, Deputy Secretary of Defense, who wrote a letter to accompany this report, these atrocities were committed by the North Korean army, the North Korean political security police, and the Chinese Communist forces. The same

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report summarized the most salient factors contributing to such a high death rate, saying there was

a deliberate attempt by the Communists to dispose of prisoners by forced marches in frigid weather under conditions in which they would either die of malnutrition and disease, expire because of untended wounds or become so weak they could then be easily disposed of by open murder.\textsuperscript{45}

These atrocities reports triggered a great wave of disgust and moral outrage in the United States. However, these problems affected not just the prisoners but also the Communist soldiers who fought on the front. As U.S. Corporal Bill Richardson recalled, tortuous marches in the cold were “not only taking a toll on us, but also on the guards”.\textsuperscript{46} In most circumstances, the Chinese fed them “the same rations as they had themselves—rice, vegetables and sorghum,” said British rifleman G. L. Hobson.\textsuperscript{47}

When China entered the conflict, the tide turned against the United Nations forces, and many more prisoners were taken; it was during this time that tales of atrocities surfaced in the American media. North Koreans were neither equipped nor trained to take prisoners of war. Many U.N. prisoners of war were shot on the spot. On October 20, approximately seventy-five Americans were shot down by North Korean guards at what became known as the Sunchon Tunnel massacre, one of the most well-documented cases of American and South Korean soldiers being executed \textit{en masse} after capture.\textsuperscript{48} The bulk of the American prisoners were taken between November 1950 and January 1951, including fourteen of the twenty-one prisoners who eventually chose to stay in China.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Bill Richardson and Kevin Maurer, \textit{Valleys of Death: A Memoir of the Korean War} (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2010), 216.
\textsuperscript{48} Pat M. Avery, \textit{They came Home: Korean War POWs Tell Their Stories} (Kimberling City, MO: Branson Creek Press, 2004).
Thousands of Americans died in temporary prison camps and on death marches during the winter of 1950 until the peace talks began in the summer of 1951. Most deaths were from cold, starvation, dysentery, and beriberi. A Greek journalist working for the *London Observer*, Philip Deane (Philippe Deane Gigantes), was captured and later tortured and beaten by North Koreans. In his book, *I Should Have Died*, he described the primitive conditions a POW had to endure in the early stage of the war.\(^{49}\)

Initially, the prisoners were interned at temporary camps where American bomber planes frequently flew overhead. The temporary camps included the “Bean Camp” near Suan, the “Death Valley” near Pukchin, “The Valley” near Kanggye, the “Interrogation Center” near Pukchin, and three camps near Pyongyang which included “the Caves” and two interrogation centers known as “Pak’s Palace” and Camp 12.\(^{50}\) North Koreans placed little or no emphasis on the indoctrination of the enemy POWs,\(^{51}\) except that once they set up an indoctrination camp called “the Peace Fighters School” in Camp 12 near Pyongyang as a pilot program.\(^{52}\)

Later, prisoners were marched northward along the Yalu River in North Korea to a network of prisoner-of-war camps run by the CPV. Many U.N. prisoners languished during the notorious “death marches,” when North Koreans took them on the long journey by foot to the permanent camps.\(^{53}\) The West was shocked by the sheer


\(^{50}\) The Defense Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War, *POW Report*, 9-10. “Caves” or Camp 9, was primarily set up by the North Korean police for South Korean prisoner, and was notorious for the brutal treatment and extremely high death rate.


\(^{53}\) Philip Crosbie, *March Till They Die* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1956. Father Crosbie, an Australian missionary, recorded his hardships he experienced as a civilian prisoner of war in the hands of North
“inhumanity, brutality and degradation” of the North Koreans and attributed it to North
Koreans’ effort to “illustrate the superiority of the Orientals over the ‘barbaric
Westerners.’”54 The 1988 British documentary *The Unknown War* records that the North
Korean officials admitted that they unscrupulously shot their American prisoners.55
Brutality was the normal experience, whereas Major General William F. Dean, the
highest-ranking U.N. prisoner, reported that he had enjoyed much better treatment in
Camp 6 by North Koreans since his capture in August 1950.56

The Leniency Policy had been a PLA tradition, which had risen during the three-
year Chinese Civil War and the eight-year war against Japan.57 Especially during the
Chinese Civil War, the goal for dealing with war prisoners was to switch the political
stance of enemy officers and soldiers and to persuade the fighters to join the revolution.
However, in Korea, the POW administration had to adapt to the new situation of fighting
a limited war with an armistice as the ultimate war aim.58 Using its previous experience,
the CPV POW administration underwent new exploration and development in three
areas: enemy propaganda on the front line, POW education management, and enemy
family relation management.59

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56 William F. Dean, as told to William L. Worden, *General Dean’s Story* (New York: Viking, 1954); —, “My Three Years as a Dead Man,” *Saturday Evening Post* 226 (23 Jan. 1954): 17-19, 82-99, and the next five issues (31-35). Dean’s capture was kept as a secret until December 1951. He was repatriated on September 3, 1953. He was separated from other U.N. prisoners and never confined in a regular POW camp.
57 “Interview with Li Zhenglin,” in *Mei jun zhan fu: Chaoxian zhan zheng huo xian ji shi*, by Chen Shaokun and Huang Jiyang (Beijing: Shi shi chu ban she, 2003), 203.
58 Xu Yan, *Di yi ci jiao liang: kang mei yuan chao zhan zheng de li shi hui guy u fan si* (Beijing: zhong guo guang bo dian shi chu ban she, 1998), 266.
59 Ibid.
At the beginning of the war, the CPV adopted their old approach from their civil war experience—shouting out the Lenient Policy on the front lines and spreading propaganda pamphlets. This method achieved some success: for example, one black engineering company of the 25\textsuperscript{th} division collectively surrendered collectively during the Second Campaign. As the CPV grew more familiar with the American troops, its political work began to place more emphasis on criticizing American imperialist polices and the South Korean government’s aggressive behavior while simultaneously expressing its own peacemaking intentions. In addition to using loudspeakers to propagandize their lenient policy, the Chinese used other forms of extensive communication with enemy soldiers. One source indicates that on Christmas Eve of 1951, interpreter Zhu Fuqian and other two CPV scouts were assigned to deliver Christmas gift bags and pamphlets explaining the Lenient Policy to the front lines of the U.N. troops. According to some of the captured American POWs, many of the American soldiers enjoyed these gift bags, which were sold on the black market for up to thirty dollars each.\textsuperscript{60}

During the first campaign, the CPV almost immediately released thirty newly captured G.I.s and seventy South Korean soldiers. American domestic media and military newspapers were dumbfounded by such a move, but the prisoners themselves understood that the Chinese Communists released them for propaganda purposes. A group of G.I.s called their experience of the Chinese “Lenient Policy” an “adventure and its strange and happy conclusion”.\textsuperscript{61} The Chinese handpicked twenty-seven captives, fed them rice, barley meal, and vegetables, and traveled with them in the trucks for two nights. Before

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\textsuperscript{60} Chen Shaokun and Huang Jiyang, \textit{Mei jun zhan fu: Chaoxian zhan zheng huo xian ji shi} (Beijing: Shi shi chu ban she, 2003), 203.
\textsuperscript{61} “Released GIs Call Red Act Propaganda: Were Treated Well by Captors; Told War Caused by Imperialists,” \textit{The Hartford Courant}, 24 Nov. 1950: 24.
\end{flushright}
letting them loose into the night, the Chinese shook hands with them and gave them a last-minute lecture on “American imperialism” and Chinese peace-making intentions.\textsuperscript{62} American POWs’ memoirs indicated that the Chinese usually picked the sick and wounded for early release while “the strongest men” remained and participated in the marches toward the permanent camps along the Yalu River.\textsuperscript{63} According to Lieutenant General Du Ping, the Director of the Political Departments in the CPVF General Headquarters, the CPV political work section thought this approach reflected the CPV’s revolutionary humanitarianism, expanded the CPV’s political influence, and relieved the burden of managing heavily wounded enemy prisoners.\textsuperscript{64}

In the initial stages of the war, due to the lack of preparation and the absence of a specialized organization to handle the POWs, many captured war prisoners were able to run away and escape. At the same time, the Chinese claimed that they had great difficulty receiving food through supply lines for both CPV soldiers and U.N. prisoners due to U.N. aircraft strafing. The Chinese blamed the American planes for dropping bombs, which caused many deaths on the road. The Chinese explained that they usually marched in the night to avoid the strafing of U.N. aircraft. In order to relieve the logistical burden, as well as to demonstrate humanitarianism, the CPV transferred the captured South Korean POWs to the North Koreans and released many who were injured. As a result, there were very few war prisoners initially held by the CPV at the beginning. When the exchange of POWs’ names on both sides occurred, the U.N. claimed to hold 130,000 North Korean and Chinese prisoners, while the Communist side said they held only slightly over 10,000

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Lloyd W Pate as told to B.J. Cutler, Reactionary! (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 41.
\textsuperscript{64} Du Ping, Du Ping hui yi lu: yuan ming “Zai zhi yuan jun zong bu” [Du Ping's Memoirs; My days at the headquarters of the Chinese People's Volunteers] (Beijing Shi: Jie fang jun chu ban she, 2008) [People's Liberation Army Press, 2008], 377.
U.N. prisoners. This fact explains the later discrepancy between the number of MIA U.N. soldiers and the number of war prisoners the Communist side returned at the end of the conflict.\footnote{The U.S. declared the captured G.I.s numbered 9,500; the CPV only claimed 7,068. At the end of repatriation, the CPV returned 3,764. The Chinese claimed the gap could be explained by those captured by North Koreans and released on the front line, whereas the Americans claimed they were missing in action (MIA). When both sides exchanged POWs at Panmunjom, there were only 7,142 South Korean POWs and 4,417 non-Korean U.N. POWs. The U.N. side declared 12,000 MIA (including 10,800 Americans) and South Koreans claimed 88,000 MIA. The statistics were quoted from Xu Yan, \textit{Di yi ci jiao liang}, 269, 303, 304.}

As one American postwar study aptly points out, “the very standard of living for which the boys were fighting was often their worst enemy.”\footnote{“Chapter 13: The Defector: Claude Batchelor,” in Louie Tanner, \textit{Here Today...} (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1959), 269.} American soldiers in Korea were considered to be “the most pampered soldiers in history” by Alan Winnington, one of the western journalists who had access to U.N. POWs in Korea.\footnote{Alan Winnington, \textit{Breakfast with Mao: Memoirs of a Foreign Correspondent} (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986), 121.} The U.S. Army had lavished their soldiers with extravagant combat rations including “meat, poultry, hamburgers, vegetables, fruits, biscuits, coffee, sugar, milk, vitamins, confectionery.”\footnote{Ibid.} They were also given “clothes in absurd variety, mostly unsuited to the terrain they faced but providing nice profits and free advertising.”\footnote{Ibid.} The CPV political officers used the KMT defectors’ accounts to collect information about the very enemy they dealt with: the defectors were trained by the American military advisors, and they testified that American soldiers were “spoiled playboys” and largely inept.\footnote{Du, \textit{Du ping hui yi lu}, 55-56; Zhang, \textit{Mao’s Military Romanticism}, 190.}

The American POWs were the prisoners that the CPV POW administration found the greatest difficulty managing.\footnote{Xu, \textit{Di yi ci jiao liang}, 268.} After their capture, it had been a constant challenge for the Americans to adapt to the primitive conditions in the hands of their Asian enemies.
Many Chinese captors’ recollections pointed out there was a pervasive sense of lethargy and despair among the American prisoners. Historian Latham also points out that a “disturbing number of prisoners… simply lost the will to live”. This observation was reinforced by accounts written by western authors, and the general attitude was labeled “give-up-itis,” in which many POWs turned their faces to the wall and died away, one by one. Dickerson, one of the initial non-repatriates (later repatriated in October 1953) recalled, “I can’t say how many men died there. I counted 37 men go down. The men were not used to the food (cracked corn) and a lot starved to death. There was no morale and a lot of men just gave up”. Repatriated British and Australian prisoners confirmed the same perception and added that approximately 1,600 American POWs died in Camp 5 because they were “too pampered, too young” and had become suicidal and simply “lost their will to survive”. By comparison, only twenty British died in the first six months, and few Turks, if any, died. Alan Winnington, the Communist-sympathizing British journalist, wrote that the reason the British survived while the Americans perished lay in their national cultures. He contended:

The British prisoners lived because they were co-operative and organized; they set up democratic bodies to share out food and drugs, sacrificed their rations for sick comrades, maintained strict hygiene and above all were optimistic. They had a background of trade unionism and solidarity. Those fine American boys died because, through none of their own fault maybe,
they carried into battle and captivity the traditions of free enterprise and devil-take-the-hindmost.  

The Britons survived because of their solidarity and camaraderie, according to Winnington, who quoted a Chinese ganbu (an English-speaking Chinese civilian functionary): “Where there are three British prisoners there is a committee,” whereas morale and discipline collapsed among the American prisoners. This difference may have had to do with the fact that Americans were usually captured and transferred as individuals, while the British were captured by regiments and the Turks, by company.  

Jeff Erwin remembered, “A lot of guys didn’t want to waste any of their strength on others because they knew it would be hard to replace. So they did no more for anyone than they absolutely had to”. Though Catholic chaplain Father Emil Kapaun performed altruistic deeds to assist his fellow prisoners, on many occasions, stealing and murder occurred. One notorious case was that of James C. Gallagher, a corporal from Brooklyn, N.Y., who threw two dying American prisoners in the snow. Immediately after repatriation, he was court-martialed for murder. In another case, a black G.I. was seen stripping wallets and possessions from the dead and put them into his kitbag, while none of the other Americans in his compound did anything to stop him. Stealing and

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78 Winnington, Breakfast with Mao, 171.  
79 Ibid., 161.  
81 Carlson, Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War, 139.  
83 Lech, Broken Soldiers, 74-5; Philip D. Chinnery, Korean Atrocity! (Annapolis, MD, 2000), 112; Pate, Reactionary! 59-60; White, The Captives of Korea, 87-8.  
murder served as good illustrations of what the Chinese Communists said could happen under the influence of “poisonous individualism”.  

Not surprisingly, the Chinese astutely used food as a political weapon, though they did try to keep the prisoners alive. They maneuvered the quality and quantity of food to influence prisoners’ political orientations. One prisoner revealed that there was a distinction between rations for “reactionaries” and those for the others. “It was hard to resist...when your political opinion decided how you ate and how much medical care you got,” admitted one repatriated G.I. Later, as the armistice talks resumed, the Chinese felt compelled to feed U.N. prisoners for propaganda purposes. “You could always tell how chow would be from how things were going down there. When they were going good, they’d give us a little pig to eat. When they were going bad, it would be soup and rice”. According to interviews with the repatriates, during the latter half of their captivity, most of the prisoners said they had been fed with good food—“the best that they could give us under the circumstances”. British historian T. R. Fehrenbach argued that it was the “chemistry and culture” that killed Americans rather than the Chinese’s deliberate cruelty. It was the “disciplines, attitudes, and organization that Americans brought into captivity” that killed many of them. There was “a debasement of social morality,” observed Sergeant R.F. Matthews of the Gloucestershire

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90 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
Regiment. He lamented the fact that the lack of communal support led to death of many Americans.

From it arose a system that prostituted traditional American enterprise and incentive, favoured the strong, and gave no charity at all to the weak. We [the British] looked after our sick, and those who couldn’t stomach millet got sugar or dumplings from the communal ration. It was an accepted part of our way of living. The American sick, unless they had good friends, went into the death house, and, once there, only one journey remained. It was to the cemetery on Boot Hill.\(^93\)

In Camp 5, despite the Chinese’s repeated warnings to boil their water before drinking it, eighteen hundred prisoners contracted cholera from drinking water contaminated from animal and human waste seeping through the ground and into the well water. Robert Fletcher remembered the Chinese guards used to tell them, “Cold water, no good, no good!”\(^94\) The overcrowded prisoner population only made the scarcity of fresh water even worse.\(^95\)

Dysentery was another common cause of death, resulting from eating improperly cooked Asian food.\(^96\) Fehrenbach pointed out, “to expect an Asian nation accustomed to famine to feed its prisoners of war better than its own half-starved peasantry was and remains wishful thinking on Americans’ part”.\(^97\) Still, the CPV dramatically improved the quality of ration food in the camps after diagnosing roots of sudden deaths of many POWs as “Serious Nutritional Deficiency Syndrome”.\(^98\) Rice, flour, and pork were transported to Pyoktong across the Yalu in the last years of captivity.

\(^93\) Jones, *No Rice for Rebels*, 36-37.
\(^95\) Richardson, *Valleys of Death*, 240.
\(^96\) Ibid.
\(^97\) Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*, 374.
\(^98\) Du, *Du ping hui yi lu*, 375.
Rumors about homosexuality and marijuana use in the camp were reinforced by Chinese guards’ memoirs.99 “Half the Americans were bound together more by homosexuality than communism,” The Newsweek editorialized.100 Chinese prison officer Guo said homosexuality in the second squadron caused disturbances in Camp 5.101 The Chinese separated those who engaged in homosexual acts from the rest of the prisoners. Since most of the prisoners passed the days in captivity “in a state of acute sexual deprivation,” some consumed large quantities of marijuana to relax themselves.102 When G.I.s discovered marijuana and other narcotic weeds growing wild on the hillside, they dried and sucked the weeds, as the drugs’ “soothing effect provided an escape from the harsh reality of prison life”.103 One side effect of these drugs is that using them caused prisoners' appetites to increase, making their daily rations seem less sufficient.104 Most of the prisoners who smoked the weed were Turks, but some Americans and a few British also participated.105 Once the Chinese found out what was happening, they lectured the prisoners on the dangers of drugs and banned the practice immediately.

At the end of spring 1951, Wang Yangong was assigned to manage Camp 5, and he ran the camp of prisoners from thirteen countries like a school. A seasoned political officer, Wang had experience managing senior prisoners from Manchukuo and former Nationalist officials. The U.N. prisoners addressed Commander Wang as the Chinese

99 Lech, Broken Soldiers, 157-8; Carlson, Remembered Prisoners of a Forgotten War, 27.
101 Guo, Shi jie di yi deng zhan fu ying, 9.
102 Lech, Broken Soldiers, 157.
104 Adams, An American Dream, 52.
“university president”\textsuperscript{106} At first, even some Chinese instructors and translators were astounded at the idea of calling the prisoners “students”\textsuperscript{107} “We had to call the instructors ‘comrade’ and they called us ‘students.’ They never called us ‘prisoners’—always ‘students,’” recalled Sergeant McCollum.\textsuperscript{108}

Initially, compulsory lectures and discussions were the basic means of indoctrination. One Chinese instructor, along with an English-speaking interpreter, conducted lectures continuously for two hours a day, beginning in early February 1951. In the lectures, the instructors propounded the political, economic, and social gospel of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, indoctrinating the prisoners with the principles of Communism. Approximately one hundred POWs were appointed as “monitors” to lead small study groups of about fourteen men to read and discuss current events for four hours. At the end of the sessions, prisoners were expected to turn in answered quizzes and written reports.

Early release was a tantalizing incentive, so the Chinese captors promised the prisoners that they would be sent home as soon as the prisoners learned about the truth. “So we were all anxious to be good scholars,” recalled Sergeant McCollum, “We were prisoners, but… it looked just like a summer camp or school, with all the men walking around with books under their arms or papers in their hands. We used to joke a little, ‘When are you going to graduate from the University of Pyoktong?’”\textsuperscript{109}

Dubbed by prisoners as “P.U.,” Pyoktong University was “a high-powered interrogation center, and an exclusive one [that]…was reserved strictly for non-Korean


\textsuperscript{107} Qian Meide, \textit{in They Chose China}. Also see \textit{Mei you tie si wang de zhan fu ying} [The POW Camp without Barbed Wire] (Beijing: Zhongguo guo ji dian shi zong gong si chu ban fa xing, 2004).

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{109} Brinkley, “Valley Forge GIs,” 113.
captives. …The faculty quickly informed us that they meant business and would give the business to anybody that didn’t learn their lessons properly.”\textsuperscript{110} The U.N. prisoners quickly found themselves to be “students of politics under the tutelage of their, mostly Chinese, Communist guards”.\textsuperscript{111} They were bombarded “by propaganda leaflets and films, by alleged pro-Communist testimonials from other prisoners, and by a daily series of three-hour propaganda lectures hammering at such points as the virtue of the Communist cause and evil of the capitalist world”.\textsuperscript{112} The prisoners were asked to write a biographical sketch about their home life and educational background. The prisoner students were also instructed to keep daily dairies to track their ideological transformation. They were issued a journal bearing the Chinese inscription “Peace Dairy” and “sketches of a Kremlin tower, Peking’s palace and the peace dove”.\textsuperscript{113} They also had to attend meetings to criticize themselves and others. British POW R. F. Matthew later recalled that to the Chinese, “self-criticism was the only effective way of showing penitence”.\textsuperscript{114} With fantastic self-abnegation, some of the confessors condemned themselves by going through the catalogue of their pasts and voicing penitence for their deeds.

Labeled as the ‘Progressives’ Camp, Camp 5 in Pyoktong was established as a unique project. Its geographical proximity allowed the Chinese to transport POW supplies with railroad bridges spanning the Yalu, connecting Korea to Manchuria. The main headquarters of the CPV POW administration was located in Camp 5. Pyoktong’s

\textsuperscript{110} Captain John W. and John W. Thornton, Jr.,\textit{ Believed to Be Alive} (Middlebury, VT: Paul S. Eriksson, 1981), 168.
\textsuperscript{111} British Ministry of Defense,\textit{ Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Korea}, 1.
\textsuperscript{113} Brinkley, “Valley Forge GIs,” 121.
\textsuperscript{114} Jones, \textit{No Rice for Rebels}, 43.
status in the whole POW indoctrination program, as one post-war study put it, was equivalent to “what Teachers College is to Deweyism.” Pyoktong soon became “the most progressive camp throughout the whole war”. A camp newspaper, *Towards Truth and Peace*, was published here roughly twice a month, and circulated through all the camps. Batchelor and Adams were the “progressives” who were regular contributors of this Communist publication. Camp 5 also was the place where held the biggest rally in June 1951 to celebrate the formation of a “peace” committee and the signing of a “peace” appeal. Once, prisoners in Camp 2 complained about how their food rations were smaller than food rations in Camp 5 and were told that the Camp 5 prisoners “were progressive and study well so of course they feed better”. The Communist-sympathizing western visitors usually received a much warmer welcome in Camp 5, compared to other camps. Alan Winnington’s propagandistic lectures were often greeted with shouts of “You’ll hang!” in Camp 1, whereas he appeared fairly welcome in Camp 5.

**Battle for Ideological Supremacy**

The Chinese placed the prisoners in five segregated compounds: those with black Americans, white Americans, Turks, Englishmen, and those who spoke Spanish

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118 Ibid., 26.
including Spanish-speaking Americans, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and Colombians.\textsuperscript{119} The Chinese explained that the intentions behind the segregation practices were for “study purposes”.\textsuperscript{120} One repatriated G.I. summarized the Chinese policy, saying that they “played class against class, country against country and white men against black man … to stir up hatred and division among the prisoners”.\textsuperscript{121}

The Chinese’s first step in creating division was to undermine the existing rank and accepted loyalty and leadership restructures, which they accomplished by separating officers from sergeants and sergeants from other ranks in the POW camps.\textsuperscript{122} The Chinese put officers into Camp 2 and enlisted men in Camps 1 and 3. British historian T. R. Fehrenbach called this approach “the most effective way of breaking down possible resistance and cohesion in any group of prisoners”.\textsuperscript{123} “No one here has any rank—you are all the same,” said the Chinese.\textsuperscript{124} In general, ordinary G.I.s received much better treatment than captured officers, and the Communists made a bigger effort to indoctrinate the enlisted men.\textsuperscript{125} Officers were subjected to more detailed interrogation than enlisted men, especially on the “types of bombs being used and the sort of targets selected for raids”.\textsuperscript{126} In addition, older, higher-ranking men were seen as a bad influence over some of the younger men and were suspected of impeding their acceptance of Communist

\textsuperscript{121}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122}Cyril Cunningham, \textit{No Mercy, No Leniency: Communist Mistreatment British and Allied Prisoners of War in Korea} (London: Leo Cooper, 2000), 76-77, 217-218.
\textsuperscript{123}Fehrenbach,\textit{This Kind of War}, 318.
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid.
indoctrination. This suspicion was evident when the Chinese removed all the sergeants from Camp 5 and put them in Camp 4.\textsuperscript{127} The loss of \textit{esprit de corps} not only created great confusion, but it also “created a leadership vacuum that the Communists readily filled”. As Fehernbach pointed out, it “strongly contributed to developing a psychological dependency of the POWs upon their Communist captors”.\textsuperscript{128}

Additionally, the Chinese skillfully exposed the shortcomings of American democracy by making use of its existing racism, for they viewed “the racial and social differences as a tool to disunite the POWs”.\textsuperscript{129} The Chinese played upon the racial and ethnic differences among the prisoners by segregating African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos. The Chinese exploited the prevalent racism among white Americans toward African-Americans and tapped into the resentment of African American soldiers against white G.I.s.\textsuperscript{130} Initially, Chinese put white and black G.I.s in the same camp areas and even the same room, which only led to racial conflicts.\textsuperscript{131} Later, black and white G.I.s were not allowed to work together nor attend lectures together.\textsuperscript{132} The Chinese segregated them and offered preferential treatment to black G.I.s as an inducement for them to become more “progressive”.\textsuperscript{133} A few times, Chinese instructors lectured on the evils of

\textsuperscript{127} Bassett with Carlson, \textit{And the Wind Blew Cold}, 67.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131} Adams, \textit{An American Dream}, 50.
segregation and urged African-Americans to forgo their “second class citizenship.”¹³⁴ Cpl. Richard Barnes, a black repatriate, said that if he did something wrong, he could easily get away with it. “But if a white boy did it,” Barnes added, “he would get from six months to a year in jail”.¹³⁵ Besides using more lenient treatment to win over blacks, the Chinese also exploited racial tensions to create conflicts in the minds of black prisoners. Such topics as lynching, unfair labor practices, and other outrages against African Americans were used to portray prevailing social injustice in American society.¹³⁶

Chinese’s partial treatment toward the American blacks generated a variety of responses from the black G.I.s. “For the first time in my life, I felt I was being treated as an equal rather than as an outcast,” said Adams.¹³⁷ He and a few other black prisoners eagerly went to voluntary lectures and came back and argued with each other about the shortcomings of America and the virtues of Communism. In a filmed Communist broadcast, black G.I. William C. White from Plumerville, AR. testified that it was his first encounter in which he “witnessed complete equality. South Koreans, Mexicans, Filipinos, white men all mixed together”.¹³⁸ Some black G.I.s, however, disagreed, saying that they knew better about America than their Chinese instructors. Furthermore, they asserted, the Chinese lived in a manner “far inferior to” that of African Americans in America.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Ibid.
¹³⁷ Adams, An American Dream, 59; also see Xu, Di yi ci jiao liang, 270.
¹³⁸ Wang, They Chose China.
China’s “racial segregation” policy was widely decried in America. Kansas Whip, a black newspaper from Topeka, Kansas, ridiculed the Chinese’s failure to win over no more than a few prisoners despite an intensive propaganda effort. An October 23, 1953 article wrote:

In Korea, Negro prisoners found themselves in a paradoxical situation; prior to their capture they had been fighting in the first unsegregated army in U.S. history, but as soon as they were taken prisoner, the Communists—self-styled saviors of oppressed minorities—placed them in segregated prison camps.\(^{140}\)

Clearly, the article carefully situated the civil rights reform within the ideological constraint of America’s Cold War narrative, so that “the story of race in America,” as legal historian Mary L. Dudziak argued, was “used to compare democracy and communism”.\(^{141}\) Even though President Truman issued his executive order on desegregation in 1948, the U.S. Army’s slow implementation led to the fact that most of the African American G.I.s continued to serve in segregated units. The Confederate flag was exhibited in the United Nations troops as the blatant resistance to integration in the fall of 1951.\(^{142}\) The story of race was presented in the black American media outlets as “a story of progress” and “a story of U.S. moral superiority,” and the Chinese’s heavy-handed endeavor to win friendship with African Americans was met with rebuffs.\(^{143}\)

Finally, non-American prisoners were also used to try to exploit the tensions between the U.S. and other United Nations countries. British prisoners were generally older than Americans, most of them being seasoned soldiers who had fought in World War II.

\(^{140}\) [Communists; Negroes; United States; Prisoner; War; Korea; China; Communism], Kansas Whip (published as Kansas American), 23 Oct. 1953: 2.


\(^{143}\) Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 13.
The Chinese held a total of 978 British prisoners, most of whom were housed in Pyoktong. Only a small percentage of them grew sick and died. A very few Japanese prisoners, who were culturally sophisticated, were hired to do translation or technical work for the U.S. Armed Forces. One Chinese source indicated that the Filipinos and Turks, who came from rough social-economic circumstances, tended to appreciate the Chinese “Lenient Policy”. Chinese guards exploited the divisions between the American prisoners and their U.N. allies. For example, the Chinese camp administrators worked to incite British prisoners to call Americans “bloodthirsty” and “selfish”. Wang Naiqing, one of the young camp officers at Pyoktong, saw that the Americans in captivity epitomized “all the shortcomings and all the dirty, dark side of their society: greed, indulgence, cowardice, selfishness, and indifference”. Otho G. Bellone, one of the three non-repatriates who returned to the U.S. in 1955, recalled that the Chinese used to ask him questions such as, “How about the friction between the United States and Great Britain?” The British soldiers were told that they were “dupes and cannon fodder of the American aggressors” and were sent to Korea by their “fascist rulers”. The interview records of repatriated British prisoners indicated that the Chinese adeptly exploited the anti-Americanism generated by some American prisoners’ despicable behaviors so that the Chinese could create tension between the American prisoners and prisoners of other

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147 —, *shi jie di yi deng zhan fu ying*, 4.
150 Jones, *No Rice for Rebels*, 43.
United Nations countries. Moreover, the CPV POW administration exploited the racial discrimination of U.S. troops toward the South Korean troops by explaining to the latter the objective of Chinese foreign policy for self-determination and anti-colonialism.

The five main groups of prisoners were African-Americans, white Americans, Turks, Englishmen, and Spanish-speaking U.N. prisoners; however, some prisoners of different ethnicities were exempted from racial pressuring. Greek soldier Chletzos Constantinos of Lemnos Island said the Reds did not try to indoctrinate him, explaining, “I don’t know their language and they didn’t know mine”. In another case, one returned American Indian private commented that the Chinese “did not make any attempt to gain favor with or propagandize” American Indian prisoners because the Chinese had thought that Chinese shared the same origin with American Indians. The private said he had not found the Chinese’s explanations persuasive. When the Chinese tried to segregate the only black British prisoner from the rest of the Army Catering Corps attached to the Glosters in Camp 1, the rest of the British prisoners indignantly protested the separation: “He’s a Brit… not a bloody nigger, he’s British!” Facing unanimous resistance, the Chinese backed down and let the British cook stay where he was.

By instilling a radical Maoist egalitarianism, the Chinese Communists aimed to unsettle the previous power dynamics between white Americans and black Americans,

152 Xu, Di yì cì jiāo liàng, 272.
between officers and enlisted men, and between the U.S. and its allies. A combination of physical and psychological pressure was employed to challenge power structure, destroy existing loyalties, and sow dissension. “Everybody here is the same. No officers, no N.C.O.s here. Everybody is equal,”¹⁵⁷ Fehrenbach wrote. Clarence Adams also testified, “as prisoners, we were all equal”.¹⁵⁸

The Chinese Communists’ reformist approach to U.N. prisoners stemmed from their domestic experience of transforming the “bad elements” of the Chinese society. It is impossible not to be struck by the parallels between the CCP’s policy toward domestic “lackeys of imperialism” and their policy toward the U.N. prisoners-of-war. In his *The Dictatorship of the People’s Democracy*, Chairman Mao claimed that the key distinction between “people” and “reactionaries” was whether or not they had accepted Communist leadership. Written for the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Communist Party, Mao argued that the “people” in China included “the working class, the peasant class, the petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie”. Under the leadership of the working class and the party, these classes united together to “carry out a dictatorship over the lackeys of imperialism—landlord class, the bureaucratic capitalist class, and the Nationalist reactionaries and their henchmen representing these classes”.¹⁵⁹ In the land reform movement, the Communist regime saw wiping out the landlord class as the means to smash the roots of imperialism in China. One mass-line slogan for simultaneously conducting the “Anti-America, Aid-Korea” campaign and the land reform campaign was “kicking U.S. imperialism’s head in the front, and out-rooting U.S. imperialism in the

¹⁵⁷ Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*, 318.
back”.\textsuperscript{160} For the Chinese, the attack on the American troops in the front joined hand in hand with the trial and execution of the landlord class, which was seen as being made up of “agents of foreign imperialism”. Both landlords and the Guomingdang were seen as the enemies of Chinese revolution, which was “anti-imperialist by character”.\textsuperscript{161}

In Red China’s arduous journey to achieve modernity, Mao practiced an egalitarianism, which now provoked the charge of utopianism. By defeating Chiang Kai-shek in the civil war, Mao had unified China and liberated it from the fetters of imperialism and foreign aggression. As the chairman of the People’s Republic of China since 1949, Mao aimed to harness the revolutionary spirit of the people to recreate a utopian form of communism, first in their own country and then around the world. By embracing Mao Zedong Thought, or Maoism, the Chinese masses were to inoculate themselves against poisonous contagion of imperialism and colonialism, remaking their country with great enthusiasm. As historian Akira Iriye pointed out, “the 1950s saw an attempt by the Communist leaders at massive indoctrination of the Chinese people, both to ensure stability of the Communist regime and to prepare the nation ideologically for a showdown with the United States”.\textsuperscript{162}

In a similar vein, in North Korea, the Chinese Communists aimed to use their “superior” Marxist ideology to reform former enemy soldiers from the sixteen U.N. nations. The thought reform in Pyoktong, North Korea was a milder version of “thought reform” in China, with less violent and coercive approaches, compared to the massive

\textsuperscript{160} Yao Xu, \textit{cong ya lu jiang dao ban men dian} [From Yalu River to Panmunjom] (ren min chu ban she, 1985), 83.

\textsuperscript{161} “Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong, 5 February 1949,” in \textit{Cold War International History Project Bulletin}, Iss. 16:150.

violence against landlords and merchants in the domestic scene.\textsuperscript{163} The Chinese
Communists attempted to convince the prisoners that their attitudes and patterns of
thinking were incorrect and must be reformed. Richard described how an English-
speaking Chinese interrogator announced his government’s policy: “The Chinese
People’s Volunteer Army will not harm you, because we are a peace-loving people… We
know you were being forced by your corrupt government to help South Korea in their
invasion of North Korea.”\textsuperscript{164}

Class divisions and social segregation were heightened and even exaggerated in
the indoctrination program. The Chinese lecturers iterated that the Korean War was a
“rich man’s war but a poor man’s fight”.\textsuperscript{165} A typical line was that the “capitalists on
Wall Street started this war to sell their arms and to gain markets and raw materials in
Asia”.\textsuperscript{166} It was the “American imperialists” who were behind the Korean fighting, and
President Truman, General MacArthur, and Secretary of State Dean Acheson were “no-
good capitalists”.\textsuperscript{167}

A strong racial overtone was emphasized. African-American soldiers were
promised homes, wives, and jobs if they would renounce their allegiance to the U.S.\textsuperscript{168} In
a letter to his mother, the non-repatriate William C. White explained how Mao’s

\textsuperscript{163} Richard L. Walker, \textit{China under Communism: The First Five Years} (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press,
1955), 57-59.
\textsuperscript{165} Adams, \textit{An American Dream}, 54.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} “Released GIs Call Red Act Propaganda: Were Treated Well by Captors; Told War Caused by
\textsuperscript{168} [Communists; Negroes; United States; Prisoner; War; Korea; China; Communism], \textit{Kansas Whip}
egalitarian China appealed to him more than a racist, white-supremacist America, which made him to decide to choose China.\textsuperscript{169} White wrote:

\begin{quote}
… for the first time in my life I have seen complete equality for men of all races and colors who worked together and played together. When I see things like this I am reminded of what happened to me in my own country where as children, I and other Negro boys were whipped by policemen because we didn’t take off our hats to them.\textsuperscript{170}
\end{quote}

The political education of prisoners included not only oral indoctrination but also a rigorous censorship of their newspapers, periodicals, and other publications. Communist Chinese saw these media as vehicles for Communist or “progressive” messages. The tactic was successful, as more than one fourth of the non-repatriated Americans were either camp librarians or regular visitors of the camp library. Morris Wills, one of the twenty-one “turncoats,” wrote about how the Maoist egalitarianism influenced his decision of non-repatriation:

\begin{quote}
The more I read in the library, the more I was convinced... Well, my God, this is just the thing that is needed. Equality for everyone. Everything’s organized, planned, secure. On paper, it looks very nice, especially to someone who doesn’t know anything about it.\textsuperscript{171}
\end{quote}

Adams was put in charge of the camp library. The library stocked books written by Russian and Chinese authors, such as Maxim Gorky and Lu Xun, and were published by the Foreign Language Publishing Houses in Moscow and Peking.\textsuperscript{172} Books by

\begin{footnotes}
\footnoteref{171} J. Robert Moskin and Morris R. Wills, Turncoat; an American’s 12 years in Communist China; the story of Morris R. Wills as told to J. Robert Moskin (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 55.
\end{footnotes}
“progressive” western writers were carefully selected and stocked. Among them were Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Jack London, and W. E. B. Du Bois, who were strongly opposed to social injustice in the capitalist world. Batchelor later admitted that he had become a “progressive” through reading Communist literature in the library. In one exclusive report he wrote for the Associated Press, Batchelor mentioned that reading the *Daily Workers* from New York, London, and San Francisco had also had an impact on him. Morris Wills also revealed that the daily readings of Marx, Engels, and the *Daily Workers* had likewise intensified his sympathy toward Communism and China.

Themes of social injustice and hardships of the downtrodden in America were intentionally pitted against glowing pictures of life in Red China. New China and the progress it had made became another theme of the “Pyoktong University” education. With a genuine belief in the potential of the revolutionary transformation of China, the Chinese instructors tirelessly described the progress “New China” was making with “new roads, dams, and schools, and the happy life of peasants”.

Books like *Economic Progress of the Chinese People’s Republic* showcased the “statistics” and “tremendous gains” being made in different sectors of the Chinese economy. A silver-tongued Chinese instructor named Lin, dubbed “Screaming Skull” by many prisoners, was skilled at paining rosy, inviting pictures of China under Mao. Maoism was portrayed as an essential unity of interests and values widely shared by Chinese of all classes, regions,

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173 “Communists Accused: Communicated With Prisoners In North Camp Tokyo, Jan. 5,” *South China Morning Post*, 06 Jan. 1954: 16; also see Wang, *They Chose China*.
175 Debriefing of Morris R. Wills, Nov. 19, 1965, Department of State Airgram, p. 27, FBI-Wills.
and creeds. Mao’s China was described as “a utopia where everyone would share equally”. 178 The White Haired Girl, a lengthy Chinese revolutionary opera, was performed twice at Camp 5 to demonstrate the contrast between the old China and the new China. 179 The constant bombardment of lectures on a glowing new China definitely impacted the captured soldiers’ views on China and Communism. When many of the American prisoners returned from Korea, they told the press, “Although communism won’t work in America, I think it’s a good thing for Asia”.180

In the meantime, the Chinese Communists seemed to work hard to expand the influence of the Chinese Communist revolution.181 Upon returning to the U.S., Corporal Edward S. Dickenson reported that the Chinese Communists had told him and other non-repatriates that the American Communist Party was preparing to launch a revolution by the year 1958.182 Dickenson added that the Chinese prisoners were told that they would be sent off to China for training to take over leading government positions in America. “You are revolutionaries now and will go to China to study Marx and Lenin,” the Chinese told the prisoners when they first rejected repatriation.183 The Chinese promised them that they would be generals or other high-power leaders; in this way, “we would become ‘masters of our own country,’” said Dickenson.184 Dickenson also mentioned that the Chinese had promised non-repatriates women, homes, and free education.185

178 Richardson, Valley of Death, 267.
179 Ibid., 272; MacKenzie, British Prisoners of the Korean War, 50.
180 Lech, Broken Soldiers, 5.
181 Carlson, Remembered Prisoners, 229-230. Also see Cunningham, No Mercy, No Leniency, 12-13; Lech, Broken Soldiers, 187-89.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
Collaborators’ Humanitarianism?

Most of the alleged acts of collaboration took place from late 1950 to the spring of 1951. It was estimated that a third of the American prisoners in Chinese-run camps collaborated with their captors; the British record also shows that at least one third of British servicemen collaborated. After the negotiations began between the United Nations and Chinese in August of 1951, the physical status of the POW improved considerably. Reportedly, 10-12% of the 1,200 U.N. prisoners in Camp 5 were progressives. The U.N. prisoners gradually fell into three categories, according to political behavior of individual prisoners: progressives, reactionaries, and non-committals.

Progressives, called “pros” for short, were the Chinese’s favorite students. Progressives were later characterized by the American media as “young” and “poorly educated and trained”. They were seen as not necessarily being Communists but as being people truly believing that communism was a superior form of government. They received extra food and other favors in return for their cooperation, but most of the other prisoners regarded them with distaste. Some of the progressives, such as Adams, were appointed as monitors who often guest-lectured on topics like feudalism, slavery, imperialism, capitalism, social development, and the accumulation of wealth. Adams also became a regular contributor of the camp propaganda newspaper, Toward Truth and Peace. The progressives joined “peace committees” and got special privileges, such as

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188 Pate, Reactionary! 68.
189 Adams, An American Dream, 57.
190 Ibid.
extra cigarettes, matches, shoes and clothing, pens and ink, and writing paper.\textsuperscript{191}

However, the perception that “the ‘progressives’ lived high in the camp, never had to work, and frequently got drunk with their Communist captors” was not true.\textsuperscript{192}

The progressives served as propagandists for the Communist cause, and their efforts were manifested in written articles, speeches, and recordings about the “The Chinese Lenient Treatment Policy”. The letters, articles, and pictures compiled by United Nations POWs were later distributed throughout the world in an attempt to prove that POWs were receiving excellent treatment in captivity. Among them, in particular, was

United Nations P.O.W.’s in Korea and Thinking Soldiers: By Men Who Fought in Korea, published for foreign consumption.\textsuperscript{193} At the end of 1951, when the Chinese abandoned the compulsory indoctrination program and set up a volunteer study group, most of the attendees were progressives. On February 22, 1953, several of the progressives signed a peace petition to the United Nations to bring a faster end to the war:

To: Representatives of all countries in the United Nations General Assembly  
From: POW Camp, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, February 22, 1953  
Dear Sirs:  
We, the undersigned, have been prisoners of war for over two years. During these two years our welfare has never been neglected and our stay here has been made as comfortable as possible. But personal comfort can never substitute for the yearning which we all have to return to our families and our natural desire to return home still remains in spite of the fact that we are being treated well and living comfortably.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{194} Adams, \textit{An American Dream}, 57.
Some of the returned prisoners complained that many “progressives” were given early release. One repatriated G.I. swore vengeance on fellow prisoners who turned informers: “You couldn’t say anything against the Reds without the Chinese finding out about it within 20 minutes. If they (informers) get on the boat with me, they’ll be shark bait. They were hated worse than the Chinks”. However, only twenty out of the early released 149 G.I.s were suspected as having been compromised and subsequently singled out for further mental and medical examination at the Valley Forge Army Hospital in Pennsylvania. Rather than all 149 of the early-released G.I.’s being seen as “progressives,” only these “Valley Forge 20” were seen as “having succumbed to Communist indoctrination”.

Making up less than five percent of the U.N. POWs, informers were not necessarily progressives or Communists. Not all the prisoners who mouthed Communist slogans and “toed the Communist line” were informers. Also, those who informed or actively assisted the Chinese were not necessarily Communists. In one extreme case, the incentive for one G.I.’s informant behavior was “to get the money to purchase marijuana,” rather than being a result of successful Chinese indoctrination.

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197 Ibid.
198 Basset, *And the Wind Blew Cold*, 93.
Consisting of approximately 209 POWs, reactionaries were famous for their tough stand against Communism. The Chinese called them “problem children” or “stubborn students”. The Chinese put them in a squad of their own, named “reactionary squad”. A Ku Klux Klan unit was formed among the reactionaries to “straighten out communistic tendencies of some of the boys,” according to Pfc. James R. Dunn, a repatriated G.I. from Anderson, N.C. The unit was located in Prison Camp 1 close to Pyongyang; however, the KKK members eventually expanded their influence to every single camp except Camp 2. The concept of race served more as an organizational strategy for general opposition to communist indoctrination,” especially within the overarching theme of equality. Members were organized to obstruct Chinese reeducation efforts, threaten suspected “progressives,” and disrupt camp life. According to the Army record, sergeant Lloyd W. Pate, the famous American reactionary,

organized groups of fellow prisoners to disrupt attempts at Communist indoctrination and harass their instructors. Each time the groups were disbanded because of informants, Sergeant Pate formed other resistance groups…. he raised the morale of fellow prisoners, stiffened their resistance and contributed in great measure to the failure of the Communist program to convert prisoners of war to Communism.

Pate was awarded the Commendation Ribbon by the U.S. Army in 1954 for being a reactionary in the prisoner camps.

Actual disciplinary punishments were reserved for the small minority of hard-core prisoners who fought back or sabotaged Chinese indoctrination efforts. For example, if

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204 McKnight, “We Fight for Peace,”77.
205 Ibid.
206 Pate, Reactionary! 137.
these prisoners offended or threatened a progressive, they were likely to be thrown into the “hole” or the “icebox” and placed in solitary confinement. Many returned ex-POWs said they had been “whipped, beaten and forced to stand immobile for hours in freezing cold because of tales carried to the Chinese by “Progressives.” The British Ministry of Defence 1955 Report records the punishment given to an American officer:

He was kept in solitary confinement for three weeks. During his confinement, he was savagely beaten and tortured. When he returned to the compound he was morally and physically broken. He told the other officers never to discuss anything in his presence as he had been sent back to act as an informer and threatened with worse torture if he did not comply. His treatment had left him very weak and he no longer had any will to live … and he eventually died about two weeks after his release.

The vast majority of the U.N. prisoners were “non-committals”. They “played it cool” by keeping a low profile, drifting along with Communist discipline and avoiding mistreatment, in the in hopes of surviving until the war ended. Postwar studies sponsored by the army offered the surprising conclusion that maintaining a neutral attitude was actually the best approach to cope with captivity. The neutrals, or the “in-betweens,” constituted approximately eighty percent of the POW population. Not surprisingly, these people were the sources through which the Chinese were able to get acquainted with the prisoner situations within the camps. A lot of “rats” were actually from this group.

Upon repatriation, while facing his court-martial charge for collaborating with enemy, Claude Batchelor claimed his alleged collaborations were actually “humanitarian

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207 Basset, And the Wind Blew Cold, 68.
211 Pate, Reactionary! 68.
leadership”. As someone who enjoyed great favor with the Chinese, Batchelor was appointed the chairman of the Living Affairs Committee. His Chinese captors referred to him as a “young Lenin” and complimented his “mass line.” He argued that he was using his position in captivity to reinvent humanitarianism in a way different from that of the Geneva version of humanitarianism or the Chinese Lenient Treatment policy. He thought he had managed to earn respect among his fellow prisoners despite his progressive tendency because he was sincere and always kept his “progressive activities out in the open”. He further explained why he was well regarded, saying, “because I got along with the Chinese and made friends with them; because I believed that what I was doing was right and wanted to help my people”.

Even though Batchelor’s theory was met with skepticism, some of his fellow prisoners confirmed the fact that Batchelor used his position to assist the sick and wounded. One witness, Corp. Harold M. Dunn of Brooklyn, testified that “Batchelor helped other POWs in his company when they were ill, including Corp. Edward Dickenson. Dunn said Batchelor also helped, by his contacts with Chinese guards, to “bring about an improvement in food”.

Batchelor was not the only non-repatriates who exhibited this “humanitarian leadership”. Andrew Condron, a member of the British Royal Marines, was the only British non-repatriate during the Korean War. His fellow prisoners later vehemently

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212 McKnight, “We Fight for Peace,” 66.
215 Ibid.
defended him for his selfless assistance in captivity.\textsuperscript{217} Pf. John R. Dunn was another non-repatriate who was “known for his efforts to take care of other sick prisoners”.\textsuperscript{218} One Marine private, McKnight, testified after the war that “he owed his life to Dunn for sharing his food with him, giving him his blanket, and taking care of him when he was sick”.\textsuperscript{219} One British soldier found another way to provide aid: he later admitted the reason he attended voluntary study groups after the Chinese abandoned the compulsory mass indoctrination was “to get in with the Chinese”.\textsuperscript{220} By appearing to be attracted to Communism, he was able to obtain extra medical attention for fellow prisoners and acquire medical books for self-study. Colonel Harry Fleming, who was elected camp leader after twenty G.I.s were transferred from Camp 5 to Camp 12, succeeded in keeping a far lower death rate than any other prison camp. One witness testified that Fleming was in a “truly terrible position, for no man can serve two masters; he must remain loyal to his government yet someone must emerge from the prisoners to be a go-between between them and the enemy.”\textsuperscript{221} Fleming himself stated, “I will give my soul in hell to get every man out of here alive.”\textsuperscript{222}

Despite cultivating a mild affinity toward communism and China, the indoctrination program in general was a failure. The Communists “made a concerted but unsuccessful attempt to indoctrinate captured officers with their ideas,” said 28-year-old Captain Billy B. Foshee. He added that although the Communists talked “until we were

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{220} British Ministry of Defense, \textit{Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Korea}, 7.
\textsuperscript{221} Lech, \textit{Broken Soldiers}, 116.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 117.
almost deaf and blind,” they had little luck in their attempts to make Communists.\textsuperscript{223} “A few men went over to Communism as a result of indoctrination, but the majority came out even more anti-Communistic than before they went in,” said Corporal H. Hogg.\textsuperscript{224} 

Hogg said the Communists coerced prisoners to sign Communist peace appeals by threatening to cut their food rations.\textsuperscript{225}

As early as June 1952, the CPV switched gears and adopted Premier Zhou Enlai’s directives of focusing on the improvement of U.N. POWs’ living situations and working on libraries, clubs, and committees. As Cheng Shaokun, a Chinese camp officer, later recalled, “Primer Minister Zhou [Enlai] told us… Not too much lecturing, not too much political education. Concentrate on the principle of opposing the war, for peace”.\textsuperscript{226} With the information provided by some progressives, the Chinese POW administration finally switched from promoting ideological indoctrination to fighting against war and advocating peace.\textsuperscript{227} As a senior camp administrator, Zhou Bosheng attended the second CPV meeting to work against the enemy at Pyoktong in June 1952. The POW administration decided to abandon compulsory lectures in the meeting. A 1952 yearly report of the POW Work Section of the Division’s Political Affairs Department of CPVA states that although the CPV successfully persuaded the U.N. prisoners to criticize U.S. government policy in Korea, the class struggle education was a recognized failure.\textsuperscript{228} By mid-1952, the Chinese decided to abandon the compulsory “re-education,” though the

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\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{226} Cheng Shaokun in \textit{They Chose China}.

\textsuperscript{227} Cunningham, \textit{No Mercy, No Leniency}, 74.

\textsuperscript{228} Xu, \textit{Di yi ci jiao liang}, 270.
principles were “fundamental to the ‘Lenient Policy’ as originally formulated”. The Chinese report also said almost all the prisoners agreed that the U.S. had no business in Korea and that the Korean problem should be decided by the Korean people themselves. Topics like “monopoly capitalists,” “war trash for Wall-Street bosses,” “hypocritical democracy,” and “American aggression in Korea” not only became topics of laughter and ridicule for the POWs, but they were also taken as propaganda tactics to slander the American way of life. Additionally, the Chinese report also admitted that some of the prisoners viewed the POW education as spiritual torture. Their propaganda campaign, which targeted against families and relatives of enemy POWs, also encountered setbacks, as all the mail sent back home from POW compounds was seen as Communist propaganda. After these facts became clear, the POW education switched to only emphasizing the peace campaign, and the CPVA completely gave up the idea of “exporting revolution”.

A close examination of the way the Chinese treated U.N. POWs reveals that despite the extensive efforts to propagandize the humanitarianism of the new socialist regime, as evidenced by the self-proclaimed “Lenient Policy,” the efforts to ideologically indoctrinate and proselytize western enemies proved to be a failed experiment. The POW Work Section of the Division’s Political Affairs Department of the CPVA did not formulate a coherent policy in dealing with enemy prisoners of war; instead, they made haphazard exploitation attempts, including extracting filmed “confessions” from thirty-eight U.S. air force men for conducting a “germ warfare” campaign in 1952.

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230 Xu, *Di yi ci jiao liang*, 270.
Confessions were released in May 1952 saying that U.S. airmen dropped “explosive germ bombs” over North Korea in January 1952.\(^{232}\) The United States government persistently denied these germ warfare charges, which had been orchestrated by the Soviet Union and Communist China.\(^{233}\) The allegations resulted in an international controversy until 1998, when the public disclosure of Soviet Central Committee documents confirmed that the germ warfare had been a Chinese fraud. However, a few Chinese scholars continued to argue that the U.S. did indeed employ biological warfare against Chinese and North Korean forces during the Korean War.\(^{234}\)

Chinese revolutionaries tried out their methods on the western minds, provoking both cultural and political vulnerabilities. Their tactics were developed slowly and carefully, based on the PLA’s past experience of dealing with captured soldiers of Kuomintang and Japanese. However, their experience was based primarily on illiterate peasant soldiers who were raised in a “culture that strongly emphasized obedience, loyalty, and sacrifice”.\(^{235}\) Though the instructors were intelligent and well trained, “hardly any of them had lived outside China, and they had no first-hand knowledge of Western mentality”.\(^{236}\) The same explanation applied to the Korean People's Army’s policy of early release of enemy prisoners. Lieutenant General Du Ping argued that it was the U.S.’s entrance into the war that changed the nature of the war from a civil war into

\(^{232}\) Lech, Broken Soldiers, 158.
^{235} Zhang, Mao’s Military Romanticism, 214-5.
^{236} Jones, No Rice for Rebels, 48.
an international war, resulting in a complicated prisoner-of-war issue. Early release revealed a fledging Communist regime without much world credentials applied mechanically its old practices from the civil war, disregarding the fact that the new enemy came from totally different cultural contexts. The Chinese’s efforts to break down the morale of U.N. prisoners in Korea ran parallel to their domestic policy of “thought reform”. Systematic attempts were made to convert their prisoners to the Communist viewpoint and use them to further their Communist goals in the propaganda campaigns worldwide.

The notion of race was extensively employed and exploited prominently in anti-American propaganda and in POW education. Even though the POW indoctrination touched off sensitive issues, such as the ethnic strife and racism, most of the American prisoners, including the African-American servicemen, remained resistant to Communist indoctrination efforts, as testified by the formulation of clandestine racist organizations, such as the KKK, to resist Chinese propaganda. As historian Zhang Shuguang points out, “the CPV’s political indoctrination faltered in the face of poor logistics, resulting in inadequate clothing and poor food, repeated military setbacks, and an effective US/UN propaganda war”. Time magazine reported in 1953 that a mere thirty of the 3,500 POWs proved “really susceptible to enemy propaganda”.

For the sake of surviving the captivity, “progressives” collaborated with their captors to improve their living situations. Even the infamous twenty-one non-repatriates chose to stay in China not out of ideological convictions but out of pursuing opportunities

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237 Du, Du Ping hui yi lu, 344.
238 Zhang, Mao’s Military Romanticism, 215; Gerald Segal, Defending China (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 103.
to elevate their own life situations or play the “peace fighter” role modeled by Communist China. Andrew Condron, the only British non-repatriate, insisted that he was “not a Communist but a pacifist who wanted to prove that ‘war is evil and people can live together in peace.” 240 S. P. MacKenzie’s research demonstrated that Condron’s motivations and actions to stay behind had more to do with him “as an individual rather than reflecting some broader ideological position”. 241 Looking back on his experience after several years, Adams recalled his years as a prisoner in Chinese-run camps: “I never became a Communist or a Chinese citizen,” Adams remarked. He continued,

I was looking for something much more fundamental. I wanted to be treated as a human being, and I wanted the opportunity to live a better life. Although our Chinese captors never became close to any prisoners, they at least treated black and white prisoners with equal dignity—or indifference. Thus, for the first time in my life, I felt I was being treated as an equal rather than as an outcast. 242

The non-repatriation of one small group of opportunistic and troubled young men triggered paranoid anxiety in Cold War America. Lurid accounts of germ warfare and the twenty-one non-repatriates gave momentum to sensational depiction of China being a formidable “brainwashing” regime. U.S. journalist and CIA agent Edward Hunter’s serialized publications on “brainwashing” dramatized the physical and mental coercion in the hands of Chinese Communists. 243 In 1958, his testimony in “United States House Committee on Un-American Activities” further fanned the flame of virulent

anticommunism in the MacCarthyite era and provided fuel for further dividing an America searching for enemies within.\textsuperscript{244}

In the aftermath of the repatriation of prisoners of war, an anxious America groped for a new POW policy. In 1955, President Eisenhower issued a Code of Conduct to regulate the servicemen’s conduct in captivity. The Report of the Secretary of Defense’s Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War warned the American people that the lesson from Korea was that the spread of Communism, whether by armed aggression or by internal infiltration, constituted a direct challenge to American way of life. Americans must work against Communism by being vigilant on the home front:

\begin{quote}
The responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of the United States and all it stands for is one which must be shared by every citizen. Every American is in the front line in the war for the minds of men … The home front is but an extension of the fighting front.\textsuperscript{245}
\end{quote}

The promulgation of Codes of Conduct within the U.S. and other western militaries regulated and enforced behavior norms in an ideological total war. As historian Elizabeth Lutes Hillman put it,

\begin{quote}
Defending America during the Cold War meant not only bearing arms on behalf of the nation, but also protecting American ideological superiority by spurning communist indoctrination—even under the duress and deprivation of a remote POW camp.\textsuperscript{246}
\end{quote}

However, the newly issued code of conduct in the aftermath of court-martialing repatriated prisoners of war for collaboration “established an impossibly high standard of ideological loyalty that was unevenly enforced”.\textsuperscript{247}


\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., 46-47.
Ironically, what was perceived by the Chinese as a failure triggered potent countermeasures from the U.S. to combat future psychological warfare initiatives. Major W. E. Mayer, an Army psychiatrist from the Brooke Army Medical Service School in San Antonio, Tex., kept warning the American people that the Chinese Communists had acquired “the ultimate weapon” in the ideological total war:

Communist objectives as revealed in Korea are much more mature, far-seeing and long-range... If there is an ultimate weapon, it is not a bomb or a gun, but the psychological or ideological weapon as used by the Chinese Communists.248

The attacks from journalist Eugene Kinkead and Army psychiatrist Major William E. Mayer propagandized the image of American servicemen in captivity as collaborators. Kinkead concluded that the American prisoners “appeared to lose all sense of allegiance not only to their country but to their fellow prisoners”.249 In a similar vein, Mayer argued,

The behavior of many Americans in Korean prisoner camps appears to raise serious questions about American character, and about the education of Americans... The behavior of too many of our soldiers in prison fell far short of the historical American standards of honor, loyalty, courage and personal integrity.250

Mayer based on his conclusion on the interviews of over 4,000 returning prisoners of war from Korea and described brainwashing as “simply a well organized educational program”.251

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249 Eugene Kinkead, In Every War But One (New York: W.W. Norton, 1959), 154; also published in Britain under the title Why They Collaborated (London: Longmans, 1960); Maj. William E. Mayer, “Why Did Many GI Captives Cave In?” U.S. News and World Report, 24 Feb. 1956: 56; Mayer also had a widely circulated sound tape, entitled “Brainwashing and its Implications on American Prisoners of War in Korea”.
250 Mayer, “Why Did Many GI Captives Cave In?”
251 Mayer, “Brainwashing: The Ultimate Weapon”.

58
“Pyoktong University” outdoor classroom in a valley close to Camp 5 in Pyoktong. The mud huts at the top of the picture are the dorms where the “students” lived. The prisoners all sat on the ground or on bricks or homemade stools, while the Chinese instructor stood alone to lecture.

by Wang Nai-qing, source: Internet

U.N. POWs watching *The White-Haired Girl* stage show performed by a touring drama troupe in Pyoktong in 1952

by Wang Nai-qing, source: Internet
Chapter III

“Bugout”\textsuperscript{252} in Death Island and the Price of Non-Repatriation

General Dodd went down by the compound.
Everything was dull inside
When all at once two Commies grabbed him,
James Van Fleet sat down and cried . . . \textsuperscript{253}

This song, sung to the tune of \textit{The Little White Cloud That Cried}, narrates a
specular series of events in May, 1952, when an unwary American general was seized
and held for ransom by his mutinous prisoners under the United States-led United
Nations Command. During the spring of 1952, a barrage of violent riots culminated in the
kidnapping of this American general in the grisly island prison of Koje. The general
signaled his subordinates not to fight and said he would court-martial anyone who fired.
The mortified American troops at the gate witnessed their general being hauled away by
his own captives.

Referred to by General Clark as “the biggest flap of the whole war,” this
extraordinary incident immediately drew widespread attention.\textsuperscript{254} The \textit{New York Times}
stated that it took on “such a fantastic character as to be almost unbelievable”. \textsuperscript{255}

\textsuperscript{252} “Bugout,” a noun, was the POW Command slang term for a prisoner of war who altered his ideological
loyalty in either direction.
\textsuperscript{254} Mark W. Clark, \textit{From the Danube to the Yalu} (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 36.
ensuing turbulence and the U.N.’s mishandling of the POWs generated headlines—especially adverse publicity for the U.N.—in the foreign press all over the world.

An observer in 1952 would have been shocked by the extent of agency that North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war were able to exercise while in captivity: they not only managed their living-related issues, but they also “defied guards, silenced dissenters, traded with the natives, made demands, and staged demonstrations and within the stockades”.  

A postwar analysis from the University of Chicago characterized the popular image of the Koje-do POWs as “fanatically active and rebellious against their captors”.

At its height, the U.N.C. Camp on the island of Koje held 173,218 prisoners of war who fought for the Communist side (North Korea and the People's Republic of China), including 151,589 Koreans and 21,629 Chinese. Koje held the largest POW camp run under U.S. military auspices. On October 15, 1950, during the meeting with President Truman at Wake Island, General Douglas MacArthur had reported of his 60,000 North Korean prisoners:

The prisoners are the happiest Koreans in Korea. They are clean and well-fed for the first time. They have been de-loused and have good jobs for which they are being paid under the Geneva Convention.

Granted, in their best conditions, Communist prisoners in United Nations camps were adequately clothed, appeared well fed, and had medical care available. They were housed

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in neat, winter-proofed buildings which they themselves had constructed out of stone, mud, and cement. However, within two years of MacArthur’s claim, these same prisoners had written and signed blood petitions, instigated prison riots, shouted out derogatory “pro-and-con” Communist songs, kidnapped a U.S. general, waved Communist and anticommunist flags, and manufactured handmade weapons behind the barbed wire fences. Moreover, at the end of the war, the emotional upheaval of the POWs was not ultimately resolved by the prisoners’ return to their native cultures.

Despite the rebelliousness within the camps, the majority of the POWs did not ultimately wish to return to their native lands, contrary to the claims laid out by the Communist press. In fact, by the end of the war, more than two-thirds of the Chinese POWs and more than one third of the North Korean POWs had decided not to return to Communist control. To the consternation of Chinese and North Korean Communists, only 70,000 of the 132,000 prisoners held by the U.N. chose repatriation. Out of approximately 21,700 Chinese prisoners of war, 14,066 chose to go to Taiwan. “This kind of mass resistance to repatriation has been almost unknown in modern warfare until very recent times,” commented the previously mentioned University of Chicago postwar analysis.

This chapter is an effort to provide an understanding of the turmoil and unrest within the United Nations Command (U.N.C.) prison compounds, of the way the prisoners’ behavior provided insights into Chinese and North Korean Communist societies, and of America’s psychological war initiative surrounding the enemy

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The chapter explores some of the unusual circumstances, particularly those of the Chinese prisoners of war, which led to subsequent prison riots and mass non-repatriation in the U.N.C. prison compounds. The chapter asks such questions as: to what extent did these soldiers’ fates in captivity become a focus point of struggle for Beijing, Taipei, and Washington? How did these powers strive to turn the knotty problem of Communist prisoners into a strategic advantage in the Cold War struggle? How did the progress of truce talks affect political developments within the prison compounds? How did the “democratically oriented” prisoner-students of the “Civilian Information and Education Divisions” program eventually galvanize the captives into becoming militant and fanatical prisoners? How was the prison compound subdued and restored to order by an old China hand?

The answers to these questions are crucial to understanding America’s role in the Asian civil wars within the context of global cold war. Cultural and linguistic competence proved to be essential in effectively engaging enemy POWs in Asia. Under pressure from their allies and from world opinion, Americans eventually sent one of their best talents to handle the Oriental prisoners, and General “Bull” Boater came to Koje and finally subdued the prisoner munity.

While the non-repatriation principle served as a stroke of brilliance in American psychological warfare in delegitimizing Communist regimes in China and Korea, Communist and anticommmunist prisoners’ ferocious infighting behind the barbed wires and America’s overall mismanagement of prison camps revealed that voluntary

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262 Between November 1950 to March 1951, the U.S. Eighth Army set up a psychological war division to win the hearts and minds of the Communist soldiers.
repatriation was no more than American-style rhetoric of democratic empowerment and the celebration of individual choice over Communist collectivism.

Whereas it became a self-serving, self-perpetuating myth for Cold War America that a person only accepted Communism at the point of a bayonet, it was the masses of Asian prisoners of war who paid the price for the American policy of non-repatriation by subjecting themselves to either Communist or anticommunist revolutionary violence.\textsuperscript{263} The horrific violence in Koje underscored how American Cold War ideology, although championing individual choice over totalitarian Communism, ended up providing limited options for prisoners and instigating destructive violence in the camps.

**The Composition and Motivations of the Communist POWs**

During the truce talks, the number of the U.N.-controlled Communist POWs provided by the Red Cross delegate was 169,000. However, when both sides exchanged the list of POWs in December 1951, the number submitted by U.N. was 132,000. Only about 70,000 people would not forcibly resist repatriation to China or North Korea. This discrepancy enraged the Communist side. The Americans claimed that they had deducted 38,000 South Koreans, who had been captured and impressed into the North Korean Army and had later been taken into custody by the United Nations forces at the end of 1950. The United Nations did not consider them to be genuine prisoners of war and reclassified them as civilians. If these residents in South Korea had been repatriated, they

\textsuperscript{263} The American presumption that most Chinese did not believe in Communism can be evidenced by a U.N. propaganda leaflet, which read, “Most of you were not Communists. You were forced by a few Communist leaders to flight and be scarified for Russia. Why should you continue to do this? Join the United Nations’ side for freedom and prosperity.”
would have been turned over to North Korea instead of returning to their homes in the South.\textsuperscript{264}

Among the 132,000 were more than 20,000 Chinese POWs, half of whom were soldiers of the ill-fated 180th Division of the 60th Army, who had been captured during their encounters with the U.S. 24\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division during China’s unsuccessful “Fifth Phase” Offensive (April 22—June 10,1951).\textsuperscript{265} During this attack, the Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) had commanded nine armies of approximately 250,000 men.\textsuperscript{266} According to Liang Shiqiu, during the five offensives, up to 173,700 Communist soldiers were captured as prisoners of war, among whom the Chinese POWs comprised approximately 21,300.\textsuperscript{267}

The internal makeup of North Korean POWs was simple and straightforward. Before the Inchon Landing in September of 1950, the U.N. side only held 1,000 North Korean POWs. In the following two months, almost 130,000 prisoners were held under U.N. control. By mid-1951, there was a population of more than 150,000 inhabitants at Koje-do.\textsuperscript{268}

Approximately 110,000 were actually North Korean. The remaining 40,000 were South Koreans pressed into service with the KPA … the average prisoner of war (POW) had been in the KPA for less than six months.\textsuperscript{269}

\textsuperscript{265} 180\textsuperscript{th} Division was stationed in Chengdu, Sichuan before the outbreak of the war. Most of those captured from the 180th Division were sent to Koje Island, 25 miles southwest of Pusan, including the Division Commissar Pei Shan.
\textsuperscript{267} Liang Shiqiu, “Guang rong de bei ju di yi mu,” in Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi, 18.
According to the survey statistics collected by the U.S., the Korean POWs included North Korean soldiers, drafted North Korean civilians, ex-South Korean POWs, straggling South Korean soldiers, and civilians.\textsuperscript{270} Soviet diplomatic documents also confirmed that the North Korean army had regrouped some South Korean POWs into their units.\textsuperscript{271} The POWs were first held under South Korean control near Pusan and were later transferred to Koje by the winter of 1951.

The composition of the Chinese POWs was more complicated, resulting from the indiscriminate recruiting of the Chinese Communist Party in 1950-1951. The Chinese POWs were made up of die-hard Communists who attempted to hide their true identities, as well as new recruits of dubious political allegiance. The Chinese government had, in early October 1950, scrambled to raise a “volunteer” army of 1.2 million men, who were not soldiers of the highest caliber. The Chinese government aimed to convince the world that Chinese “volunteers,” not the Chinese government, had organized the CPV.\textsuperscript{272} The government had rounded up an assortment of men, ranging in age from fifteen to early twenties. The fledging Communist regime had actively recruited WWII veterans and seasoned Communist soldiers who had suffered tremendous losses during the Chinese Civil War. The new recruits also included naïve university graduates who had wanted some experience but had not anticipated the brutality of the battlefield. The regime had even accepted “spoiled capitalists” from “wealthy families, such as landlords, business owners, bankers, and other bourgeois and capitalist classes accustomed to exploiting the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{270}Ri ben lu ju shi xie hui, ed., \textit{Chao xian zhan zheng} (Jie fang jun guo fang chu ban she, 1990), 201-203.
\item \textsuperscript{271}Shen Zhihua, ed., \textit{Chao xian zhan zheng: e guo dan an guo de jie mi wen jian} [Korean War: declassified documents from archives in Russia] (Zhong yang yan jiu yuan jin dai shi yan ji u suo shi liao cong kan, 2003), 650.
\item \textsuperscript{272}“Organizing the Riots on Koje: Colonel Zhao’s Story,” in \textit{Voices from the Korean War}, 247.
\end{itemize}
less fortunate members of society”.

To members of the old exploiting classes, fighting in the CPVA provided the opportunity to seek redemption in a new China teeming with Maoist revolution slogans.

A large number of CPV prisoners, as U.S. Army historian Walter G. Hermes pointed out, lacked enthusiasm for returning to Communist control because many of them were former Nationalist soldiers who defected to the Communists during the Chinese Civil War. During the final stage of the Chinese Civil War, the PLA picked up a large number of Nationalist soldiers and integrated them into the Communist Army en masse via the Lenient Policy. British historian Rosemary Foot estimated that former Nationalist soldiers comprised 50-70 percent of CPV forces. Of these soldiers, 7,094 expressed repatriation wishes and eventually returned to the mainland. More than 14,000 went to Taiwan when the conflict ceased, and very few went to neutral nations. In his 1954 government report, Lieutenant-General Chiang Ching-kuo, then the director of the political affairs bureau of the Defense Ministry of the Nationalist government of China, mentioned that 66% of the non-repatriated Chinese POWs were actually ex-Nationalist soldiers.

Historians have debated over the reasons accounting for the defeat of the Chinese during the “Fifth Phase” Offensive (April 22-30,1951), when the majority of Chinese

273 Ibid.
278 Chou Hsiu-Huan etc. (eds.), *Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu* [The Reminiscences of Korean War Anticommunist Defectors] (Taipei Shi: Guo shi guan, 2013), 38.
POWs were captured. Reuter reported that it was the first time that “massed groups of Chinese prisoners lay down their arms and surrendered” to South Koreans and Americans. During the second stage of the offensive, more than 16,000 Chinese were captured, which made up 80% of the whole CPV POW population. Despite overextended supply lines and outdated facilities, the CCP leaders launched the campaign to avoid having to fight on both fronts to prevent another U.S./U.N. landing. Chinese historian Zhang Shuguang noted, the CCP leaders’ “war of attrition” strategy not only weakened the U.S./U.N. forces as the Chinese had predicted, but it also had a devastating effect on the development of Chinese economy and society, as well as damaging the morale of the CPV soldiers”. Replenishment of the troops became problematic when the front line became overextended and the Russian air force failed to deliver the goods it had promised. The PRC was under tremendous pressure fighting a new war within five years of the outbreak of the Chinese Civil War. As the war in Korea progressed, the Chinese supply lines became thin and overstretched. As a consequence, weaponry, food, and medicines were in seriously short supply. The CPV leadership had entered Korea in 1950 expecting to fight a defensive battle, but from the onset, the Chinese found themselves drawn into offensive operations to clear North Korea of the U.N. troops. The CPV’s military unpreparedness for this type of operation caused their troops to suffer greatly. The CPV leadership generally believed that their numerical and moral superiority would yield a complete victory over American technological prowess. The Chinese side

281 Xu yan, *Mao ze dong yu kang mei yuan chao zhan zheng* (Jie fang jun chu ban she, 2003), 217.
never expected that the U.N. forces would recover so quickly from their long retreat. Furthermore, the CPV vastly underestimated their enemy’s superior weaponry. Finally, their political and military leaders had expected practically unlimited support from their ally, the Soviet Union; however, the promised air force coverage was never provided.\textsuperscript{283} Throughout the course of the war, the Chinese Peoples’ Volunteers lost approximately 21,000 men as prisoners of war. On the U.N. side, the United States was caught by surprise at the massive numbers of Communist prisoners that their forces accumulated so quickly.\textsuperscript{284}

After July 1951, U.N. psychological warfare messages proved to be a crucial factor in the heavy increase of Communist prisoners.\textsuperscript{285} Since the beginning of the war, the United Nations Command had utilized leaflets, radio broadcasts, and loudspeakers to persuade Communist soldiers to capitulate voluntarily. The surrender leaflets were particularly compelling for the Chinese enlisted men, as hundreds of them had reportedly crossed the U.N. line, waving surrender-safe conduct psychological warfare leaflets.\textsuperscript{286} Later interrogations of Communist prisoners of war demonstrated that one in three were influenced to surrender by leaflets.\textsuperscript{287}

The complicated makeup of personnel set the stage for the adoption of the “voluntary repatriation” policy and the “bloody screening” of POWs. In the meantime,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{283} Stanley Sandler, \textit{The Korean War: No Victors, No Vanquished} (Louisville, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 239-240.
\item\textsuperscript{286} Demaree Bess, “The Prisoners Stole the Show in Korea,” \textit{The Saturday Evening Post}, 1 Nov. 1952, Vol. 225, Iss. 18: 37.
\item\textsuperscript{287} Laurie, “Psychological Warfare,” 538.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the complex composition of prisoner population also heightened and multiplied the level of hardship POWs suffered in captivity, as well as provided opportunities for those trying to divide the POWs along certain political lines. The dramatic influx of enemy prisoners caught the Americans off guard, for they had not anticipated collecting such a large number of enemy prisoners, let alone managing them. To feed, house, clothe, and guard an ever-mounting prisoner population posed an insurmountable problem for the United Nations Command.

The POWs’ Living Situation

The Chinese and North Korean prisoners were mainly held by the American and South Korean troops. The South Koreans, like their counterparts in the North, initially had no policy for prisoners and simply shot the North Koreans they captured. A South Korean officer reported that at other times, South Korean soldiers released enemy prisoners on the spot out of convenience instead of sending them to POW camps.288 Since September 1950, the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSAK) POW Command began to bear the brunt of the custodial responsibility of managing and controlling all the Communist prisoners captured.289 Later, the U.S., as the executive agent for the U.N., collected all the North Korean POWs and placed them in different camps.290 The prisoners stayed in

settlement camps along the southern coast of Korea, located at Pusan, Koje Island, and Jeju Island. The temporary prison stockades resided in Pusan, Pyongyang, and Inchon.

Pusan, the principal U.N. post for transporting military materials, became the post where the U.S. Army Prisoners of War Headquarters was first based. Located in the southern tip of Korea, this port city primarily held wounded prisoners, women, and children. Generally a total of about 12,000 wounded prisoners were held for treatment at the 64th Field Hospital in Pusan.

Simultaneously, Pusan also held transiting camps, where newly captured prisoners came and were registered. Photographs and fingerprints were taken, and each person received a POW tag with the date and their registration number. The tag included comprehensive information about individual POWs—their places of origin, age, class origins, experience, family background, education, date of joining the army, ranking, office appointments, battles fought in the war, etc. The Chinese POWs called the POW tag their “POW ticket”. Only after a POW received the POW ticket could he or she could be officially called a U.N. POW and begin to enjoy the privileges of a POW under the Geneva Convention. Such privileges meant that the prisoners would be “treated as human beings who had ceased to be combatants and were entitled to adequate food, shelter, and facilities for their physical, spiritual, and intellectual welfare”.

After being deloused and sprayed with D.D.T., prisoners were given POW uniforms and old military blankets. Then they were categorized according to the condition of their wounds and sent to different destinations. Healthy and newly recovered

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291 Pusan also served as the temporary capital for the retreating South Korean government.
292 Liang Shiqiu, “Guang rong de bei ju di yi mu,” in Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi, 18-19.
293 Ibid., 19.
prisoners were sent to other camps in groups of five hundred. One Chinese prisoner’s memoir mentioned that each of the prisoners was allocated half box of cigarettes, which the prisoners used in gambling to kill time.\(^{295}\) By September 24, after Indian custodian forces took full custody of the non-repatriated POWs, the main concentration of anticommmunist Chinese POWs was on Cheju-do Island.\(^{296}\)

During the first two years of the war, different ideas were proposed regarding where to construct prisoner-of-war camps. Before January 1951, General MacArthur proposed to transfer all the enemy POWs to the United States territory, as had been done with the majority of German POWs back in World War II; however, the U.S. government rejected this proposal on the basis of practicality.\(^{297}\) One scholar surmised in retrospect that such a move might have prevented the Dodd Incident.\(^ {298}\) Eventually, all the prison camps were built in South Korea and on offshore islands. In his memoir, Ridgway recalled the U.N.’s consideration in choosing the locations of prison camps. Initially, attention was focused on Cheju-do; however, Koje-do was eventually chosen due to its smaller population density, despite its rocky, mountainous terrain.\(^ {299}\) The U.N. also made public the location of the camp to “avoid any possibility of enemy attack”.\(^ {300}\) After the screenings of 1952, the U.N.C. decided to move some of the excessive POW population to Pongam-do, as well as Cheju-do.

Most of the prisoners were sent to Koje, a 150-square-mile mountainous island in the vicinity of Pusan, thirty miles off the southeastern tip of Korea. The island itself was

\(^{295}\) “Ji Yunhuan xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 180.
\(^{296}\) The camps in Koje Island and Jeju Island were built in April 1951 and May 1952, respectively.
\(^{297}\) Ridgway, The Korean War, 205.
\(^{298}\) Riconda, Prisoners of War in American Conflicts, 243; Ridgway, The Korean War, 205.
twenty-three miles long and from two to fifteen miles wide. It was the same place the
Japanese had held their American POWs during World War II, when Korea was a colony
of Japan. Known as the “island of death,” Koje had held banished prisoners as early as
Korea’s Koryo Dynasty (918-1392). Korean civilians used the island as a fishing post.

In January 1951, the U.S. Army decided to construct the camp despite the
vociferous protests from Korean peasants, as it was built on a former rice paddy. In Koje,
about 100,000 farmers and fishermen made up the general population.301 The local
civilian population was made up of about 46,000, but at the beginning of the war, the
sleepy island had suddenly found 65,000 refugees pouring onto its shores for safety. Two
valleys in the northeastern part of the island were chosen for the location for the camp.
On May 30, 1951, the U.S. Army began to ship up to 50,000 POWs from temporary
camps in Pusan to Koje in groups of 500 via cargo ships. Up to 150,000 North Korean
and Chinese prisoners and Korean civilian internees were incarcerated in a camp
designed to hold a maximum of 38,400 people.302 Additionally, 15,000 U.N. troops were
stationed to guard them. A total of thirty compounds were established in Koje, though the
compounds were of different sizes and some were only used as warehouses. The
prisoners lived in squad tents, which accommodated 120 people each. U.S. Army
quartermasters gave every prisoner a full issue of clothes, from head to toe, out of the
class X stores, with a total value of $54.80 spent for each person. This amount
represented more than nine years’ pay for a South Korean soldier.303

of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army, 1994), 1; Ridgway, The Korean War, 206.
303 George Barrett, “Koje at Last Appears to be Under Control: Boatner’s Firm Policy Convinces Prisoners
There was a division of labor among the American and South Korean staff at Koje. Americans occupied all the leadership roles in the camps, mainly in interrogation, education, and propaganda, while Syngman Rhee’s troops covered the daily groundwork and were under the supervision of the Americans. The camp commander and military police headquarters of the logistics department of EUSAK took charge of all the administration work.

On the surface, the camps seemed to be under close surveillance. There were five formidable layers of barbed wire outside every compound. A twenty-meter-high watchtower was erected at every corner of the compound. Barbed-wire fences up to five meters high surrounded the camps, as well as ten-meter-high post buildings at the camp’s four corners. At night, searchlights glared over the compounds for the purpose of preventing prison riot attempts. Tanks constantly patrolled around iron houses and tents which inhabited prisoners and administrative personnel. At the top of the mountains nearby were searchlights, and lower inland was a helicopter airport. Besides the standard prison camps, the U.S. Armed forces also installed additional prisons for war criminals, such as iron camps and water camps.

However, camp security was not as good as it appeared to be; in fact, the camps were poorly organized. All the records indicate that the Koje prison compounds were understaffed, overcrowded, and above all, woefully mismanaged. Generally speaking, the U.S. armed forces’ management style was to leave prisoners to their own “self-

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304 During World War II, both German POWs and Japanese POWs under American control committed riots. The use of searchlights during the night was intended to prevent similar occurrences; unfortunately, this deterrent was not very successful. See Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 303.
administration” (“Yi fu zhi fu”). According to the rationale of the U.N.C., these prisoners ceased to be instruments of the enemy and became subject to “the laws, regulations, and orders in force in the armed forces of the Detaining Power”; thus, the captives were allowed a “generous measure of self-government”. As a result of the U.N.C.’s carelessness, laxity, and indifference, the prisoners themselves normally “ran the show,” and the guards’ control stopped at the compound gates. The POWs were “virtually masters of their compounds,” wrote George Forty, while the guards “could do no more than stay outside [the barbed wire], under orders not to use force”. The U.N. guards at Compound 76 even abandoned their command posts in April 1952 because, as one American captain in charge of the stockade put it, “We felt our lives were in danger.” Each compound selected its own spokesman to deal with camp authorities; this man served as a representative for all the POWs in the compound. POW Guards (P.G.s) and Compound Monitors (C.M.s) were selected among the POWs themselves to maintain security and order. As one prison guard witnessed, “there was no bed check, no roll call, no inspection of quarters…when a prisoner walked into one of the Koje compounds, he actually passed out of the control of his captors.” One United Nations camp office credited the anti-Communist Young Men’s League with maintaining order in a prison camp close to Pusan. The camp housed 10,400 Korean prisoners, four-fifth of whom belonged to the anticommunist organization.

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305 According to Geneva Conventions, see Chen Jiying, “Ju ji dao han ze bu liang li,” in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 29.
The U.N. administration separated the Korean POWs from the Chinese POWs because the unequal distribution of food and clothing led to conflicts and disputes between the Chinese and North Koreans.\textsuperscript{311} Initially, North Koreans dominated almost all the POW leadership positions, and the Chinese received discriminatory treatment under the Koreans in receiving food and shelter.\textsuperscript{312} Compared to the Chinese prisoners, the Koreans enjoyed numerical superiority, and the camps were built on their homeland. The United Nations delegated the responsibility of security and management to the North Koreans, fueling their sense of condescension toward the Chinese. The Korean cooks in the kitchen manipulated the allocation of food to be favorable to the Korean POWs. One night, an angry, starving Chinese POW could not put up with this situation any more: he snatched the North Koreans’ rice bucket and took it to the Chinese crowd. A battle ensued over food distribution.\textsuperscript{313} The U.N. troops came in promptly to prevent any casualties from either side. This incident proved to be a turning point for the organization of Communist and anticommunist Chinese prisoners. With the removal of the external focus for their resentment (the North Koreans’ discriminatory food policy), the tension among the group of Chinese prisoners turned inward, and the division among the anticommunists and Communists emerged.\textsuperscript{314}

The Chinese POWs went through different compounds during their stay in Koje. They primarily stayed in Compound 72 (containing more than 7,000 people) and Compound 86 (containing more than 8,000 people), while Compound 70 and 61 also held

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[311] Wang Pingling and Mu Qin, “Ju ji dao han ze bu liang li (II),” in \textit{Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi}, 85; also see Liang Shiqiu, “Guang rong de bei ju di yi mu,” in \textit{Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi}, 19.
\item[312] Jiang Donghai, \textit{Yi wan si qian ge zheng ren} [Fourteen Thousand Witnesses] (Taipei: Xin zhong guo chu ban she, 1955), 62.
\item[313] Ibid., 63.
\item[314] Liang Shiqiu, “Guang rong de bei ju di yi mu,” in \textit{Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi}, 20.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
a few Chinese POWs. After being captured, most of the CPV soldiers were overwhelmed with enormous shame humiliation and despair. The Communist doctrine viewed being captured as “Shi jie” [shameful] and “Tan sheng pa si”[cowardly]. After November 8, 1951, 219 Chinese prisoners who insisted on repatriation were taken out of Compound 72 and 86, and Compound 71 was set up, which was designed to be the first “CPV POW Repatriation Camp”. After the April 8 Screening, more than 5,000 Chinese prisoners were gathered in a new compound, Compound 602, which had been established for those who opted to return to the PRC. In July 1951, these 5,000-odd men were transferred to Compound 21, which later became No. 8 POW Camp, until repatriation.

The official political apparatus was based on a four-layer leadership system. The prison camps were divided into basic units called regiments. Each regiment accommodated seven or eight thousand prisoners. The next echelons were battalions, companies, and platoons. Above the battalion were security guards; both the captain and guards were made up of prisoners of war.

General James Van Fleet, the Eighth Army Commander, instructed the Americans to run the camps as loosely as possible, as the armistice could be reached at any time; however, Communist Chinese Colonel Zhao interpreted the Americans’ lack of supervision in the camp as conspiratorial:

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316 Bian wei hui, “Chao xian zhan zheng zhong zai mei fan g de zhong guo zhan fu zai zhong ying kuang zong su,” in Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji, 8.
317 Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji, 2.
318 “Zhang Ruiqi xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 364.
319 Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji , 2.
320 Doyle, The Enemy in Our Hands, 258.
Many of the guards treated the prisoners like animals. The UN officers and men believed that we, the Chinese and North Koreans, were not people like themselves, but near animals, who could be controlled by the use of the same brutality we were accustomed to employ against each other. They selected traitors and defectors from the prisoners and used them to watch us.\textsuperscript{321}

Colonel Zhao’s emotional characterization of U.N.C. guardians as a mass with racial prejudice and the captors’ cruel treatment of Asian prisoners clearly attested to Zhao’s sense of victimization produced by his captivity and the degrading camp circumstances.

**Vocational or Ideological? The CI&E and the POW Education**

The idea of creating a prisoner reeducation program began on September 27, 1950, when General Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote to General Douglas MacArthur and told him to come up with a reeducation program, waging psychological warfare against the POWs to alter their political orientations.\textsuperscript{322} The Department of the Army initiated a rehabilitation program for the Korean POWs with Lieutenant Colonel Donald R. Nugent, USMC, as the director.\textsuperscript{323} Former officers working with denazification and officers who had experience working with Asians, particularly in China and Japan, staffed the “Civil Information and Education Section” Program, calling it the CI&E.\textsuperscript{324} Notably, two Presbyterian missionaries were also hired in Tokyo to prepare the CI&E to set up an elaborate series of educational courses.

\textsuperscript{321}“Organizing the Riots on Koje: Zhao’s Story,” in *Voices from the Korean War*, 243.
goal of the CI&E was to immerse the POWs in an alternative ideology to Communism. Monta L. Osborne served as the director of the pilot program on November 16, 1950.\textsuperscript{325} Major General Robert A. McClure, Chief of Psychological Warfare of U.S. Army, became the final director of the program, also serving as the chief instructor. The “Rehabilitation Project for Prisoners of War” received the personal endorsement of President Truman.\textsuperscript{326}

There were two stages of development of the POW education program. The first stage was the U.S. Army pilot program, which was implemented with 500 Korean POWs in October 1950 at Yongdong-po, near Seoul. The instructors used materials ranging from Army news releases and updates, weekly Korean translation of United States Information Services (USIS), and films with Japanese subtitles to explain “democracy”. The program was terminated after China’s entry into the war and was later reinitiated and transferred to the hands of the U.N. Command. In the second stage, which started in the spring of 1951, all POWs were expected to participate in the reeducation program.\textsuperscript{327} After the screenings and clear-cut separation of Communist and anticommunist compounds in 1952, the orientation classes in the Communist compounds were dropped entirely.\textsuperscript{328}

Based on the lessons learned during the denazification program in Germany and de-militarization program in Japan, the CIE program in Korea was a crash course on

\textsuperscript{325} Harold Vetter, \textit{Mutiny on Koje Island} (Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle, 1965), 100.
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{327} At the same time, the Chinese began their indoctrination program. 1951 was a turning point for both sides.
\textsuperscript{328} Vetter, \textit{Mutiny at Koje Island}, 109.
American democracy, the origins of the Korean War, and the role of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{329} The goals of these classes were to increase knowledge and understanding of democratic precautions and democratic ideals; the development of attitudes favorable to the United States and the United Nations; and the development of attitudes which will make of the POWs democratic citizens of their nations and of the world.\textsuperscript{330}

These classes aimed to wash away the prisoners’ mental image of Americans as evil capitalists on Wall Street or warmongers in Washington, D.C. and instead to create a sense of longing for the capitalist way of life.

The CI&E aimed to project America as a country of democracy, material affluence, and sophisticated technology. One of the standard textbooks the CI&E supplied to prisoners was called \textit{Today’s America}. The instructors encouraged group participation and discussion while keeping the lectures to a minimum.\textsuperscript{331} Kenneth Hansen, a Colonel in the U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Division, commented:

\begin{quote}
They were now to receive, for the first time in their lives...completely objective information. They did not have to believe it unless they wished to. They could ask questions, discuss it among themselves, and make up their own minds.\textsuperscript{332}
\end{quote}

Prisoners in Korea, as Rear Admiral Ruthven E. Libby, Chief of the United Nations sub-delegation recalled, were “being taught the fundamental concepts of democracy,” as well as the basic principles of the Four Freedoms which upheld universal human dignity and

\textsuperscript{329} For works on how the U.S. designed, built, and implemented successful prisoner camps and reeducation programs of German and Japanese POWs in America during World War II, see Jeffrey L. Littlejohn and Charles H. Ford, \textit{The Enemy Within Never Did Without: German and Japanese Prisoners of War At Camp Huntsville, 1942-1945} (Texas Review Press, 2015); Ron Robin, \textit{The Barbed-Wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States During World War II} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

\textsuperscript{330} Chief CI&E Section to Chief Psychological Warfare and Chief of Staff, “Third Interim Report on Progress of Educational Program for Prisoners of War,” 27 May 1952, RG 319, Box No. 30, 12.

\textsuperscript{331} Vetter, \textit{Mutiny at Koje Island}, 110.

\textsuperscript{332} Hansen, \textit{Heroes Behind Barbed Wire}, 45.
The Sears Roebuck catalogs were provided to showcase the American way of life and the abundance of consumer goods in a democracy characterized by individual choice in the marketplace.\textsuperscript{334}

The CI&E program at Koje also included literacy and vocational training, juvenile education, and health and sanitation instruction, as well as an extensive program of recreation, which included athletics, arts, drama, music, and literature.\textsuperscript{335} A literacy program was developed, as the great bulk of prisoner students were illiterate; (a survey by CI&E head John Benben showed that 24\% of the Koreans and 60\% of the Chinese were illiterate).\textsuperscript{336} According to White, the illiteracy rates for North Koreans and Chinese prisoners were 34\% and 82\%, respectively.\textsuperscript{337} The vocational training included carpentry, tailoring, mechanic repair, wielding, painting, pottery, and sculpting. R.W. Alderson from \textit{The Christian Science Monitor} described how the C.I.E. as a benevolent institution infused a sense of purpose among the enemy prisoners:

Here they learn arts and crafts, both to improve their camp accommodations, and to prepare for building a better standard of living in their homelands when they are released. American soldiers there have seen the prisoners learn to make splendid hand tools from discard scarps of steel.\textsuperscript{338}

Within the compounds, English-language newspapers, magazines, and films served as the main media from which the prisoners gleaned information. Material for indoctrination lectures was prepared from the newspapers such as the U.N.C. newsletter

\textsuperscript{333} Wilfred Burchett and Alan Winnington, \textit{Koje Unscreened} (Britain-China Friendship Association, 1952), 35.
\textsuperscript{334} White, \textit{The Captives of Korea}, 115.
\textsuperscript{335} Hansen, \textit{Heroes behind Barbed Wire}, 79.
\textsuperscript{337} White, \textit{The Captives of Korea}, 331.
Newspapers enabled prisoners in the camps to keep current on developments in the Armistice negotiations, on which their fate relied. Films such as *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* and documentaries were supplied by the USIS (the United States Information Agency). Also available were nineteen feature films and twenty cartoons made by six American film companies, including Columbia, MGM, RKO, 20th Century-Fox, United Artists, and Warner Bros. Additionally, the prisoners had access to English-language magazines and journals.

Nationalist Chinese educators were deeply involved in the planning and programming of the indoctrination of Chinese prisoners. At Koje, South Korean and Nationalist Chinese educators taught approximately 80-90 percent of the classes for prisoners. For the Chinese prisoners, the main subject of study was *China’s Destiny*, written by the “Generalissimo” Chiang Kai-shek. The reason for indoctrinating Generalissimo’s interpretation of Chinese nationalism was to rebuild the image of Chiang and to establish the legitimacy and orthodoxy of his regime in the minds of Chinese POWs. The POW students attended classes twice a week. Monthly examinations were held, and prisoners were taught to sing Nationalist revolutionary songs to praise Chiang and denounce Mao. All class sessions met for two hours, and every prisoner was required to attend four hours a week. At the end of each class, they shouted out anticomunist slogans. The classroom in each enclosure accommodated 500 men at a time, all sitting on

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the dirt floor, while the instructor lectured from a small stage, using loudspeakers and visual aids.\textsuperscript{343}

The CI&E also sought religious means to extract Asian prisoners’ allegiance and invited a few “old China hands” to exhort prisoners in fluent Chinese to join the cause to “Oppose the Communists and Resist Russia”.\textsuperscript{344} The CI&E employed Christian clergymen (Protestant and Catholic) to offer alternative perspectives on the present and the future.\textsuperscript{345} Military Chaplain Earle J. Woodberry, and Father Thomas O’Sullivan were assigned to work with Chinese POWs. Rev. Woodberry, the son of American missionaries born in China [Rev. John Woodberry], was the notorious “Wu pei li” [literal translation of Woodberry] who appeared in the memoirs of many Chinese POWs. The Communist Chinese prisoners rejected the preaching of Woodberry, as they interpreted Christianity as an agent of western colonialism and imperialism.\textsuperscript{346} A Chinese-speaking Korean pastor also worked closely with Chinese POWs.\textsuperscript{347}

\textsuperscript{343} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{344} Burchett and Winnington, Koje Unscreened, 23.
\textsuperscript{347} “Gao wen jun xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 310-311.
Satirical cartoon entitled “Such a Father” to mock Woodberry, drawn by Chinese Communist prisoner Wu Chunsheng.

When asked whether or not they would need religious services, many of the first 500 Korean POWs, who had been trained in Tokyo, asked for Christian services rather than Buddhist services, though Buddhism (along with Confucianism) dominated most of Korean history. The second Sunday after the request was made, forty-five prisoners attended a Catholic Mass and 165 attended Protestant services. Apparently, the U.N.C. leveraged the CI&E in converting Communist prisoners into Catholicism and Christianity as a means to fight against Communism. According to the Catholic Fides News Agency in Rome, 900 Communist prisoners reportedly had converted to Catholicism from August to October 1952 at a prisoner camp in South Korea.

348 Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji, vii.
350 Hansen, Heroes, 47. The CI&E religious instruction also included Buddhism, see Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 197.
The establishment of the CI&E was an attempt to bring American-style liberal arts education to prisoners in Korea, not only in terms of content, but also in the procedure and approach of teaching and learning. “There is nothing that remotely resembles coercion or intimidation,” said Libby proudly.\(^\text{352}\) A 1960 American book on Koje prisoners praised the CI&E, contrasting it with the Chinese brainwashing practice and pointing out that there was “no coercion, no intimidation, no calculated malnutrition, no Pavlovian conditioning, no relays of brutal inquisitors with endless questions”.\(^\text{353}\)

If the CI&E in Japan was an American effort to rebuild postwar Japanese society in its image, the CI&E in Korea was an effort to win the hearts and minds of the rank-and-file soldiers from both Korea and China—countries that were already ravaged by fratricidal civil wars. Additionally, the Korean organization’s purpose was to prove the superiority of the American way of life over the totalitarian Communism. Both CI&E programs were assigned a propaganda mission—the dissemination of democratic ideals and principles\(^\text{354}\)—making the goals of both programs more propagandistic than educational.\(^\text{355}\) The bottom line of the CI&E in Korea was, in the words of the field operations commander Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. O’Brien, “to show the POWs that they would be better off socially, politically, and economically under a democratic regime”.\(^\text{356}\)

The CI&E also equipped the Asian prisoners with a drastically different angle from which to view the relationship between the individual and society. In traditional

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\(^{352}\) Burchett and Winnington, *Koje Unscreened*, 35.  
\(^{354}\) For more information on the CI&E in Japan, see Eiji Takemae, *Allied Occupation of Japan* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), 180.  
\(^{355}\) Hsin-yi Shen, *Yi wan si qian ge zheng ren: han zhuan shi qi fan gong yi shi zhi yan jiu* [14,000 Witnesses: A Study on the “Anticommunist Defectors” during the Korean War] (Taipei, Taiwan: Academia Historica, 2013), 146, 140.  
Chinese and Korean cultures, “the individual cannot hope to influence the pattern of authority; he can only hope to improve his own situation by adapting to it,” as described by the University of Chicago report. By infusing a mindset of individual choice and democratic empowerment, the CI&E strived to reverse the pattern of rank-and-file behavior as “passivity and resignation in the face of any evident power” by eliciting more active roles of individuals.357

The development of the CI&E anticommunist indoctrination program served as catalyst for the emergence of two distinct ideological organized groups of anticommunist and Communist prisoners. The vocational training also enabled POWs to manufacture an impressive arsenal of makeshift weaponry within their own compounds. The two groups employed the home-made weaponry to fight for domination, escalating the level of violence in the compounds. Because of the CI&E’s pronounced impact on polarized camp politics, on March 26, 1953, the U.N.C. forbade the CI&E’s to use explicit anticommunist themes in their teaching.358 The 1992 RAND report regretfully admitted that the overall program of the CI&E aggravated the polarization of the prisoners.359

**Politics of Prisoners: A Very Uncivil War**360

To feed, clothe, shelter, and guard the enormous number of enemy POWs was indeed a feat for both the ROK Army and the United Nations Command; however, Americans made a few unwitting blunders that caused serious problems for the U.N.C. in

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358 CIE, Third Interim Report, May 19, 1952.
managing the camps. First of all, in the summer of 1951, the U.N.C. issued red-dyed, short-trouser prison uniforms, ignorant of the fact that during Japan’s colonial period, those who wore red were prisoners under the sentence of death. The misunderstanding caused great confusion and a huge outcry from the prisoners, and Communist prisoners exploited the Americans’ ignorance by aggravating the prisoners’ grievances and organizing a resistance movement. Secondly, the CI&E program used movies dubbed with Japanese voices, which generated great resentment among the Korean prisoners because they still harbored lingering animosities against Japan for the period of Japanese colonialism and military aggression. The U.S. forces’ failure to give consideration to these complex feelings or to be mindful of the psychology of superiority and oppression revealed a lack of prior understanding of the Korean people and their history. Thirdly, the U.S. allowed Taiwan to secretly enter the war by participating in the America’s psychological war effort. Shao Yulin, the first Republic of China ambassador to the Republic of Korea, later admitted in his memoir that he had appointed one Taiwanese psychological war agent named Chen Jianzhong to closely monitor the prisoner situation in Korea and to work on C&IE-related issues. Taiwan’s intervention aggravated the polarization of the Chinese prisoners and especially emboldened the anticommunists. Lastly, the U.N.C. was not adequately prepared to handle a large prison population and

361 “Gao wen jun xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 302.
362 The Chinese prisoners were ordered to wear the bright red uniforms, as well. The anticommmunist-controlling Compound 76 changed their clothes to the Red uniform, whereas Compound 86 initiated a strike, and the U.N. forces had to give up their red uniform campaign at Compound 86. See Bian wei hui, “Chao xian zhan zheng zhong zai mei Fang de zhong guo zhan fu ji zhong ying qing kuang zong su,” in Zhang, Mei jin ji zhong ying qin li ji, 4.
363 Chang, “To Return Home or ‘Return to Taiwan,’” 130.
failed to complete the systematic photographing and fingerprinting of the captives until
the spring of 1953.\textsuperscript{365} This delay enabled the prisoners to “switch identities or adopt
aliases without fear of detection by the Americans.”\textsuperscript{366} Records of behaviors and
practices can be found in Chinese POWs’ memoirs.

The system in which the Americans ran the camps also provided opportunities for
both Communists and anticommunists to wrangle for control of prison compounds. The
understaffed, outnumbered Americans actively sought out and hired pro-American,
English-speaking Korean and Chinese prisoners and civilians to run the camps.\textsuperscript{367} Among
all the qualities they sought, “knowledge of English was… the most valuable asset for
any PW who desired appointment to an official position within the camp”.\textsuperscript{368} The hired
POW officers usually consisted of people who “generally spoke some English” and were
“intelligent, well educated, and actively cooperative with the American authorities”.\textsuperscript{369}
For example, one prisoner commander, Zhang Zeshi, “served principally as an
intermediary between the camp authorities and the prisoners, transmitting orders,
arranging for work details, and performing other tasks as directed.”\textsuperscript{370} Colonel Lee Hak-
koo, the highest-ranking North Korean officer, was put in charge of the construction
work details team because of his good command of English and his cordial relationship
with the Americans guards.\textsuperscript{371}

An American officer later penned his observation of one of the early spring prison
riots at Koje: it “reminded me in some ways of a football pep rally: A ‘cheerleader’

\textsuperscript{365} “Socio-Political Behavior of Koreans and Chinese,” 221.
\textsuperscript{366} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{367} “Organizing the Riots on Koje: Colonel Zhao’s Story,” in \textit{Voices from the Korean War}, 243.
\textsuperscript{368} Meyers and Biderman, \textit{Mass Behavior}, 238.
\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 239.
\textsuperscript{370} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{371} Song, \textit{The Fight for Freedom}, 49. Lee was planted into Koje Island to engineer the capture of Brigadier
Gen. Dodd.
mounted a box, facing the mass of prisoners. He would yell out a sentence, and the
prisoners would repeat it over and over.” With the assistance of a South Korean
soldier, the officer came to realize that the slogans chanted by the Chinese prisoners
were, “Down with the American Imperialism,” “Down with Capitalism,” “Up with
Communism,” and “Hooray for Mao Zedong.” The vigor and energy the POWs
manifested in these demonstrations deeply struck the American officer.

As time went by, the division between Communists and anticommunists began to
surface, and later it was further politicized and polarized. Based on the idea of class
struggle, the ideological baggage the C.P.V. soldiers carried with them prior to capture
became one source of conflict in the camps. The ongoing civil war, including the
opposing claims to sovereignty and the path of China’s future, became another point of
contention in the camps. The majority of the Chinese prisoners were “political neutral”
and did not understand politics, as one American civilian observed; they did not know
where they were or why. Eventually, the situation within the prison compounds rapidly
deteriorated, as succinctly characterized by James L. Stokesbury:

Some wanted to go home to China, some wanted to go to Taiwan, some
did not know where they wanted to go and many wanted to do only
whatever was necessary to survive at the hands of their fellow prisoners.
Colonel Zhao Zuorui’s story sheds some light on the development of the internal political struggles within the POW resistance movement. Colonel Zhao was a former Political Commissar for CPVF Sixtieth Army, who became the Secretary General for the Communist organization structure, the “Chinese Communist United Front (CCUF)” at Koje-do. Founded in April 1952, the CCUF at Compound 71 was referred as the “Little Yenan” on Koje Island. Starting in the fall of 1951, the establishment of underground Communist party apparatus also included launching the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) and the CCP-sponsored mass leadership. Colonel Zhao estimated that 2,000 of the CCP members constituted 20 percent of the Chinese prisoners, and at least half of them were organized. These organized Communists worked hard to unite non-CCP and non-CCYL members in the camps. Colonel Zhao later recalled, “The compound brigade leaders, or the traitors, tried to persuade Chinese prisoners to go to Taiwan. We had to stop their efforts and bring all our men back to China.” The Communist Chinese prisoners launched study groups to study how to become good Chinese Communists, emulating the fervent, self-denying Marxist revolutionaries who had fostered stringent military discipline to defy great difficulties. The purpose of the study groups was to whip up a spirit of fervent fanaticism among Communist prisoners, claiming their resistance movement to be as heroic as the acts of devoted revolutionaries trained in the rigorous experience of the Long March and the wartime days of Yan’an.

By the later half of 1951, most of the POW leadership positions gradually fell into the hands of ex-Nationalists, who were hostile and oppressive to the Communists and

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377 Da Ying, *Zhi yuan jun zhan fu ji shi* (Beijing: Kun lun chu ban she, 1987), foreword.
378 “Organizing the Riots on Koje: Colonel Zhao’s Story,” in *Voices from the Korean War*, 248.
379 Ibid.
Communist sympathizers. Most Communist prisoners were illiterate and lacked administrative experience. By the end of July 1951, Compound 72 was under firm control of anticommunist prisoners. At Compound 86, the Communists first dominated the situation by leveraging the role of translators for leadership positions and soliciting sympathy from a few low-level American prison guards, including African American Taylor, Puerto Rican Louis, Mexican-American Hernandez, and Captain Logan. However, by April 1952, Communist prisoners completely lost control to the Nationalists and became marginalized in the camp fight, while barely holding ground at Compound 71 and Casualty Settlement in Pusan.

In March 1952, Zhang Zeshi served as an interpreter accompanying an American officer from the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.) who was sent to look into a curious “suicide” case at Compound 86: an illiterate prisoner supposedly left a well-written will before his body was discovered hanging from a beam. The letter expressed that the Communists had coerced him to go back to mainland China and that he was committing suicide to express his loyalty to the KMT. However, his corpse bore the marks of recent beating and mutilation, and the tent beam was estimated to not be high enough to hang oneself to death. This murder case bore witness to the bloody struggles for control within the compounds.

Communication among the rebels proved to be key in their detailed planning and organization. The 64th Field Hospital in Pusan became the “message center,” and the officers’ ward served as the “nerve center” of the clandestine communication system.

380 Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 252.
381 Wu Chusheng, “86 zhan fu ying de fan bian se dou zheng,” in Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji, 132-133.
382 Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji, 10.
383 Zhang, Wo de chao xian zhan zheng, 102-108.
within the hospital.\textsuperscript{384} Men feigned illness to enter the hospital and received orders from new prisoners from the North. Although the hospital served as the best channel for communications between compounds and enclosures, the Communists also developed an unobtrusive, highly efficient communication system that included semaphore flags, hand signals, whistling, chanting, and throwing letters wrapped around rocks. Notes pieces were also hidden in rations, clothing, and supplies. No possible means of communication was overlooked, as evidenced by the effort of some prisoners in tying messages to large dragonflies.\textsuperscript{385} A simplified version of Morse Code was developed to communicate among the Communist prisoners, named “Wang Fang Code,” after Colonel Zhao’s alias.\textsuperscript{386} Prisoners also maneuvered shades and lights to send signals. By the time the Dodd Incident occurred, the Communists had fashioned a “tightly knit, cohesive, and smoothly functioning organization, both within and outside the camp”.\textsuperscript{387} The communication system enabled the prisoners to keep in close touch with one another and to coordinate plans for demonstrations and riots.

Compound 72 eventually became a Nationalist-controlled camp. The United States flag, the United Nations flag, and the Republic of China flag were kept flying high over the compound. A white plastic Statue of Liberty was manufactured and erected within the confine of the prison compound. Corruption and undemocratic practices prevailed in Compound 72. After anticommmunist prisoners gained an upper hand in the

\textsuperscript{385} Vetter, \textit{Mutiny at Koje Island}, 87.
\textsuperscript{386} He Pinggu and Hao Zhigeng, “zhan fu li de wang fang mi ma,” in Zhang, \textit{Mei jun ji zhong ying}, 275; Li xi’er, “yu pan tu bia jie zhe de dou zheng” in \textit{Mei jun ji zhong ying}, 213. “Wang Fang” was Colonel Zhao Zuorui’s alias, see “Colonel Zhao’s Story,” in \textit{Voices from the Korean War}, 243.
\textsuperscript{387} Vetter, \textit{Mutiny at Koje Island}, 86.
compound, anticommunists were given big bowls of food to eat, whereas Communists had to eat from small bowls.

As the vice chief, Li Da’an imposed a reign of terror in Compound 72 by giving impassioned anticommmunist speeches, distributing homemade clubs and knives to anticommmunist prisoners. He not only committed outright murder, but also implemented a forcible tattooing campaign. Li, unlike many of his fellow prisoners, had allowed himself to be captured voluntarily in the battlefield of Korea. He had driven a supply truck and carried an airdropped U.N. surrender pass and had deliberately rushed into the arms of the U.N. side. Before the Civil War, Li had served as a police officer in the Nationalist government in Manchuria. He was reputed to be one of the most stalwart anticommmunists on Koje Island and “the worst torturer of all”. Li was later executed by the Chinese government in 1958, after being airdropped by Americans as a spy along the Korean-Chinese border at the end of April 1953.

Upon capture, Li testified how he had terrorized and murdered Lin Xuepu, a POW from the 2nd Battalion, after Lin, a nineteen year-old college freshmen, had shouted pro-Communist slogans such as “Long Live Chairman Mao! Long Live the Communist Party!” Many Chinese prisoners, boxed up in the narrow compound, witnessed the whole murder scene. A pro-Communist prisoner, Wu Chunsheng, drew a satirical cartoon entitled “Li da an ding hao” [Number One Li Da’an] to capture the monstrosities

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389 Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 305-6, 407; Chen laiyi, Zheng yi xie e de jiao liang: Chao xian zhan zheng zhan fu zhi mi (Beijing: zhong yang wen xian chu ban she, 2000), 78; Fang Xiangqian, “Pan tu li da an de xia chang,” in Zhang, Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji, 328-329.
390 Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 329, 424-426; Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi, Zhang Zeshi, Wo de Chaoxian zhan zheng: yi ge zhi yuan jun zhan fu de liu shi nian hui yi (Beijing Shi: Jin cheng chu ban she, 2011), 117-119; Burchett and Winnington, Plain Perfidy, 134; also see Ma Guozheng, “fangong, konggong, kongguo: han zhan lai tai zhi yuan jun zhan fu wen ti zhi yan jiu’(Jiayi, Taiwan: Master’s thesis for National History Research Institute, 2008), 131-138.
391 Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 400, 409-410, 424.
of the murder.\textsuperscript{392} In the cartoon below, the line “\textit{li da an ding hao}” comes (curiously) out of the mouth of a devilish Uncle Sam, while the pro-Communist author called Li \textit{“Zhong hua min zu de bai lei, mei jun te wu de zou cu”} [the scum of the Chinese nation, the lackey of the U.S. Army spies]!\textsuperscript{393} According to Zhang Zeshi, in June 1952, Li and a few other former KMT soldiers were sent by the U.S. Army to Tokyo to receive espionage and anticommunism training. They were sent back to install top-down control within Compounds 72 and 86.\textsuperscript{394}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{cartoon.png}
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This cartoon captures the sanguinary scene in which Li Da’an murdered Lin Xuepu. Li, with a grotesque and ferocious face, holds a dagger piercing Lin’s heart. Li’s exceeding brutality made him the most hated man in the compound, even among some of the anticommunist prisoners; however, the United Nations Command saw him as a “model collaborator.”\textsuperscript{396}

In June 1951, a tattooing campaign began to rage in Camp 72 when all the five thousand inmates were required to tattoo ideographs on their bodies disclaiming Communism. The body parts that were tattooed included the arm, hand, back, belly, leg,

\textsuperscript{392} Zhang, \textit{Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji}, vii.
\textsuperscript{393} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{394} Zhang, \textit{Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji}, vii.
\textsuperscript{395} Zhang, \textit{Mei jun ji zhong ying qin li ji}, vii.
\textsuperscript{396} Gao wen jun xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in \textit{Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu}, 306; Hermes, \textit{Truce Tent and Fighting Front}, 136; “Organizing the Riots in Koje,” 248.
bottom, and even forehead. Slogans included “Fangongkanger” [Oppose the Communists and Resist Russia], “Jian mie gong fei” [Wipe out Communist Bandits], “Sha zhu ba mao huo zhuo mao ze dong” [Kill the pig for its hair; Kill [Marshal] Zhu [De] and Capture Mao [Zedong] Alive], “hui Taiwan” [Return to Taiwan], “Huo zhuo Zhu Mao” [Capture Zhu De and Mao Zedong Alive], “Sha jin gong fei”[Kill all the Communist Bandits], “Mie gong fu guo” [Exterminate Communists and Reviving the Nation], and “Bu cheng gong bian cheng ren” [We Win, or We Perish]. Those POWs who chose to be tattooed readily accepted the tattooing as a way to demonstrate their loyalty to the Nationalist Party, whereas thousands of Chinese prisoners who opted for repatriation were also tattooed against their will.\(^{397}\) The individual who received the most tattoos was Wang Fulin, who eventually had 136 characters on his body.\(^{398}\) According to Burchett and Winnington, “Before the end of October, orders had been handed down by the Kuomingtang headquarters to compete the tattooing of the prisoners at high speed.”\(^{399}\)

For many prisoners, the forced tattooing served as visual evidence of their mandatory incarceration, since there had been no individual choice involved. While coercive tattooing could be seen as surrendering the ownership of one’s skin, body, and even soul, voluntary tattooing vigorously claimed the prisoners’ own ideological stances, which could have potentially fatal consequences in the ongoing Cold War. As Cardinal Spellman observed as he eye-witnessed the prisoners stripped to the waist to greet him in Korea, “[tattooing anticommunist slogans on one’s body] is equivalent to writing one’s

\(^{397}\) Da Ying, *Zhi yuan jun zhan fu ji shi* (Beijing: Kun lun chu ban she, 1987), foreword.
\(^{398}\) Hsin-yi Shen, *Yi wan si qian ge zheng ren*, 167.
\(^{399}\) Burchett and Winnington, *Koje Unscreened*, 22.
own death warrant if the Communists ever capture them or we [the Americans] ignominiously surrender them".\textsuperscript{400}

The custom of tattooing was not new in historical China. It was a despised practice used to brand thieves and evildoers in feudal times. Modern warlords such as Yan Xishan in Taiyuan, and even Chiang Kai-shek in the Chinese Civil War, also imposed tattooing on military personnel. The Nationalist troops in Taiyuan used to set up a system called “\textit{Zi bai zhuan sheng}” [Reincarnation through Confession].\textsuperscript{401} Captured Communist soldiers were able to start a new life in the Nationalist troops by disavowing and tattooing themselves with anticommunist slogans such as “\textit{Da si zhu mao}” (Beating Zhu [de] and Mao [Zedong] to death).\textsuperscript{402} When Chiang fled to Taiwan in late 1949, he allegedly ordered the tattooing of all the garrison troops on the coastal island near mainland China.\textsuperscript{403}

Meanwhile, waves of blood petitions (petitions \textit{written and signed} in literal blood of anticommunist Chinese prisoners who wanted to go to Taiwan) were launched in anticommunist compounds. The Chinese Nationalist Party Anticommunist Youth Patriotic Corps was the main advocate and planner of the blood petition movement.\textsuperscript{404} On July 2, 1951, a group of 179 avowed anticommunist Chinese POWs decided to write five copies of blood petitions to President Chiang Kai-shek, General Ridgway, President Truman, U.N. Security Council, and Francis Cardinal Spellman—the powerful

\textsuperscript{401}“Zhang Ruiqi xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in \textit{Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu}, 369.
\textsuperscript{402}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{403}Burchett and Winnington, \textit{Koje Unscreened}, 19.
\textsuperscript{404}Shen Xinyi, \textit{yi wan si qian ge zheng ren}, 166.
Archbishop of New York and Apostolic Vicar for the U.S. Armed Forces—who was visiting the U.N. troops in Korea. More than 1,000 men participated in two more blood petitions in August. The entire prison population of Compound 72—up to 9,000 petitioners in total—wrote four blood petitions during the fourth petition initiative in December 1951. On December 29, 85 ex-Whampoa military academy graduates among the Chinese POWs signed a petition to Ridgway in blood against returning to Communist China. Two days earlier, the same group also petitioned to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, pleading to be returned to Taiwan and allowed to join the Nationalist army to fight Communism.

Along with signing petitions in their own blood, the anticommunist Chinese prisoners ritualized and demonstrated their anticommunist identity through other collective behaviors—shouting out ideological slogans, drinking blood wine, and wearing sun emblems, badges, and armbands of the Nationalist Party. These KMT symbols, icons, and traditions provided continuity and a sense of community, connecting anticommunist compounds to the ROC regime in Taiwan. The written and pictorial documentations emphasized loyalty and service to the KMT, the anticommunist community on Koje, and the China nation that the ROC represented. The tattoos, blood petitions, and other expressions and performances of anticommunist identity seemed to work in concert with Washington’s non-repatriation policy.

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405 Chen Jiying, “Ju ji dao han ze bu liang li,” in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 37. Francis Cardinal Spellman served as Apostolic Vicar for the U.S. Armed Forces from December 11, 1939 to December 2, 1967.
406 Ibid.
408 Chen Jiying, “Ju ji dao han ze bu liang li,” in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 39. Initially, only prisoner guards wore the KMT emblem, badge, and armband. As time went by, everyone with the rank of squad leader and higher were required to wear them. Eventually, everybody at Compound 72 wore these KMT symbols every day.
In many other ways, acts of rebellion were rampant. The Communist Compound 602 even published a compound newspaper entitled Xiao xi bao. This newspaper was first published on August 1, 1952, and it based most of its content on the U.S. Army newspaper The Stars and Stripes. The prisoners also organized mutual support groups studying foreign languages and singing revolutionary songs, such as “The Internationale” and “No New China Without Communist Party” to raise morale. Another tool the Communists used involved instigating riots against the U.S. guards to demand better treatment, food, and shelter. An army report detailed all the homemade weapons that prisoners used against one another: “Steel pickets, spiked wooden clubs, barbed wire flails, blackjacks, metal tent pole spikes, and sections of iron pipe were employed freely by the Communists, in addition to rocks and knives.”

Each compound fell into the control of a ruling oligarchy of unofficial leaders who, in the confined space of a prison camp, exercised an inescapable tyranny over their fellow prisoners. The compound leaders perpetrated a reign of terror over the majority of prisoners within the compounds. The succession of reigns and horrors mimicked the changes of dynasties in the Chinese history. The camp commanders, when their Communist or anticommunist regime was instituted and its power was solidified, succeeded in personalizing the space and creating a uniform ideological appearance of the compounds. Brutal coercion was used to influence the borderline prisoners who were not yet committed to either Communism or anticommunism. As one postwar study based on the interrogation of Chinese prisoners points out, “highly organized pressures, both

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410 Congress House Committee on Armed Services, Requesting the Secretary of Defense to furnish to the House of Representatives full and complete information with respect to insurgency in prisoner-of-war camps in Korea and Communist-inspired disturbances of the peace in Japan United States (Washington: s.n., 1952), 3.
Communist and anticommmunist, limited the freedom of choice within the Korean PW compounds”.\textsuperscript{411} For months, the bulk of prisoners were terrorized into submission. Numerous gruesome stories arose of prisoners whose loyalty was suspect being murdered, mutilated, buried alive, or burned after being minced; these appalling accounts appeared in the surviving prisoners’ memoirs.\textsuperscript{412}

As the terror escalated, prisoners were infused with militant and political nationalism, either of a Communist or anticommmunist brand, along with a tenacious instinct to survive their grueling captivity. One might be aghast at the scale and severity of the violence in the camps. The continuing escalation of horrific violence—tattooing, forced signing of blood petitions, beatings, and murders—constituted the forces shaping the prisoners’ everyday lives. The Irish Times reported that one method favored by the prisoners to kill their fellow inmates was “to beat them to death with tent poles”\textsuperscript{413}. Wang Shuiyi, a non-repatriated Chinese, later testified that he killed more than ten Communist suspects and threw their corpses into the sea in the dark of night.\textsuperscript{414} Both sides set up kangaroo courts to execute prisoners considered to be disloyal. Even as late as the last year of the prison’s existence, the throes of life-and-death compound struggles did not wane. With grisly detail, one American officer recalled how during his tenure on Koje in 1953, he and his colleagues had to stir human waste in honey buckets to see if any limb or any other pieces of human body were in the material.\textsuperscript{415} This detail was later

\textsuperscript{412} Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 92, 101, 128, 290.
\textsuperscript{413} “Executions by Koje Communists,” The Irish Times, 27 May 1952: 1.
\textsuperscript{414} Jiang Donghai, yi wan si qian ge zheng ren (Fourteen Thousand Witnesses) (Taipei: xin zhong guo chu ban she, 1955), 68.
confirmed by one non-repatriated Chinese POW’s memoir, which was recorded in Taiwan and published by Academia Historica in 2013.  

Americans, as the supervisors of the camps, hesitated in directly intervening as long as the scale of the violence did not require them to do so. Facing such a scale of violence, the American administrators had turned a blind or uncomprehending eye on the terror inside the compounds and shirked their responsibility to stem the violence.

First of all, the American guards on Koje were “mostly second-rate,” since first-class troops were usually reserved for combat purposes. To the guards, Koje represented something like “the end of the line—isolation, no glory, fewer rotation points, and living conditions that quite literally stank.” They had to put up with crude makeshift accommodations while guarding the prisoners day and night. “Anybody who couldn’t make it on the line was sent down to do duty on Koje-do. We ended up with the scum of the Army—the drunks, the drug addicts, the nutters, the deadbeats,” recalled an American officer stationed in Koje. Both American and R.O.K guards were poorly trained and were seldom disciplined for any offense. With only a one-to-188 U.S. military policemen (MP) to prisoner ratio, the majority of the guards were made up of South Koreans, who had been recommended by the Red Cross in May 1952 that they be withdrawn because of their “brutality and venality.” On top of having a lower caliber and a dearth of staff, the quality of POW administration was also compromised by the

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416 “Xiao lixing xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fan tan lu, 410.
417 Sandler, The Korean War, 213.
418 Kalischer, “The Koje Snafu.”
420 Foot, A Substitute for Victory, 109; Deane, The Korean War, 168. American media also reported that the South Korean guards seemed to be more “trigger-happy” and less compunctious than their American counterparts. See Hanson, “Koje Reflects Errors.”
incredibly high turnover rate of American camp commanders.\textsuperscript{421} Before Francis T. Dodd assumed the twelfth commandant at Koje, there was a fifteen-month period of revolving-door leadership since the opening of the camp.\textsuperscript{422}

The second reason Americans upheld a hands-off position was because their prejudice and sense of racial superiority prevented them from taking Chinese and Korean prisoners seriously. Throughout the war, it was commonplace for Americans to call Asians ”Gooks” and “Chinks”. British historian Hastings noted, “Many UN soldiers did not regard North Korean soldiers as fellow combatants, entitled to humane treatment, but as near-animals, to be treated as such.”\textsuperscript{423} Many American officers “admitted knowledge of, or participation in, the shooting of Communist prisoners when it was inconvenient to keep them alive”.\textsuperscript{424} Historian Foot also noticed that the Communist prisoners were treated with “hostility, contempt, or indifference”.\textsuperscript{425} Communist-sympathizing western journalists Wilfred Burchett (Australian correspondent for the French Communist newspaper \textit{L'Humanité}) and Alan Winnington (British journalist working for the American Communist newspaper \textit{The Daily Worker}) further criticized Americans for treating Koreans and Chinese as “just unidentifiable objects” and failing to “think of them as individuals with a history and culture that has extended over five thousand years”.\textsuperscript{426}

\textsuperscript{422} Vetter, \textit{Munity at Koje Island}, 19.
\textsuperscript{423} Hastings, \textit{The Korean War}, 287. People in other western countries, e.g. Australia, also referred to the indigenous people in Korea as “gooks.” See Patsy Adam-Smith, \textit{Prisoners of War: From Gallipoli to Korea} (Victoria, Australia: Viking, 1992), 574.
\textsuperscript{424} Hastings, \textit{The Korean War}, 287.
\textsuperscript{425} Foot, \textit{A Substitute for Victory}, 110-111.
\textsuperscript{426} Burchett and Winnington, \textit{Koje Unscreened}, 21.
The third reason Americans acted standoffishly had something to do with the prisoners’ enmity. Because of the prisoners’ anti-American sentiment, Americans had great difficulty managing the camps effectively. The American guards became easy targets of outrage for captured North Korean soldiers and civilians, as many of them had seen numerous comrades and relatives burned alive by American napalm or white phosphorous strikes.\(^{427}\) Also, the Chinese government had conducted a “Hate-America” campaign before it sent the CPV to Korea, and the campaign had only gotten more intense as the war went on. Stanley Weintraub, who used to work in the American-run 64\(^{th}\) POW Field Hospital in Pusan, recorded in his diary descriptions of an anti-American Communist parade on May 1, 1951:

…with a colorful pageant, featuring huge portraits of Mao, Kim II Sung, and Stalin, plus other Communist saints I can’t identify. Possibly the bald-headed Communist is Lenin, although Oriental in the local artist’s conception. The prisoners marched around the compound with paper floral wreaths, flags, and banner emblazoned with propaganda…PWs…climb on their hut roofs to display propaganda banners—even one in English, which advises, “AMERICANS! GO BACK TO YOUR HAPPY HOMES. YOUR FAMILIES DO NOT WANT YOU TO DIE INVADING OTHER LANDS.”\(^{428}\)

In the same vein, *Collier’s* Magazine reported that on weekend nights, when American and R.O.C. guards enjoyed their leisure time watching Korean dance bands perform, competing voices floated in from Compound 62, “where the prisoners passed their evenings singing hymns of hate against the Americans.”\(^ {429}\) Ultimately, the epidemic anti-Americanism made the U.N.C. administration later employ battalions of Dutch and Greek

\(^{427}\) Sandler, *The Korean War*, 211.


soldiers to replace American guards. British and Canadian troops were also brought in after the Dodd Incident to restore order.\footnote{Catchpole, \textit{The Korean War}, 209.}

While the United Nations was short of personnel and senior generals were exclusively preoccupied with fighting on the front, the management of prisoner-of-war camps in Koje was seriously compromised by cultural barriers and Cold War biases. The ensuing incidents and riots in the camps continued to raise the important issue of the responsibilities and duties of a detaining power in such cases of violence.

\textbf{The Non-Repatriation Policy and Prison Riots}

On July 5, 1951, Brigadier General Robert A. McClure, the U.S. Army Chief of Psychological Warfare, submitted a recommendation to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to exploit the prisoners-of-war issue for psychological warfare purposes.\footnote{Brigadier General Robert McClure to Army Chiefs of Staff, “Policy on Repatriation of Chinese and North Korean Prisoners,” July 5, 1951, RG 319, G-3, Decimal File 383.6. Bess, \textit{Saturday Evening Post}, 5 Jul. 1951: 36.} In the memo, McClure predicted that ex-Nationalist CPV soldiers would opt for going to Taiwan, fearing that the Beijing government would seek reprisal after their repatriation. If these POWs eventually chose Taiwan, it would strengthen Taiwan’s military might, reinforce respect for the principle of individual choice, and prevent the soldiers from becoming victims of the Chinese Communist regime. McClure, the Army Chief of Psychological Warfare, had special consideration for the Chinese Nationalist POWs: since the United States recognized the exiled regime of Chiang Kai-shek as the only legitimate government of China, the release of these thousands of prisoners to Taiwan would not be
a violation of the precepts of the Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{432} However, if the United States returned the entire captured Communist prisoners to their native countries, it would be a blow to the human rights cause that America was advocating.\textsuperscript{433}

The Joint Chiefs of Staff later passed the memo for discussion to the National Security Council, whose members included President Truman and his Secretary of State. Truman developed strong interests in this issue, as he was deeply influenced by the tragic fate of millions of Soviet POWs who had been forcibly repatriated under the Yalta Agreement and had suffered long imprisonment or death in the hands of Stalin. These Soviets had been captured by Germans and liberated by Americans. In the aftermath of World War II, hundreds of thousands of them had resisted repatriation, and nearly a thousand had chosen to commit suicide in Tyrol.\textsuperscript{434} Among those who eventually returned, nearly one of ten were shot; the rest worked in hard labor camps in Siberia.\textsuperscript{435} Therefore, Truman pushed the direction of the internal debate of his cabinet toward the adoption of non-repatriation. On February 27, 1952, the non-repatriation principle was officially established as America’s “final and irrevocable” offer at Panmunjom.\textsuperscript{436}

Initially, both South Korea and Taiwan demonstrated little enthusiasm about the proposal.\textsuperscript{437} President Rhee told John Muccio, the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, that

\textsuperscript{432} Sandler, \textit{The Korean War}, 248.
\textsuperscript{435} “Monta Osborne Decorated For Pioneering New Concept of Psychological Warfare,” \textit{Far East Psywar Digest} [Tokyo, Japan], Apr. 1956; Hoover Institution Archives, Alexander Liosnoff Collection, Box. No. 15, Accession No. 2005C19-31.01/02.
he did not object to integrating non-repatriated North Korean POWs. However, he did hope a large number of Chinese would return to China, simply because he did not want to see them staying in South Korea endlessly and “just eating rice”.\textsuperscript{438} Similarly, Chiang Kai-shek approved of offering a choice to Chinese POWs; however, he did not want to directly integrate thousands of soldiers with untested loyalty into his army.\textsuperscript{439}

The spring of 1952 marked the most deadly and tumultuous season in the long history of Communist prisoner violence in Korea. On February 12, 1952, in an unusually violent prison revolt, 179 prisoners perished. Six days later, 78 Korean prisoners and one American guard lost their lives, and 136 prisoners were wounded. On February 18, 76 North Korean prisoners were killed at Compound 62. On March 13, a rock fight between Communist and anticommmunist prisoners resulted in twelve deaths.\textsuperscript{440} On April 6, a violent flag-raising protest began at Compound 71, leaving three wounded. At Casualty Settlement in Pusan, red flags were also raised, and prisoners refused to let American troops enter to screen them. American tanks then entered the camp by force and took the repatriated Chinese prisoners to Compound 602.

Prior to May 1952, the only issue that remained in the armistice agreement was the exchange of POWs, after an agreement had already been reached concerning the other four items of the armistice. POWs fought against the Americans’ screening attempts on April 8, 1952, calling it the “bloody screening”. The authorities on Koje deliberately adopted an appeasement policy and did not pursue further investigation.\textsuperscript{441} Back in March, 1952, in a statement responding to a riot, Dodd had disclosed to correspondents

\textsuperscript{438} Ibid., 590.
\textsuperscript{439} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{440} “Commandant Seized by Prisoners: From Our Own Correspondent,” \textit{The Times}, Iss. 52307, 9 May 1952: 6.
\textsuperscript{441} Baldwin, “Koje Reflects Errors.”
that “‘definite instructions’ had been given at Koje that there was to be no shooting except in extreme situations—to prevent mass escapes or in self-defense [sic. self-defense].” In *This Kind of War*, historian T. R. Fehrenbach suggests that the U.N.’s decision not to use force against the POWs was due to the constant vigilance and complaints from the International Red Cross and the Neutral Nations Inspection Teams (NITS). The decision was issued from higher headquarters in the Eighth Army and Far East Command (FECOM).

Even though lackadaisical camp administrators got wind of the increasing organization efforts by the prisoners, the officials were neither concerned with minimizing or avoiding bloodshed, nor were they interested in monitoring emerging threats. They received minimal support from their higher commanders. As one American officer commented, “No commander could get any backing from General Yount in Pusan, General Van Fleet, General Ridgway, or anyone else. Ridgway himself never seemed to care a hoot in hell about what happened in Koje-do.” Compared to the ongoing armistice negotiations at Panmunjom, the prison mutinies and other incidents in Koje were lower on the priority list of these generals. As the world watched impatiently, both sides in Panmunjom haggled over the only remaining unresolved issue, the repatriation of prisoners of war. The wily North Korean and Chinese Communist prisoners tenaciously and effectively organized themselves under the auspices of the Communist high command in North Korea. The abduction of General Dodd was the climax of an eight-month succession of bloody and dramatic outbursts of rebellion and revolts. Communist prisoners had already rehearsed and executed minor prison riots and

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443 Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*, 550.
444 Ibid.
kidnappings before the Dodd Incident. The inmates had kidnapped and briefly held
U.N.C. officers hostage before, as in the case of Lieutenant Colonel Wilbur Raven, the
commanding officer of the camp’s military police guards.

As tensions mounted, the prisoners on Koje were emboldened to orchestrate the
kidnapping of their camp commander. The 62-year-old U.N.C. Brigadier General Francis
T. Dodd was seized and held hostage by his own prisoners on May 7, 1952. His junior
officer, Lt.-Col. Wilbur Robert, clung to a gate post to avoid being dragged away and
managed to escape after a U.N. guard bayoneted one of the prisoners in face. All efforts
to rescue the beleaguered commander failed. Almost immediately, the North Koreans
unfurled a banner that read, “We Captured Dodd. As long as our demands will be solved,
his safety is secured. If there happens brutal act such as shooting, his life is danger.”

Earlier, on April 28, 1952, General Mark W. Clark had replaced Ridgway as the
United Nations Commander-in-chief, and Koje was one of the headaches Clark inherited
from Ridgway. When Ridgway received the report of his replacement, his successor
Clark had already arrived in Tokyo. Clark wrote in his memoir that back then “…was the
first time I had ever heard of Koje or the critical prisoner-of-war problem that existed
behind our lines”.445

On May 9, General Van Fleet, Commander of the Eighth U.S. Army, made a
quick visit to Koje with 15,000 heavily armed U.N. troops. He expressed the view that
force would be used, if necessary, to rescue Dodd.446 The rebellious prisoners requested
telephones, writing paper, permission to organize, and other concessions before they
would release their hostage. Dodd’s deputy, Brigadier-General Charles F. Colson,

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succeeded him as the prison camp commander, so Dodd was, as a prisoner of war himself, no longer a commander but only an individual. In a letter from Mr. Pace, Secretary of the Army, to Senator Russell, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Pace stated, “It is clear that the seizure of General Dodd was the result of a premeditated plot by the Communist prisoners on Koje Island.” After Dodd’s capture, the prisoners were reportedly to be in absolute command of their compounds. In order to ransom Dodd, General Charles F. Colson, Dodd’s successor, agreed to the conditions and admitted to forced screening, murder, maltreatment, and conscription of prisoners, and he promised to abide by the Geneva Convention. On May 10, 1952, Dodd was released, and he slowly and dejectedly walked out of Compound 76.

Generals Dodd and Colson’s confessions, later published in U.N. troops newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, caused great commotion and anxiety within the U.N. administration. Two four-star generals, Clark and Ridgway, along with Van Fleet, flew to Koje to resolve this thorny public relations issue. A few days later, Dodd spoke about his captivity experience in a press conference held by Eighth Army headquarters in Seoul. He talked about how he was captured by his own prisoners and was released, then claimed that the demands of the prisoners were insignificant and the concessions made by the UN administration were likewise hardly worth mentioning. The Associated Press also reported on May 11 that Dodd had spoken about his treatment as “courteous,

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respectful and dignified”.449 “I have never been treated more courteously in any place in my life,” Dodd told the AP.450

America’s European allies saw Koje-do as a stinging defeat for the United Nations and the United States, though the prison resistance movement was eventually brutally put down. All of the Korean and Chinese representatives and delegates were sentenced to three months of imprisonment in the highest POW prison, the “War Criminal Camp” on Koje-do.451 The fiasco at the Koje Island prison camp invited criticism from “the military fiasco which has made a laughing stock [sic. laughingstock] of the United Nations Command and lost the West shocking face in the Far East,” as reported by the Irish Times.452 Selwyn Lloyd, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, commented on the Koje situation in the British House of Commons on May 30, 1952, saying that the United Nations Command had been grossly incompetent in handing Communist POWs and that control had been lost.453

Communist newspapers and broadcasting stations around the world celebrated this incident as a stunning propaganda victory. The Communists, who were eager to exploit this opportunity to discredit the non-forcible repatriation, jubilantly seized this new piece of information. The Pyongyang Radio reported that the incident had “exposed the falsity of the Americans’ claim that many of the prisoners they hold are opposed to forced repatriation”.454 By contrast, Major-Gen. William Harrison, Senior Allied Truce Delegate, charged that the Communist-instigated riots on Koje Island had been plotted

451 “Organizing the Riots on Koje: Colonel Zhao’s Story,” in Voices from the Korean War, 258.
“to divert world attention” and that the Communists were covering up the fact that thousands of prisoners would rather die than return to Communist rule. Regardless of the points that each side tried to make against each other, it was clear that what happened on Koje revealed how the lack of proper security precautions had seriously compromised the principle of non-forcible repatriation and embarrassed the U.N. Command.

General Clark was absolutely flabbergasted by what happened at Koje. He was incensed at the idea of prisoners taking control of their compound and making demands on camp officials. “Prisoners-of-war do not negotiate,” Clark simply blurted out. On May 12th, he announced the statement made by Colson and Odd invalid as they were made under duress and “involving physical threat to the life of a United Nations officer.” Clark later recorded how upset he was by Dodd and Colson negotiation:

> Of one thing I was certain. You don’t negotiate with prisoners of war, particularly fanatical Communist PWs who consider themselves combatants despite capture. At best, negotiation with prisoners is a losing game.

In his reflection, General Clark did not hide his exasperation at the “poor judgment” of Dodd and Colson and his injured pride that the Communists had been able to capitalize on the ignorance on the U.N. side.

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The Subduing of the Prisoners and Restoration of Order

On May 14, General James Van Fleet, Commander of the Eighth U.S. Army, appointed Brigadier General Hayden Lemaire Boatner as the new commandant of the turbulent prison land. After landing on the island, Boatner called upon camp officials for a meeting within fifteen minutes, and he also inspected the increased security arrangements around the island. Just one day after he took office, newspaper reports sent from the island shouted out, “The toughest regime is already evident.”

Previously, Boatner served as the assistant commander of the United States 2nd Infantry Division. He had been chosen for this position because he spoke impeccable Mandarin Chinese and was an expert on Chinese affairs. He had even allegedly criticized the Eighth Army Psych War Branch’s leaflets (which were written in high literary Chinese) for their lack of understanding of Chinese soldiers’ rank-and-file mentality.

Now his task was to restore discipline and order among 80,000 North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war. Tough General “Bull” Boatner, the fifteenth commander of Koje, was determined to re-conquer the prisoners of war when he replaced Colson on May 14th. Collier’s magazine described the newest “strong man” commandant of the troublesome Koje as “profane, scholarly,” saying that he “looks like a schoolteacher and roars like a mule skinner.” Born in New Orleans in 1900, Boatner attended the U.S. Military Academy after WWI. His first contact with China was during 1930-1934, when he studied Chinese and served as an assistant military attaché in Tianjin. During World War II, Boatner served in a variety of posts in Burma, India, and China. When the war broke out, he was assigned to Korea and became assistant commander of the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea.

461 Kalischer, “The Koje Snafu.”
in August 1951. In a conversation with a U.N. psychological warfare officer, Boater
described himself as the best person who understood the need for effective psywar in
Asia.\textsuperscript{462}

Based on his conviction that the great trouble with Koje lay in the prison officials’
“inability to cope with the Oriental,”\textsuperscript{463} Boatner took drastic measures to achieve a rapid
restoration of order among the Koje prisoners. Contemporary readers will not fail to
notice a certain patronizing orientation in his analysis, but Boatner, boasting of a
diversified background of service in Asia, was determined to regain uncontested control
in Koje-do. Boater believed that “the oriental despises weakness and worships strength,
even in prison”; thus, his first job was to show who was in command.\textsuperscript{464}

The initial changes and reforms that he initiated were to track “the blunders by the
designers of the compounds and the inexcusable carelessness, laxity, or indifference
which allowed the scandal to flourish and spread”.\textsuperscript{465} Three days later, three thousand
American parachute troops with impressive fighting records in the war—the 187\textsuperscript{th}
Regimental Combat team—were sent to Koje as the reinforcement unit.\textsuperscript{466} On May 26,
Boatner communicated to the British enforcement guards, “we have control of the prison
camp outside the barbed wire, but we do not have control inside”.\textsuperscript{467} Boatner’s strategy to
wrestle control from the prisoners included restructuring the management organization,

\textsuperscript{462} “Koje Report to Commanding Officer, 4\textsuperscript{th} MRB Co., Apo 500, 30 June 1952,” Hoover Institution
\textsuperscript{463} Typed unpublished manuscript, Box 7, Haydon Boatner Collection, Hoover Institution Archives.
\textsuperscript{464} Russell Brines, \textit{The Sun} [Baltimore, MD], 18 May 1952:2.
\textsuperscript{465} Richard Hughes, “Inquest on Koje: Scandal of Prison Island Where the Prisoners Held Whip Hand,” \textit{The
\textsuperscript{466} “Reinforcement for Koje Island,” \textit{The Times}, Issue 52315, 19 May 1952: 5; “Inquiry into Koje Camp
Revolt,” \textit{The Times}, Iss. 2316, 20 May 1952: 5.
\textsuperscript{467} “Conditions in Koje Camps: ‘No Control Inside Barbed Wire,’” \textit{The Times}, Iss. 52322, 27 May 1952: 5.
reshuffling management personnel, keeping the entire group of POW representatives in Compound 76, and rebuilding the camp.

On May 27, an American airborne force of 3,000 people dug an eight-foot-deep trench outside Koje’s barbed wire fences. The aim of this move was to disclose Communist escape tunnels underneath the ground. Boatner also delivered an ultimatum to two prisoner compounds to haul down Communist flags and banners by 7:00 a.m. on June 4. After the time limit expired, battle-equipped American troops, with eighteen tanks, tear gas, and flame throwers, smashed into the prison compounds and destroyed openly displayed pro-Communist slogans and flags. The U.N. side boasted that Boatner subdued the unruly Communist leaders without firing a single shot and released seventeen anticommmunist prisoners.\textsuperscript{468}

General Clark, General Ridgway, and General Boatner all agreed that the situation at Koje needed a quick cure, so the three-step “Operation Break-up” was created. On June 2, after a tour around the island, General Clark, Supreme Commander for Korea, “likened the present situation in the camp to the case of a sick patient who is liable to be killed by a too-quick, overnight cure”.\textsuperscript{469} Though Ridgway was assuming his new job as Eisenhower’s successor in NATO, he later recalled that he also preferred “a swift and prompt crushing of the defiance at Koje-do”.\textsuperscript{470} Clark and Boatner formulated plans and came up with three phases of “Operation Break-Up” to restore order at Koje. First, Boatner worked to “restore a captor-prisoner relationship” in the prison compounds.\textsuperscript{471} Next, he proposed to build new compounds. The final step was to break

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{469} “Tanks Enter a Koje Camp,” \textit{The Times}, Iss. 52328, 3 Jun. 1952: 6.
\item \textsuperscript{470} Ridgway, \textit{The Korean War}, 216.
\item \textsuperscript{471} Doyle, \textit{The Enemy in Our Hands}, 261.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
up the large compounds of 5,000-6,000 captives into barbed wire cages holding only 500 or 600.

In addition, Boatner frequently used the threat of tanks in order to gain uncontested control over the island’s 80,000 prisoners. He picked Compound 76 to launch “Operation Breakup”. Overseeing from a watchtower on June 10, Boatner directed his “Operation Big Shift” and ordered six tanks and two battalions of the American 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment to smash the notorious Compound 76, reputed to be the toughest compound on the island. The purpose of this operation was to split up the 80,000 unruly prisoners into smaller, manageable groups of 150 people each. After a fierce brawl, gas-masked American paratroopers successfully subdued prisoners with “a terrific barrage of tear gas and concussion grenades”.472 Within one hour of bloody confrontation, guards killed or wounded 150 Communist prisoners, while one American died and thirteen others were injured.473 In the end, the paratroopers removed 4,000 prisoners from the compound and confiscated a number of homemade weapons.474 All of the North Korean and pro-Communist Chinese POW leaders were placed in a “special prison” as “war criminals”.475 Eventually all the North Korean and Chinese prisoners held in Koje's seventeen sprawling, teeming compounds were put into the 500-

474 Ibid. Only after the June 10 incident did Pak Sang Hyon, the PW leader and principal organizer of the kidnapping of General Dodd, finally defect to the U.N. side and confess the whole story for fear that he would meet with no mercy if he were repatriated to North Korea. He flipped again in less than one year and decided to see his family before starting his prolonged imprisonment in North Korea for his failure in the revolt. Both Pak Sang Hyon and Lee Hak-koo were eventually shot for treason after repatriation to North Korea. See Song, The Fight for Freedom, 54. Lee was sentenced to death by North Korea shortly after he surrendered to American troops. See “POWs Report Riot Leader Sentenced to Death by Reds,” Chicago Daily Tribune, 4 Oct. 1952: A5.
475 Da Ying, Zhi yuan jun zhan fu ji shi, 240-47.
man stockades. Communist signs and flags were ripped down and burned, attesting to the fact that Koje prisoners were under control.

The British soldiers of the King’s Shropshire Light Infantry and Royal Canadian Regiment helped in quelling the rebellion, though they were quite unhappy with the task. The British media raised questions regarding whether or not it was the job of the British to clear up the mess that the Americans had created. The Irish Times called the task, “subjugating the Communist mutineers in the great prison camp at Koje”. The newspaper further commented, “The conditions in the camp are a result of American laxity and maladministration, and that the risking of British lives in an effort to rectify them is unjust.” On a similar note, the Canadian government also expressed displeasure over the U.S. sending Canadian detachments to Koje without previous consultation with the Canadian government.

The British troops were assigned to maintain security for Compound 66, which housed 6,000 North Korean officers. This compound was “regarded as the island’s most closely organized group”. The Royal Canadian Regiment was assigned to guard Compound 85, which held 5,000 North Koreans. This Compound was called “Kidnap Valley,” where Brigadier General Dodd had been incarcerated after his capture. On June 13, Boater visited this compound and released twenty-one anticommunists, who said the “clean-up” had saved their lives, as their compound “court” had marked them for execution.

Two tunnels were discovered running from Compound 76 to the adjacent

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477 Ibid.
480 Ibid.
Compounds 77 and 78. A third tunnel was found at Compound 66, leading outside of the barbed wire.\footnote{482 “British Soldiers to Man Guns at Koje Trouble Center,” \textit{The Irish Times}, 26 May 1952: 1.}

Two months later, Boater was promoted to become the Pusan POW Commander and took responsibility for all POWs held by the U.N. In September 1952, Boatner left Koje for an appointment in the U.S. Because of his excellent work in quelling the riots on Koje Island, he was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster of the Distinguished Service Medal.\footnote{483 “Biggest Korea Raid by Navy Planes,” \textit{The Irish Times}, 2 Sep. 1952: 1.}

\section*{Conclusion}

In late 1953, Henry Cabot Lodge, U.S. delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, brought the case before the U.N. to debate whether or not General Nam II had directed the Koje prison riots while conducting armistice negotiations with Americans at Panmunjom.\footnote{484 “Toes Cut Off with Shears,” \textit{The Irish Times}, 3 Dec. 1953: 1.} In a study conducted during the war, titled “The Oriental Communist Prisoner of War: A Study from the Intelligence Viewpoint,” the writer states,

\begin{quote}
The United States Army has never had to deal with this type of prisoner before. [...] He has taken unto himself many duties and missions to perform to further the interest of his fatherland. He has not stopped fighting just because he is a prisoner of war. He continued his fight with all the zeal and patriotism he had on the fighting line.\footnote{485 “The Oriental Communist Prisoner of War,” POW/CI Center; Office of the Provost Marshall; Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1; Headquarter, US Army Forces, Far East, 1952-1957; Record Group 554; National Archives and Record Administration—College Park, MD.}
\end{quote}

The U.N. recognized that the United States had paid a heavy price for not fully understanding the nature of their Communist enemies—that even the prisoners of war deployed as ground troops were determined to actively continue fighting in whatever way
their leaders dictated. In his memoir, General Clark later reflected on lack of understanding of the role of POWs on the U.N. side:

My experience had been with old-fashioned wars, in which prisoners were people who had to be fed, housed, clothed and guarded, nothing more. Never had I experienced a situation in which prisoners remained combatants and carried out orders smuggled to them from the enemy high command.

For the United Nations Command, the challenge of the Communist resistance movement generated powerful lessons in handling captives who still considered themselves to be combatants. On January 28, 1953, General Clark, on behalf of United Nations headquarters, publicly announced a lengthy intelligence report charging Nam, North Korea chief truce delegate, with masterminding the bloody riots at Koje, Pongam, and other camps.

In retrospect, oral histories of U.S. officials and Chinese prisoners uncovered how both the United States and Taiwan had escalated the entangled internal political struggle within the POW resistance movement and had contributed to the ensuing violence. Despite repeated Communist accusations that Chiang and Rhee’s agents “tampered with” Communist prisoners of war, Rear-Adm. R. E. Libby, Allied negotiator, denied such charges and referred to them as merely Communist propaganda. However, in an oral history interview with John Muccio, the first U.S. Ambassador to South Korea (April 20,
1949–September 8, 1952), Muccio belatedly admitted that the Taiwanese representatives in the POW administration project appeared to be “members of Chiang Kai-shek’s Gestapo” and that the Americans should be held responsible for the brutality in the camps.\textsuperscript{490} Oral history of non-repatriated Chinese POWs also confirmed that many of the CI&E teachers from Taiwan who the investigators had met in the camps turned out to be senior military officers in the Nationalist Army.\textsuperscript{491}

The prisoners of war became a source of struggle for rival Korean regimes and Chinese regimes and their claims to sovereignty. The bloody life-and-death compound battles served as a miniaturized reenactment of the unfinished Asian civil wars. Truman’s inability to bring a stalemated war to an end led him to seek a political exigency to exit Korea without losing face. The U.N. side did not want to return the anticommmunist prisoners back to Communist China and Korea, whereas Beijing and Pyongyang would not admit that individual soldiers were entitled to the right to renounce their allegiance to a country. “So there we sit,” said Walter Lippmann, “Or rather, there sit the unhappy prisoners of war—waiting”.\textsuperscript{492}

The prisoner-of-war issue in Korea posed a moral dilemma for Americans, as it was framed in such way that Americans were convinced that it would be un-American to send these anticommmunist enemy prisoners back to their own countries. As General Ridgway put it, “It is the principle which is anathema to them, since the question of the individual versus the state is the essential difference between democracy and


\textsuperscript{491} “Zhang Ruiqi xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in \textit{Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu}, 371.

As President Truman famously pronounced, to agree to forced repatriation “would be repugnant to the fundamental moral and humanitarian principles which underlie our action in Korea... We will not buy an armistice by turning over human beings for slaughter or slavery.” Secretary of State Dean Acheson further expanded the idea by saying that if the allied nations had essentially committed murder when they returned Soviet POWs to the hands of Stalin, then the U.S. would likewise be resigning the North Korean and Chinese POWs to the same fate if they handed them over to their native lands. C. H. Peake of the Far Eastern division went even further and infused this principle into a Cold War mission by saying that the West was engaged in a struggle to maintain the “fundamental humanitarian principle of individual human rights” against “the totalitarian state and the assertion of the rulers of such states that the individual lives only to serve the state.” In November 1952, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the President-elect, emphasized that there should be no forcible repatriation of war prisoners under the U.N. custody in Korea. After being sworn into office, he openly endorsed the principle of “non-forcible repatriation”: “To force those people to go back to a life of terror and persecution is something that would violate every moral standards by which America lives. Therefore, it would be unacceptable to the American code, and it cannot be done.” Admittedly, the moral appeal was quite compelling for the American government to sell the policy to its people, for as one historian pointed out, “Americans

493 Hermes, Truce Tent and Fighting Front, 146-147.
had always fought for moral issues since 1776, not for the balance of power, not to restore world order. And they had always struck hard for victory, not balance, even if such victory left the world in ruins.”

Nevertheless, the high-pitched triumphalist proclamations of American leaders conveniently overlooked the uncomfortable fact that the atrocities committed against the prisoner population took place in the prison compounds under the supervision of American troops. The U.N. and the U.S. professed to be carrying on the battle in Korea to secure free choice for the POWs on both sides to determine their destinies. However, the fact remained that the very POWs that the Americans/U.N. side claimed to protect and for whom they were securing this freedom were revolting and being murdered by their fellow prisoners in significant numbers. As historian Bruce Cumings put it,

in spite of endless American statements of their allegiance to individual rights, human dignity, and the Geneva Convention, a virtual war ensued in the South’s camps, as pro-North, pro-South, pro-China, and pro-Taiwan POW groups fought with one another, and for the allegiance of other POWs.

Despite its pronounced commitment to the rule of law and the value of the individual, America’s failure to live up to its ennobled creed undermined its efforts to appeal to these ideals to end the war. On the same day Truman proclaimed his “moral and humanitarian principles,” rebellious Communist prisoners in the notorious Koje Island kidnapped their camp commander Brig. Gen. Francis T. Dodd and presented a list of grievances, which gave the world a different version of the screening of POWs and of “voluntary repatriation”. The surges of violence at Koje Island demonstrated that “the

499 Fehrenbach, This Kind of War, 601.
501 Weintraub, War in the Wards, 109; Arnold Krammer, “Foreword,” in Doyle, The Enemy in Our Hands, x.
Communists had taken what could have, would have, and should have been a stunning U.S. and UNC propaganda victory and turned into a dismal defeat”. The Communist high command in North Korea, in collaboration with the Chinese, successfully exploited the rioting of the prisoners to embarrass the U.N.C. in the eyes of the world and weaken the position of the U.N.C. in the Panmunjom armistice negotiations.

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Chapter IV

India, Taiwan, and “Last Battle of the Korean War”:

The Controversy Concerning the POW Explanations

**Explainer:** Don’t you know we are building a new country now? There is no unemployment in our country.

**Prisoner:** You egg of a turtle *[about the worst thing you can call someone in Chinese]*, I myself was unemployed for ten months in Peiping!

**Explainer:** Yes, but things are better organized now. We are putting to work the principles of Lenin and Marx.

**Prisoner:** Don’t tell me about Lenin and Marx, you Communist dog! I know more about Marx and Lenin than you will ever know and I was a higher-ranking officer than you will ever be!

**Explainer:** I can see you are a man of some education. We need men like you to help build our country. If you go to Formosa, you will be under that bandit Chiang and we will liberate that island soon. Then where will you be?

**Prisoner:** You Communist dog. If the neutrals were not here I would tear you to pieces.\(^{504}\)

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Un-Repatriation Meets Brainwashing

Rowdy and ill-disposed Chinese prisoners unabashedly manifested their defiance, shouting their scorn for Communism and preference for “Taiwan, Taiwan” in a frenzied manner. Their violent political emotions, reflected in tough words and truculent attitudes toward representatives from their Communist-ruled homeland, caused consternation. Dumbfounded and speechless, an international working team made up of Poles, Czechs, North Koreans, Indians, Chinese, and Americans, was compelled to watch these painful scenes.

A truly unique chapter in the history of warfare, the tug-of-war ensuing in the prisoner explanation program was seen as “lively” and “as far from the dullest” performance. For three months, the United Nations, Communist China, and Korea attempted in the prison explanation program to convince their non-repatriates to return to their homeland. Referred to as the “last battle of the Korean War,” the prisoner explanations program, under the oversight of India-led Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (N.N.R.C.), took place during the last three months of 1953. During the explanations sessions, United Nations and Communist representatives attempted to convince reluctant prisoners from their respective forces to change their minds. The explanations sessions, delivered by NKPA and CPVA representatives, were violently resisted and condemned by many anticommunist North Koreans and Chinese. More than 20,000 anti-Red North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war and 359 pro-Communist

506 Ibid.
U.N. prisoners in the Indian forces’ care went through the final screening process by which prisoners’ views were determined.\(^{507}\)

In the intensity of the tumult in the “explaining” tents, war prisoners from North Korea and China faced their Communist compatriots and pronounced a verdict on their own ultimate fates. The conversations took place in a shabby makeshift hut, hastily put together by U.S. Army engineers. Outside their tents, prisoners awaiting interviews shouted raucous chants, which drowned out Communist broadcasts. Occasionally, hysterical men would be dragged past the tent, pushing, yelling, and stamping their feet. Close to Panmunjom, the Freedom Village in Munsan lay vulnerable to an East-West zigzag battle for capturing the hearts and minds of the captives. This conflict would culminate in the dramatic finale of the struggle over prisoners of war in Korea.

Desperate men in frustrating confinement fought ferociously, chanting anticommunist songs and shouting out obscenities in Korean and Chinese. However irksome the antics of the prisoners were, these insolent men carried themselves with a captivating vitality; it was this vitality that dominated the newspapers’ front pages worldwide. The prisoners’ wildly inflammable statements provided grist for the anticommunist propaganda. Media fanfare around the prisoner issue conveniently overshadowed the ongoing shooting on the front, which remained largely unreported. As Demaree Bess from *The Saturday Evening Post* pointed out, these prisoners not only “stole the show in Korea,” but they also “constituted a gigantic monkey wrench thrown

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\(^{507}\) The first “screening” by the U.S., or the “identification-interview” addressed by official U.N. Command documents, took place between April 4 and April 19, 1952. Two hundred U.N. soldiers carried out a poll of 170,000 prisoners in which only 70,000 declared their choice of repatriation—a reduction of 46,000 from the total given by the American truce team on April 1, when the Communists were willing to drop the principle of total exchange if 116,00 of the 170,000 were released. See “Prisoners, Panmunjom and Peace,” *The Weekend Review, New Statesman and Nation*, Saturday, 17 May 1952: 2.
into the truce-negotiating machinery in Korea, acting as the sole obstacle to some sort of settlement which would bring an end to the fighting there”.

The last year of captivity became a test of political persuasion over the prisoners reluctant to be repatriated. The struggle for hearts and minds of the captives was carried on with renewed vigor. As the commander of the U.N. Command Repatriation Group, General Thimayya saw what many consider to be the most bizarre aspect of the war, as both sides grew numb and indifferent toward the stalemated outcome of the military battlefield but “obviously considered the problem of prisoners who refused repatriation to be vitally important, more important perhaps than the fighting itself”. Later, Thimayya recorded his reflections in his memoir, saying, “the emphasis of the military objectives of each side was on capturing the minds as much as the property of the enemy”.

This chapter analyzes how the prisoner-of-war issue evolved into a highly complicated international problem. This chapter discusses how the prisoner-of-war issue truly developed from a local conflagration into a worldwide controversy, confronted by Cold War powers in the East and West. Special attention was given to the work of the N.N.R.C. in Korea, insofar as the commission brought out the role of India and the United Nations in the solution of the Korean prisoner entanglement.

This chapter analyzes the significant role India played in easing the thorny diplomatic operations and facilitating a peaceful settlement of the prisoners-of-war dispute. Administering the prisoner explanation program became India’s experiment in neutrality in a divided world. India, a non-aligned nation, bore the brunt of being the

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510 Ibid., 21.
virtual foster parent of strong-willed prisoners who refused to go back to their
Communist homelands. It was the time when India, as a free modern nation state, made
its debut on the international scene.\textsuperscript{511} India chose to assume this thankless role of
arbitrating a dispute between nations of conflicting ideologies relating to the issue of the
prisoners-of-war in Korea. Worthy of examination is the question of why India emerged
as the “neutral” power that assumed the custody of the non-repatriated POWs.

India’s role of maintaining neutrality in the Korean War marked the nations’ emergence as a modern nation state on the international stage, showcasing India’s official attitude concerning the ideological struggle in Asia. This chapter analyzes and assesses India’s mission, rationale, and priorities—in particular, its stance of “neutrality” guaranteeing that prisoners could exercise their bona fide rights of repatriation. This paper argues that as the executive agent for the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, was integral in challenging the presumptions behind the Voluntary Repatriation policy—\textit{freedom of choice}—that barely existed in prisoner-of-war camps.

Furthermore, this chapter argues that by stripping away Taiwan’s oratorical rhetoric, secret agents from Taiwan made a mockery of America’s pious declaration of freedom of choice. The benevolent American state granted to its enemy prisoners the right to decide which side of the armistice demarcation line they should be set free on. In addition to choosing the detaining side or that of their home countries, the prisoners were presented with a third option: they could also choose to go to a “neutral country,” although which country had not yet been determined. Within the U.S.-dominated liberal geopolitical global order, the options for the prisoners of war were placed amidst

\textsuperscript{511} Sri Nandan Prasad (author), B. Chakravorty (editor), \textit{History of the Custodian Force (India) in Korea, 1953-54} (Historical Section, Ministry of Defense, Government of India, 1976), 81.
“competing notions of citizenship, human rights, and sovereignty in the age of three worlds”. However, Admiral C. Turner Joy, the Chief delegate of the U.N. Command, took a dim view of the choices given the prisoners, because “to require prisoners to make a highly important and permanent choice under the conditions of imprisonment was to ask of them a decision they were probably not best prepared to make”. The application of the “Voluntary Repatriation” principle proved to be rather difficult and tortuous. In the meantime, more than 14,000 self-declared Chinese anticommunists succeeded in undergoing the perturbing metamorphosis from “15,000 Men Without a Country” to “anticommunist righteous men” who infused renewed purpose and conviction to the Nationalist regime. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek’s personal attention to this issue played a significant role in Nationalist policies and efforts in the relocation of anti-Communist prisoners to Taiwan, whereas the Nationalist government effectively exploited the non-repatriated Chinese prisoners in its political lobbying in U.S. Congress, as well as public diplomacy in Japan and Southeast Asia.

**Communist POWs After Koje**

Before moving to reconstruct and examine the explanations, it is necessary to examine the living situation of Communist POWs after they left Koje Island. This analysis allows the reader to get a solid grasp on the state of mind of these prisoners

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514 The term “anticommunist righteous men” means “literally anticommmunist righteous fighters or righteous fighters, translated by the KMT as ‘freedom seekers,’ mainly referred to former members of the PLA who defected to Taiwan.” See Joshua Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation: Voices from the Veterans of the Chinese Civil War, 1940s-1990s* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 52.
before they entered into the explanation sessions. It will also give the reader a sense of the new management challenges posed for the United Nations Command.

As an outgrowth of the Voluntary Repatriation policy, the U.S.-led United Nations Command had to shoulder the undue burden of settling more than 10,000 prisoners in the last year of the war. Various physical difficulties were inherent in the United Nations’ handling of the prisoners who refused repatriation. First, feeding and housing them continued to represent a considerable expense in the United Nations’ budget. Second, an unnaturally large force was needed to guard the prisoners. Third, the question of how to manage and oversee them caused dissension among the United Nations allies. As a result, the United Nations Command faced a grueling test of logistics, administration, and credibility, as managing the enemy prisoner camps continued to be an ongoing burden.

The United Nations completed the relocation of surly Red prisoners in small barbed wire stockades in Koje Island in June 1952. General Boatner’s “Operation breakup” ended with the “transfer of 5,650 civilian internes from compound 62 to compound 602, which had been divided into four smaller stockades;” while “some 5,800 Chinese prisoners, formerly held in compound 602,” were shipped to Cheju Island.515

In the last year of the war, Cheju-do became the prison home of almost 15,000 anticommunist Chinese captives and approximately 5,000 Chinese Communists.516 This all-Chinese island lay fifty miles off the south coast of Korea and was 150 miles southwest of Koje. Camp No. 21 held the approximately 5,000 pro-Communist Chinese

prisoners in Cheju City, while 15,000 anticommunists were held at Mosulpo (which means “Poor Port”), also on Cheju Island.\(^{517}\)

In July and August 1952, Chinese prisoners who objected to being sent back were moved to Cheju Island. Approximately 5,000 pro-Communist Chinese prisoners were quartered around Cheju City on the north shore of Cheju Island. The hard-core Communist prisoners were held “under maximum security restrictions” enforced by American military police detachments and South Korean guards, who had learned their lesson from Koje.\(^{518}\) These prisoners were reported to have hoisted Communist flags, sung revolutionary songs, and refused work details, which included constructing roads and assisting in unloading the little steamers that ran from the mainland. Whereas singing “became a weapon for the empty-handed POWs” to invigorate themselves, American guards had to stomach their prisoners’ streams of invective and “harassing Communistic” chants.\(^{519}\)

The craftsmanship and ingenuity of these prisoners caught the interest of their American guards, as one report marveled at a striking array of homemade weapons and artistic forms of expression. Communist prisoners learned to make splendid tools and items, including “knives, spears, daggers, grenades, maps, medals, MP armbands, telegraph keys, electric bells, epaulets, pens, pen points, petitions, pamphlets, compasses, clarinets, books, and newspapers (printed on cigarette paper with shoe heels)”\(^{520}\).

Additionally, the prisoners made for themselves little tin stars and painted them red,


which the captives were allowed to wear. They also improved their camp accommodations by making pink bricks out of clay for building better quarters and beautifying their compounds with statues, walks, and temple arches made of beer can strips. Also out of the ubiquitous beer can, the captives made ashtrays and stove pipes for the gasoline drum stoves used to warm up the compounds during the winter days.  

Every now and again, part of the camp exploded into defiant violence, and the prisoners sang, linked arms, and hurled rocks, even though these actions risked retaliation and death. This ongoing violence took three main forms in the camps: rioting, murder, and coercive tattooing. Between July 7 and 12, one prisoner was killed and seven were wounded on the Cheju Islands.

The first major Chinese Communist prisoner riot occurred October 1, 1952, at Cheju. October 1 was celebrated as Independence Day for the new Chinese Communist state. The Communist prisoners requested permission to commemorate the third anniversary of the People's Republic, but this request was denied. As early as August 15, they organized singing contests, art shows, theatrical performances, and sporting events to celebrate the Chinese victory in the war against Japan. However, this time they defied American guards by raising ten makeshift Chinese flags and singing their national anthem on National Day. This disturbance was the first full-scale uprising since the transfer from the Koje Island.

The mutinous rioting occurred at Compound No. 7, where more than 5,000 die-hard Chinese Communist prisoners were held. The reaction was triggered when the camp commander refused permission to celebrate and requested that prisoners take down the

flags and stop singing. The Hartford Courant reported 500 Chinese prisoners unleashed their first big riot on their independence day, and a third of them were “cut down in a melee with U.S. guard”. The outbreak occurred at 7:30 a.m., when 600 Chinese began hurling rocks in an uprising that was to have signaled simultaneous outbreaks from nine other compounds, as reported by The Washington Post. Prisoners brazenly raised a red flag behind the barbed wire enclosure and wore white paper carnations to commemorate their dead comrades. The prisoners exhibited their defiance not only by waving Communist flags and shouting insults but also by refusing to go on work details. While some of the organized Chinese prisoners began throwing rocks, others attacked guards with clubs, barbed wire flails, and sharpened tent poles. The guards had to open fire to control the prisoners. Order was restored in half an hour. Fifty-six prisoner deaths and 120 wounded marked the riot as the “second most deadly in the long and bloody history of Communist prisoner violence in Korea”. Two American soldiers were slightly injured. It was believed that American infantrymen thwarted a mass

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525 Ibid.
outbreak of 5,800 tough Chinese Communist prisoners of war when they quelled this rebellion in POW Compound No.7.\textsuperscript{531}

Even though pro-communist Chinese prisoners generated provocative headlines with their emboldened defiance, their performance at Cheju paled in comparison with that of their anticommunist brothers. The stage was set when more than 14,000 self-declared anticommunists, originally from Camp 72 and 86 on Koje Island, went through investigations and were transferred to Mosulpo as Units 1, 2, and 3, which formed the United Nations Prisoner-of-War Camp No. 13 off the southwestern tip of Cheju Island. Each unit was comprised of about five thousand men. These units were divided into ten smaller groups of 500 men each, located at individual shelter places. The prisoners were taken in groups of 500 to the seashore for bathing and swimming.\textsuperscript{532} Colonel Wilson, the commander of Camp 13, commented that within the nine-foot-high barbed-wire fences, these prisoners’ compounds were well maintained.\textsuperscript{533} The guards did not see attempted escapes except in one dramatic scene, which involved a “stir-happy prisoner who climbed over the fence one night, reached the water and set out to swim to Formosa”.\textsuperscript{534}

After settling in Cheju, the prisoners were instructed to build their own new standard enclosures: 5,000 prisoners were accommodated within an enclosure, and each enclosure was broken down into ten compounds.\textsuperscript{535} Anticommunist Chinese prisoners grew deeply frustrated at the perception that their anticommunist stance went

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{532} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{533} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{534} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
unappreciated, as evidenced by no superior or differentiating treatment by the U.N. Command.\textsuperscript{536} Resenting the prospect that they would build and live in the same quality of quarters as their pro-Communist brothers, the prisoners staged a sit-down strike in the middle of the construction and once again declared their will to resist repatriation to their Red homeland:

The new compounds will make it easier for you to turn us over to the Communists when the time comes. Why don’t you machine-gun us here? It is better to die here and now than to be put in new compounds and turned over to the Communists.\textsuperscript{537}

Mac R. Johnson from the\textit{New York Herald Tribune} aptly labeled this group of Chinese prisoners in Camp 13 as “15,000 Men Without a Country”. Even though the great bulk of them would have preferred to return to the government of Chiang Kai-shek, they were deeply “distrusted by Chiang and unwanted by Allies”.\textsuperscript{538} Syngman Rhee did not want them turned loose in South Korean territory. The United States Government was not ready to give them political asylum in America. Johnson comments sarcastically:

No one denies the humanitarianism of the principle, but it has left the U.N. command with no armistice and with 15,000 unwanted anti-Communist Chinese who have an ideology, a barbed-wire home and a most uncertain future.\textsuperscript{539}

The tragedy of these 15,000 Chinese anti-Communist prisoners of war was exactly as New York Herald Tribune journalist Mac R. Johnson described:

…no nation except communist China wants them. And Communist China cannot have them, because the prisoners themselves do not want to go back to live under communism and the U.N. command feels that to send

\textsuperscript{536} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{537} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{538} Mac R. Johnson, “Tragedy of Anti-Red Captives: 15,000 Men Without a Country,”\textit{New York Herald Tribune}, 19 Aug. 1952: 1B.
\textsuperscript{539} Ibid.
them back would mean an automatic sentence to death by torture, slave labor or a firing squad.\textsuperscript{540}

Chiang did not want these prisoners circulating among the loyal troops in Taiwan. Even though the Communist regime in China verbally welcomed its estranged children, the West could not take the risk of sending them back to repeat what had happened to Russian POWs who returned to the Soviet Union in the aftermath of WWII.

Johnson did, however, recognize that there were distinct differences between the anticommmunist and Communist camps at Cheju, where all the Chinese nationals were confined. Although guard towers, barbed wire, and security troops also existed in the anticommmunist camps, they served as no more than a quiet background rather than the “bristling first line of defense that they are at the explosive Communist enclosures”.\textsuperscript{541} “The extreme willingness of all the anti-Reds to cooperate,” Johnson continued, gave these camps “a ‘happy’ look” that was “missing in the grim Communist camps”.\textsuperscript{542}

Despite the seemingly cheerful faces they put on, the anticommmunist Chinese did have other inner misgivings about the way the United Nations Command was treating them. In their opinion, the United Nations was missing the bus by not releasing this friendly, pent-up manpower to fight on the Allied side. And they are quite seriously worried that their present easy situation may deteriorate if, say, the confinement lasts another year, or if the U.N. ever makes a move to sell out these men to the Communists in hopes of a quick truce.\textsuperscript{543}

Even though the anticommmunist prisoners had been given assurance of “Voluntary Repatriation,” they were concerned that the U.N. Command would fail to carry out its  

promises and turn them back over to the Communists. The captives continued to plead that they be incorporated into the United Nations Armies and be allowed to fight against the Communists. Moreover, they harbored deep distrust toward the U.N. command and trepidation toward their ultimate fate:

They have one unfounded fear—that ultimately they may be double-crossed by the United Nations and handed over to the Communists …
They want special personalized assurances from some high-ranking authority … that they will not be turned back to the Reds.\(^{544}\)

The main reason for the anticommunist prisoners' fears was that if they were sent back to China or North Korea, they would likely face punishment as traitors.

Many times, the prisoners took their appeals to higher authority figures in the West and pleaded for their support. Though most of the prisoners were not “devout religionists,” their letters to religious leaders in the West demonstrated skillful utilization of widespread antipathy toward Communism from a religious point of view.\(^{545}\) In an impassioned appeal to the Cardinal of New York District, the prisoners expressed their fear and distrust toward the U.N. Command, as well as their frustration with not being able to fight the Communists on the front. On January 25, 1952, Cardinal Spellman read a letter written by anticommunist prisoners in a speech before the New York State Bar Association:

Cardinal, we oppose the ferocity of our enemies with Christian behavior. We escaped from the tiger’s jaws and surrendered to the UN forces. We now cast ourselves upon your charity and entreat your help. We fear that the UN authorities do not fully understand our dreadful plight—that they will deliver us back into the grip of our souls’ enemies. We beg them rather to put us in the front line of the UN forces in desperate attacks. Put

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\(^{544}\) Ibid.
\(^{545}\) Hayward, “Cheju Island PW Camps: Docility Versus Belligerence.”
us where we can front the worst shocks of our detested enemy. We will prove our worth.\textsuperscript{546}

To put this appeal in the context of U.S.-East Asia relations since the mid-nineteenth century, the prisoners strived to appeal to the popular antipathy toward the Chinese Communists in America by drawing on the well-worn sentimental discourse of U.S. foreign policy with Asia.\textsuperscript{547} This particular thread of political rhetoric in America emphasized the special bond of sympathy with Asia, which American missionaries had cultivated. In the new era of the Cold War, this discourse advocated fighting against communism with a clear conscience and continued to play the role of “a defender of China against foreign aggression and an altruistic guide to democracy and modernizing”.\textsuperscript{548}

The prisoners’ petitions did arouse some international attention. On March 15, 1953, Adlai E. Stevenson, the Democratic Presidential nominee of 1952, visited Cheju and inspected the United Nations prisoner-of-war camps and South Korean Army training centers.\textsuperscript{549} Anticommunist prisoners on Cheju Island serenaded him “with drums and bulges fashioned from tin cans”.\textsuperscript{550} International attention bolstered their spirits and renewed their determination.


\textsuperscript{548} Ibid.


Most importantly, the anticommmunist Chinese prisoners secured the stalwart support of Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang showed himself to be keenly interested in the psychological warfare being waged against the non-repatriated Chinese. As early as February 28, 1952, the Nationalist government announced that it was prepared to receive in Formosa all Chinese Communist prisoners of war in Korea who opted to come to the island to join the cause of anticommmunism. In the late half of 1953, Chiang decided to step up the psychological pressures that could be applied to the non-repatriates. On August 5, 1953, he offered them asylum, telling anti-Red allied prisoners that they could enter Formosa. The following radio message sent by Chiang demonstrated his determination to deploy his regime to back up these prisoners’ activities at Cheju:

We wholeheartedly welcome the return of all of our captured personnel to the arms of the motherland; we have further guaranteed, in an agreement reached with the other side, that all captured personnel shall, after their

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551 Qiu Nan, “Si Nian Mo Lian Qi Wei Xi Nao,” in Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi, 206.
repatriation, rejoin their families to participate in peaceful construction and live a peaceful life.  

Similarly, in a printed pamphlet distributed to the prisoners and broadcasted by the U.N.C., Generalissimo Chiang urged the prisoners to “stand firm…in your choice for freedom”.\(^555\) In addition to the soothing words uttered by the leaders of the anticommmunist Formosa regime, the non-repatriated prisoners also received gift packages sent by the Mainland Relief Organization. Along with political pamphlets, edibles such as pork, bananas, pineapples, and cube sugar were sent by air. Taiwan sent two delegations to comfort the internees on Cheju Island, led by Ni Wenya and Fang Zhi, respectively.\(^556\) All of the propaganda activities had a palpable effect on the men in confinement.

On August 11, 1953, the Chinese Communists angrily protested that secret agents of Chiang Kai-shek were indoctrinating and coercing prisoners in the U.N.-Command camps.\(^557\) As a result, the prisoners were not able to make “a free choice for repatriation”.\(^558\) The Chinese government demanded the transfer of jurisdiction of the non-repatriated Chinese prisoners to the Indian government.\(^559\)

Later investigation by the Indian government confirmed the alleged activities of Nationalist agents among Chinese prisoners held on Cheju Island. The KMT government had sent two groups of agents to work with non-repatriated Chinese prisoners. The first group was comprised of twelve people, including Taiwan Foreign Service officers, government officials, and the Nationalist psychological warriors, while the second group

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555 Ibid.
556 Shao, *Shi han hui yi lu*, 355.
559 Parrott, “Foe Charges U.N. Coerced Captives.”
was made up of six men with similar backgrounds.\textsuperscript{560} These men carried out extensive propaganda campaigns in the camps: they gave indoctrination lectures on anticommunism, they widely distributed political pamphlets, and they heavy-handedly crushed the opposition with their arguments. These men dictated that every single one of them “must return to Formosa”. They insisted,

\begin{quote}
NO one will be allowed to go back to the mainland. If any one returned to Chinese mainland the communists will kill him or amputate parts of his body which were tattooed with Anti-Communist expressions.\textsuperscript{561}
\end{quote}

As one escapee later testified to the N.N.R.C., special agents from Taiwan even taught prisoners how to murder those desirous of repatriation to China. Suspected pro-Communists were usually found “strangled and a letter left in their pockets saying that they had committed suicide as their longing for returning to Taiwan had not been fulfilled”.\textsuperscript{562} On April 12, 1953, the United Nations Command in Tokyo reported that Chinese prisoners at Cheju Island camp had murdered a fellow prisoner who was found “battered and wrapped in a blanket” on April 9.\textsuperscript{563} Prisoner eyewitnesses said seventy captives had participated in the beating. The murdered man was presumed to be a Communist, as the camp was dominated by fanatical anticommunists who stated that they would rather commit suicide than go back to Communist China.\textsuperscript{564} On April 25, 1953, the U.N. Prisoner of War Command announced that anticommunist Chinese prisoners had beaten fifteen “unwanted Red agitators” in the supposed anticommunist compound on Cheju Island. Three suspected pro-Communists who had been beaten on their “lower

\textsuperscript{560}“Statement by Sgt. WANG HASIN, POW, No. 704755 from Compound D 31 on 24 September 1953, Recorded by V. Kumar,” in \textit{Reports and Selected Documents}, 265-66.
\textsuperscript{561}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{562}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{563}“P.O.W. Murdered at Cheju Camp,” \textit{South China Morning Post}, 13 Apr. 1953: 12.
\textsuperscript{564}Ibid.
back and buttocks” died at the camp hospital.565 More gruesome murders were committed. “The bodies were thrown down in deep trench latrines,” witnesses later recalled, “Some people were hanged and it was said that he had committed suicide. Some were killed while bathing in the sea and were reported to have been drowned.”566

Besides teaching the non-repatriated prisoners how to kill and torture, the special agents from Taiwan also trained them on how to conduct themselves during the explanation sessions. These agents passed on tactics to resist the persuasion of the Communist delegates: when asked any question by the N.R.R.C. representatives, the captives should raise strong objections and then simply shout out, “Taiwan, Taiwan!” The KMT agents made a strenuous effort to teach every single prisoner to pronounce “Taiwan,” as well as how to spell it, since the majority of the captives were illiterate. The prisoners were told that they would have the right to fire a barrage of questions at the representatives during the interviews. Anticommunist prisoners were offered rewards for kicking a Communist representative. Colonel Robinette noticed that the “one-month forced rehearsal” of explanation sessions were “to school them on the questions that probably would be asked, and what pressures might be put on them”.567

Granted, some of the self-professed anticommunist prisoners might have been merely opportunists who predicted that the U.N. would eventually win the Cold War in Asia. As one commentary in The Washington Post reported, “Undoubtedly many of these prisoners are rice-Christians, whose anti-Communist convictions have been determined

566 “Statement of IDO CHENG Kang No. 704015 dated 26 September 1953, recorded by Sd. V. Kumar,” in Reports and Selected Documents, 263.
567 White, The Captives of Korea, 249.
by good food and good treatment.” However, most of the prisoners, according to the American guards who ran the camps, were sincere anticommunists, and 80-90 percent of them “would prove it by jumping at a chance to join the Chinese Nationalist or Republic of Korea armies—knowing that recapture by the Reds would mean a hideous death”.

In one American officer’s eyes, the trouble within the camp was a matter of power struggles between competing cliques rather than irreconcilably ideological convictions, or with allegations of homosexuality usually associated with western prisoners:

there is less sex-perversion than you could expect among European or American prisoners, but probably more squabbles and even riots among rival cliques for power inside the compounds. Occasionally these had led to gang murders and to killing when the guards have had to use riot tactics to restore order.

As this quote testified, the bitter struggle for political control often led to bloodbaths and terrorist activities. American guards who came to quell the rioting often found themselves encountering heavy resistance.

One major explanation of the high riots frequency among the pro-Communist prisoners had to do with the Communist standard of heroism. Many pro-Communists felt that they had already disgraced themselves simply by being captured, which was contrary to Communist standards. These prisoners felt that they might be accused of being “tainted” by American imperialists or even charged of serving as spies upon returning home. As a result, they would undoubtedly be subject to Communist reprisals should they

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choose to return home. One American source revealed that eighty percent in the pro-
Communist camps were not actually “fanatic Communists”.571 However, as one
commentary from The Christian Science Monitor aptly pointed out, “By sacrificing
themselves and causing trouble their leaders [the POW leaders] feel they are proving they
are loyal Communists, useful and worthy to return home.”572 The captives’ belligerent
appearance and riot record would give them a political advantage upon returning to their
Communist homelands.

Explanations in the “No Man’s Land”

In the middle of September 1953, a group of anticommunist Chinese prisoners
plunged into chaotic violence outside of the so-called Indian Village, about a half-hour
drive from Panmunjom. They had just taken the train to travel from Cheju Island to
Panmunjom. Prisoners had extreme fear and apprehensions about their move to the
Demilitarized Zone. They angrily ripped off their identification tags and threw them on
the ground. At the entrance, upon seeing the observers and interpreters from Communist
China, they became agitated and hurled rocks at them.573 According to the official history
of the C.F.I., the anticommunist POWs

explained [to the C.F.I.] that their objection to the presence of the
Communist observers was based on the fear that individual prisoners
would be identified during the process of taking over and then their
families in China would get harassed or punished.574

571 Hayward, “Cheju Island PW Camps: Docility Versus Belligerence.”
572 Ibid.
The protests against explanations ushered in a volatile period that might be called “Un-repatriation Meets Brainwashing”. Within the compounds, Chinese nationalist flags and Korean banners flew high in the wind. Thousands of Chinese and North Korean non-repatriates who were already in the neutral zone compounds not only greeted the new arrivals with “songs, cheers, and band music played on homemade instruments,” but they also started rehearing mock “explanation” sessions.\footnote{575}

By September 26, American guards handed over the prisoners who had refused repatriation into the demilitarized zone from the camps on the islands of Koje and Cheju, as well as two mainland camps.\footnote{576} In total, the U.N. handed over 14,704 Chinese and 7,900 North Korean prisoners to the Indians, including nearly 1,200 who were sick and wounded.\footnote{577} In the meantime, the K.P.A.-C.P.V. Command handed over to the C.F.I.s 359 non-repatriate Allied captives, including 330 male and five female South Koreans, twenty-three Americans, and one British prisoner of war.\footnote{578}

Within a few weeks, the town of Taesung-dong witnessed an influx of Communist explainers, non-repatriated war prisoners, and neutral observers from a five-nation neutral commission. An enormous tent camp sprang up almost overnight in the hills of the demilitarized zone.\footnote{579} The prison camp area covered five square miles of what was once “No Man’s Land”. The Indian guards called it “Shanti Nagar,” which meant

“Village of Peace”. The camp was subdivided into fifty-five barbed wire enclosed compounds, each holding 500 prisoners. Additional facilities accommodated guards of the Custodian Force India, members of the N.N.R.C., and Communist explanation and communications teams. The N.N.R.C. was a five-member arbitrating committee consisting of India, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

In the following prisoner explanation program, United Nations and Communist representatives attempted to convince reluctant prisoners from their respective forces to change their minds. Any prisoner who did not desire to go back to his homeland would have to endure a minimum of nine months of imprisonment, with no guarantee that he would be set free even after that period. The explanations would start on September 22 and continue until December 22, 1953. A political conference would be scheduled to decide the prisoners’ destination within thirty days. If no decision had been made by January 22, 1954, then 14,711 Chinese and 7,916 North Koreans would be released as civilians.

In August 1953, Li Kenong and Qiao Guanhua led Communist persuasion teams made up of the C.P.V. Explanation Delegation of around a hundred party cadres, along a the truce negotiation delegation and journalist delegation. By the terms of the armistice, Communist persuasion teams would attempt to convince those Chinese prisoners who were balking at returning to Communism to come home after the interview. If the prisoners refused, they could eventually go to any nation that accepted them. On September 30, 1953, the Communist side announced that Peng Dehuai and Kim II-sung

580 Ibid.
581 Ibid.
582 Ibid.
had composed a letter to the prisoners of war, which was broadcasted in English, Korean, and Chinese, to woo them home.

The northern camp was located close to the village of Songgong, where the pro-Red POWs were housed. The U.N. captives who had refused to go back would undergo the “explanations” by which the U.N. officials hoped to persuade them to change their minds. The U.N.C. made very conspicuous plans for trying to reorient 359 pro-Communist U.N. prisoners, including 335 South Koreans, twenty-three Americans, and one British Marine. Explainers from the U.N. side were chosen from “among former lawyers, teachers, ministers, salesmen … and soldiers—men able to think and talk on their feet”. Brig. Gen. A. L. Hamblen explained how he picked explainers from various sections of the United States: “Thus, a southerner may explain to any southern prisoner, Negroes will do the explaining to any Negroes in the group, Republic of Korea explainers will talk to the South Korean captives who refuse to return home, and so forth.”

At the final stage of the war, India emerged as a custodian of those prisoners of war in Korea whose future remained undetermined. India assumed three roles: it acted as an N.N.R.C. member, as a chairman and executive agent, and as a custodian of the prisoners of war. All prisoners of war on both sides who were desirous of non-repatriation were transferred into the hands of the N.N.R.C., led by India. A POW hospital in the demilitarized zone was also under Indian custody. Additionally, India sponsored a program of education and recreation for prisoners which closely paralleled

583 White, The Captives of Korea, 314.
the program provided by the U.N. Command in the past.\textsuperscript{587} Most importantly, India was tasked with administering a unique program that enabled representatives of the parent nations to offer “explanations” to the non-repatriated prisoners and to guarantee them “full freedom to return home to lead a peaceful life” within the ninety days stipulated in the armistice agreement.\textsuperscript{588} This situation was a test of India’s stance of impartiality, as both sides wrangled over the petty technicalities of exchanging prisoners. General Thimayya, chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, acted as the fulcrum of the East-West see-saw.\textsuperscript{589} For the first time in modern times, India had to make worldwide decisions for other nations, and it acted as an intermediary between opposing world forces while simultaneously navigating different ideologies, principles, and ways of life.

The philosophy that underpinned India’s foreign policy initiative was “neutrality”. Before the C.F.I. assumed its duties during the first week of September 1953, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru exhorted the troops to view this mission as one of “peace and goodwill … with ill-will to none and categorical friendship to all”.\textsuperscript{590} He emphasized that India and the Indian Army “must always remember that they are to act in a completely impartial manner and carry the message of peace and friendship on behalf of India to that unhappy country”.\textsuperscript{591} The undertaking was “India’s first overseas military operation, undertaken as a peace-keeping mission to restore international peace in the war-torn Korean peninsula”.\textsuperscript{592} Gen. Rajendrasinhji, the Commander-in-Chief, also

\textsuperscript{589} White, \textit{The Captives of Korea}, 321.
\textsuperscript{590} Prasad and Chakravorty, \textit{History of the Custodian Force}, 81.
\textsuperscript{591} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{592} Ibid., (i).
pointed out that the C.F.I. went to Korea “on a unique mission,” which was “the first of the kind in history”. Indeed, the task of the Indian troops was “not to fight an enemy, nor to guard a ceasefire line, but to hold custody of 22,959 prisoners of war of various nationalities of the East and the West, and facilitate their repatriation or disposal otherwise”.

The C.F.I., as the executive agent of the N.N.R.C., carried out the organization’s orders. The main function of the C.F.I., which consisted of about 5,000 troops, was to implement the repatriation of prisoners and maintain both the southern and northern camps. Major General S. P. P. Thorat was the commander of the C.F.I. Indian Custodian Force, which flew from India (with a brief stop in Japan) and then transferred to D.M.Z., because Rhee would not allow the Indians to set foot on South Korea. The armed foreign troops in D.M.Z. included 5,000 troops from India and fifty each from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

How India viewed its own role can be characterized in the Menon Resolution, which stated that the “Repatriation Commission was to serve as a caretaker of the people who were on their way home and would receive the prisoners not on behalf of the detaining power but on behalf of the country of origin”. The Chinese POWs, as observed by General Thimayya, were “better disciplined, less noisy, and a bit more rational”. These prisoners were “lost and abandoned children,” whereas the Koreans “seemed like bewildered and angry children”. Taking the role of “a foster-parent for

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593 Ibid.
594 Ibid.
595 U.N. Doc. A/2354, December 20, 1952. The Menon Resolution was named after V.K. Krishna Menon, Indian delegate to the United Nations. It was proposed as India’s solution to the prisoner-of-war dilemma in the Korean War.
596 Thimayya, Experiment in Neutrality, 90.
597 Ibid.
frightened prisoners of war” was a “delicate and hazardous job”: India needed to “play the indispensable parts of the objective arbitrator and the trustworthy Samaritan, but also reduce the obligations of those other powers that are banded together for common defense”. 598 Essentially, India was tasked with executing the terms of reference while still acting as a referee in a bitter game of political warfare. 599

Administration and discipline of the prisoners of war posed difficult and complicated problems for the C.F.I. Both the southern camps and northern camps held prisoners of the Korean War who were resisting repatriation to their native lands. Three key challenges during the explanation period involved “breaking up the existing organizations of the prisoners,” “bringing the prisoners out for explanations against their will,” and “segregating them in connection with explanations.” 600 Indians found their operations punctuated by intervals of explosive violence instigated by the prisoners themselves.

One of the foremost issues was to accurately screen the repatriates and non-repatriates, which required separating the two groups. Like their processors, the India-led N.N.R.C. found it baffling to segregate the bona fide repatriates and non-repatriates:

Some tattooed anti-Communists—reportedly more than 1,000—have changed their minds. Under rescreening they have rejoined the pro-Communist group that awaits repatriation. Some reportedly are busy now obliterating their tattoos. Such men later may claim they were tattooed against their will. The scars might become a mark of distinction worn by some of the most “valiant” Communist of the future—like a Nazi prison-camp tattoo. The changeableness of even a tattooed man illustrates how difficult it is to classify Chinese prisoners reliably. 601

600 “Minority Report: Separate Interim Report by the Swedish and Swiss Members of the Natural Nations Repetition Commission,” in Reports and Selected Documents, 68.
601 Hayward, “Reds Win Back Many Chinese PWs.”
The fact that the prisoners who had been tattooed with anticommunist slogans and insignia eventually chose repatriation testified as to the coercive nature of the tattooing campaign. This incongruity created the impression that these men were tattooed by fellow prisoners in the camps against their unexpressed will. The prisoners who attempted to seek repatriation might be beaten up and even killed by if he failed in the attempt.

“Highly organized fanaticism” contributed to acts of violence and even murder in the southern camps. According to one Chinese report, at least four hundred agents from Taiwan were working in the south camp, which accounted for the discrepancy between the *de facto* number of Chinese non-repatriates (14,704) and the U.N. publicized statistics (14,235). Many of the agents had previously worked for the C.I.E. and had spread pro-KMT and pro-U.S. propaganda in POW camps. Now these agents were actually U.N. personnel working as interpreters. KMT agents allegedly swaggered through the southern camp compounds and intercepted messages, indicating the existence of strong organization within the camps.

Messages intercepted by the Indians confirmed the existence of the surreptitious communication system in the southern camps. One letter written by anticommunist prisoners said that, “Communist bandits must die” and that Communism in China was “opposed by four classes (soldiers, farmers, workers and merchants), four seasons, four

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603 “Statement of IDO CHENG Kang No. 704015 dated 26 September 1953, recorded by Sd. V. Kumar,” in *Reports and Selected Documents*, 262.
seas, four directions, etc." This letter stated that the Taiwan government planned to counterattack the mainland with the help of U.N. It said that the anticommunist guerilla on the mainland were very active and gaining strength. The prisoners were encouraged to keep daily dairies of the anticommunist activities inside the camps so that the U.N. could publish them for the rest of the world. The prisoners were also told that the Communist representatives were weak and that they should beat them. Similarly, another intercepted letter urged prisoners to collect stones in the compound so they could throw them at the Communists whenever they saw them. It promised that if a prisoner kicked an explanation representative, the captive would be rewarded $200, followed by an additional reward after returning to Taiwan.

Strong anticommunist organizations among the south camp’s prisoners negated “all assumptions or assertions about Freedom of Choice… any prisoner who desired repatriation had to do so clandestinely and in fear of his life”. In a candid interview with the United Press, Lieut. Gen. K. S. Thimayya outspokenly criticized prison camp indoctrination: “As best as I could make out, these camps were filled with people from...

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605 “Letter sent by 1st Lieut. UI (Camp) Group No. 8 to other Groups of ‘Anti-Communist’ PW, Summary Translation,” in Reports and Selected Documents, 258-59.
606 In Eisenhower’s state of the union address on Feb. 2, 1953, he announced that the neutralization of the Taiwan Strait was reaching its end. It implied that the Eisenhower administration encouraged Chiang Kai-shek to “retake” mainland China and set up the second battlefield of the Korean War to distract Chinese forces in Korea.
607 Ibid.
608 “Letter sent by 1st Lieut. UI (Camp) Group No.8 to other Groups of ‘Anti-Communist’ PW, Summary Translation,” in Reports and Selected Documents, 258-59.
609 White, The Captives of Korea, 325.
South Korea and Taiwan who gave lectures to them [the POWs].” He went on to add, “You should never meddle with a prisoner’s mind.”

However, the U.N.C. was not the only side “meddling with” prisoners’ minds. Lt. Col. Vaughn F. Meiserling, an American observer of an explanation session, commented, “It’s an awful thing to sit there helpless and watch mental torture like that…It’s like seeing a man killed before your eyes without doing anything about it.”

The Communist commissioners depicted two contrasting lifestyles for the prisoners. Life under Communism would be “a peaceful life with your waiting mother and father and loved ones. They [the loved ones] were not killed despite propaganda [by the United Nations].” The repatriates would also get good jobs and enjoy the benefits of good crops, education, and reconstruction work. If the prisoners opted for repatriation, they would “go to a civilization of margarine, cars, pon-pon girls [prostitutes].”

Each explanatory session was attended by the explainers, N.N.R.C. representatives, a representative of the detaining side, and press correspondents. Outside each explanation enclosure, two different exits awaited the prisoners: one for those who decided to apply for repatriation and the other for those who did not. On one exit gate hung a golden sign reading “bosom of motherland” in Mandarin and Korean, along with the Red flag and NPRK flag. The golden sign was also flanked by two slogans: “Long

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611 Ibid.
613 Ibid.
614 Ibid.
615 Ibid.
live the DPRK” and “Long live the PRC”. Another banner reading “running for freedom” hung on the gate to Taiwan and South Korea.

In most cases, the explainers began the sessions with a benign, reassuring smile and soothing remarks such as, “We are here to welcome you back to the arms of the people of China. Your parents and your future await you.”617 The Communist persuaders pointed out that staying meant abandoning the prisoner’s families and being exiled from their homeland. The Chinese explainers also tried to lure the prisoners back home with the prospect of helping build a new Communist state. The prisoners, according to the explainers, would suffer no penalty if they went home; they would instead share in the blessings and advantages of the new Communist system.

The anticommunist Chinese prisoners, however, viewed the explanation sessions as a golden opportunity to embarrass the Communist explainers.618 The prisoners usually came to the explanations docilely and then began to interrupt and change the tone of the conversation. In one case, when being questioned about his decision to go to Taiwan, one anticommunist prisoner quickly retorted:

Yes…I know that. It [Taiwan] is tiny. But have you ever seen the sun? It is also tiny as we look at it from here, but the sun, anyhow, shines all around the world and that is Taiwan today. It shines also all over the mainland -- China …619

Not every prisoner’s “counter-explanation” was as civil and mild as this one. Other captives screamed obscenities in Chinese and even scuffled with their Indian guards, acting as if they were trying to tear the explainers in half. As one British newspaper

described, most of the prisoners acted hysterically, “reeking of violence and long-drawn-out misery”. However, even to those who defiantly rejected repatriation, the Communist explainers still repeatedly told the non-repatriates that if they or their follow captives ever had second thoughts about their decision, they just needed to ask the Indian guards to arrange for their repatriation.

In one particular case, anticommunist Chinese prisoners seemed to fly into a frenzy upon arriving the explanation tent. On October 17, 1953, one POW entered the tent and displayed the slogan “anticommunism and resisting Russia” written on his body in chalk. He began to sing anticommunist and pro-Nationalist songs at the top of his lungs and threw an iron chair at the translator. Another prisoner tossed an iron can at Miao Fujin, one of the Chinese explainers. These actions made it obvious that the prisoners refused to submit to arguments offered by spokesmen of the regimes they feared or disliked.

Outside the tents, the noise of shouting was similar to that of a livestock auction every day of explanation sessions. Shouts of “Death to Mao Tse-tung” and “Long Live Chiang Kai-shek” resonated through the camps. Men ranted and bellowed for Taiwan, using a barrage of inventive denouncing Mao and his Communist regime. The explanation tents resounded with shouts of “Down with the Soviet Union!” “I want to go to Taiwan!” and “Down with Communist bandits and Communist running dogs!”

Prisoners awaiting interviews sympathized by drowning out Communist broadcasts with

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622 Miao Fujin, “can jia ban men dian jie shi zhan fu dai biao tuan,” in Shan xi lao nian, 2000, Iss. 8, 18.
raucous screaming and singing.\textsuperscript{625} In one extreme case, a prisoner bitterly denounced Communism for an entire thirty-minute session. The Chinese persuaders could not get in a word as the prisoner insisted over and over again, “I want to go to Taiwan [Formosa]!”\textsuperscript{626} As \textit{The New York Times} put it, “What is going on in the thirty-two explanation tents is a matter of raw, militant anti-communism that almost has to be seen to be believed.”\textsuperscript{627}

Caption: “We don’t understand why the war prisoners don’t want to come back. See, we have set up everything for them!”\textsuperscript{628} The two men in the middle under the banner “The Welcoming Committee” are Mao Zedong and Karl Marx. The man in the left front is labeled “The Soviet”. A Stalin portrait is presented next to the front desk, on which a pair of handcuffs and a pair of manacles are on display. In the back are a Marxist library and a labor camp. A barbed wire building on the right is labeled “The Stronghold Tenement”. Most importantly, the biggest banner in the middle says “Siberia Winter Sports Meeting”. The implication of this cartoon is that nothing but Communist slavery awaits the non-repatriated prisoners. Moreover, they will be sent to Siberia for hard labor and will spend the rest of their lives in imprisonment.

\textsuperscript{625} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{626} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{628} Qiu Nan, “Si Nian Mo Lian Qi Wei Xi Nao,” in \textit{Fan gong yi shi fen dou shi}, 204.
John Randolph, a journalist from the Associated Press, witnessed a dramatic scene in which a North Korean explainer met a bewildered anticommunist prisoner from his own country. After the North Korean explainer greeted the prisoner as “comrade,” the prisoner screamed back, “You filthy sons of a dog. You dirty Communist trainer. You and your Russian Chinese barbarians. Don’t comrade me, you dirty Chinese lover. I spit on your father and your mother.” From five feet away, the prisoner spat straight at the officer, missing his face but soiling his uniform. Screaming with an implacable hatred, the captive struggled strenuously against the restraint of his Indian guards.

According to Lieut. Gen. K. S. Thimayya, who supervised the controversial explanations, the prisoners’ “Hui Taiwan, Hui Taiwan” [To Taiwan, To Taiwan] campaign was a well-orchestrated show rather than a spontaneous outcry. He recalled that the Communist prisoners he met in Korea seemed to have been hypnotized by meticulously planned indoctrination:

These men and their staff officers seemed mere boys. They all had great dignity, but they strained, I felt, to give the impression that they were just plain simple types, ignorant of ostentation. There was a stoical sameness about them. It was difficult to view them as individuals. One saw them, rather, as a group of players acting out a carefully defined role.

To Thimayya, the North Korean and Chinese prisoners' responses were simply carefully conducted performances that were staged-managed by greater forces behind the scenes. They were absolutely not a group of individuals. Their carefully conducted performances were manipulated by the forces behind them. *Life* magazine editorialized that Thimayya’s

630 Ibid.
stance was influenced by Nehru, who told him that the anticommunist prisoners were “obviously held under duress”. 632

According to the C.P.V. explainer Miao, the U.S. let the Taiwanese agents play the role of being explaining representatives of the detaining powers, as well as being translators. Taiwanese agents not only permeated the southern camps and conducted indoctrination, but they were also present at the explanation sessions. The agents used hand gestures, nodding, winking, and frowning to send signals to prisoners and disrupt the explanation process. Miao’s observation was reconfirmed by members of the N.N.R.C., who unanimously agreed, “overzealous United Nations Command observers have, in some cases, obstructed the course of the lectures”. 633

General Thimayya and the N.N.R.C. that he led were keenly aware of the fact that the southern camps were saturated with Taiwanese agents. These agents’ main goal was to convert the maximum number of prisoners to anticommunism and to prevent them from electing repatriation. In a letter to United Nations Command, the N.N.R.C. addressed the ongoing concerns regarding prisoners’ shouting of “I shall go to Formosa”:

the Commission, on the basis of its experience of explanatory work on 15th and 17th October respectively, does not feel justified in assuming that a prisoner’s shouting of words “Taiwan, Taiwan” constitutes the final and conclusive proof of his intention. The Commission observed that even the prisoner… (who) entered the tent by shouting “Taiwan, Taiwan,” … eventually elected to be repatriated. 634

Within the five-power neutral nations’ group, representatives from anticommunist members, Sweden and Switzerland, voiced different opinions regarding the existence of

634 “Letter from the Counselor, N.N.R.C. Secretariat to the Commanding General, United Nations Command Repatriation Group, No. 170/NNRC/2; 30th October 1953,” in Reports and Selected Documents, 208.
secret agents. Armand Daeniker, a senior Swiss Diplomat, believed that it was the Communists’ strategy to “mask their failure to convince a substantial number of prisoners to return home by falsely putting the blame on agents planted in the prison camps.” 635 Swiss and Swedish representatives admitted the existence of strong POW organizations in the camps; however, they asserted, the prisoners still had fair chances to opt for or against repatriation, as “shown by the not inconsiderable number (726*) of prisoners who, in the period of custody, actually were repatriated.” 636

Representatives of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland also held divergent views on what would constitute an acceptable supervisory team, how the explanation should be handled, and whether or not the N.N.R.C. should use force against the prisoners. A Swiss representative complained about the internal tension of the N.N.R.C.: “It is more like a bridge game, with the Swiss and Swedes on one side and the Czechs and Poles on the other. It is very discouraging.” 637 On one hand, the Communists insisted on speaking to the prisoners individually because in groups the men were subject to the influence of “bosses” planted among them by the Allies; on the other hand, the U.N. command preferred group persuasion, as it would not be possible to directly intimidate a single individual at all times. 638 Both sides argued that the other system offered greater a chance for “coercion or direct threats to the prisoners.” 639 The U.N. command also declared that anticommmunist prisoners who did not want to listen to explanations should not be forced to do so. 640 When 8,000 North Koreans flatly rejected

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636 White, The Captives of Korea, 326.
637 Alden, “Reds Fail, Swiss Says.”
640 Ibid.
to come out of their compounds and attend the explanations, the N.N.R.C. was deeply split—Czechoslovakia and Poland opted for the use of force, whereas Sweden and Switzerland opposed it. The Communists also requested that repatriates be separated from non-repatriates, as well as segregating the explained from the unexplained. This proposal was shot down by General Thimayya, as “there were no spare compounds” and there was a shortage of men to guard them.⁶⁴¹

Explanations to the Chinese prisoners were delayed when the Chinese insisted on individual interviews rather than group persuasion. The Chinese explainers did not come face to face with anticommunist Chinese POWs until October 15. The explanation sessions were further delayed and broken off three times; as a result, they did not take place during fifty of the days during the seventy-day period in question.⁶⁴² On December 23, the U.N.C. unilaterally announced the termination of the explanation. The Chinese Communists received 160 prisoners who had escaped from the Indian custodian oversight and ninety more after the Indians transferred the custodian power back to the U.S.⁶⁴³ Only three percent (more than 600) of the C.P.V. prisoners interviewed by Communists had agreed to return home and openly declared that they genuinely desired repatriation.⁶⁴⁴

Chiang’s welcome proclamations inspired bold confidence and determination among the non-repatriated Chinese prisoners, while the Voice of Free China broadcasting constantly admonished the non-repatriate Chinese to cooperate with the guards and remain loyal to the Nationalist cause. On November 25, General Chiang welcomed

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⁶⁴¹ White, The Captives of Korea, 312.
⁶⁴³ Miao Fujin, “can jia ban men dian jie shi zhan fu dai biao tuan,” in Shan xi lao nian, 2000, Iss. 8:18.
14,000 Ex-POWs in Free China. General Chiang Ching-kuo, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek’s eldest son, who was in charge of the anticommmunist prisoner project in Taiwan, announced that the prisoners “would be free to enter the nationalist army or do anything else they wished … there did not seem to be any reason for questioning their loyalty”. In particular, President Chiang’s letter generated a flurry of excitement that broke the monotony of the prisoners’ daily routine and rekindled their hopes to go to Formosa after the war. On the night of December 17, 1953, Madame Chiang broadcasted a message to the 14,600 Chinese prisoners at Panmunjom, saying, “I shall see you in Formosa.” A UP report on December 1953 recorded how the Beijing government protested against such psychological warfare activities in Panmunjom camp and claimed that an “illegal” radio receiver was smuggled from Tokyo to Korea.

Regardless of how the Communists interpreted the outcome of the “explanations,” the results of the stormy interviews were significantly favorable to Nationalist Chinese and South Korean governments. The heart-rending prisoner of war problem in Korea ended with the majority of anticommmunist prisoners of the United Nations in Korea forfeiting the opportunity to return to their Communist homelands. Ultimately, 440 Chinese filed to repatriate back to mainland China, fifteen died under India’s jurisdiction,

646 Ibid.
649 The Communists broke off explanations in mid-November to more than 22,000 Chinese and North Koreans after convincing less than three percent of the first 2,000 interviewed to return home. The Communists had ordered the 250 Chinese prisoners who had not yet been interviewed to come back the next day, but the prisoners refused. The U.N.C., along with the Swiss and Swedish representatives in N.N.R.C., protested against the use of force against prisoners who did not want to interview. The “explanations” sank into an impasse.
and 14,235 ended up going to Taiwan.¹⁶⁰ Twelve Chinese and eighty-nine Koreans, thoroughly tired of the pro- and anticommunist struggle, said they wanted to start life anew in a neutral country.¹⁶¹ These twelve Chinese and seventy-four of the Koreans eventually left for India. Twenty-two Americans, one Briton, and seventy-seven South Koreans preferred to seek a better life on the other side of the Iron Curtain of the Far East.

**India’s Experiment in Neutrality**

Even though the prisoner-of-war issue was handled with impartiality and empathy under his jurisdiction, Gen. Thimayya held strong reservations about the policy that he had been instrumental in executing. About three quarters of the Chinese prisoners had refused to go back to Communist China. In the meantime, 347 former Allied soldiers, including twenty-one Americans, had renounced their homelands to become Communist “peace fighters.”¹⁶² However, Thimayya doubted that many of these men “deserted their own flags for ‘ideological’ reasons.”¹⁶³ “As a soldier,” he said, “I am dead against it [the principle of voluntary repatriation] … Once we accept that an army can go across and desert its country, it becomes a frightful precedent.”¹⁶⁴

Lieut. Gen. K. S. Thimayya supervised the controversial explanations session, which became known as one of the “most explosive phases of the Korean armistice

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¹⁶⁰ Yan zhi xin, “chao xian ting zhan xie ding qian shu yi shi he zhan fu tan pan,” in *Yan huang chun qiu*, Iss. 6, 2008: 19.
¹⁶¹ White, *The Captives of Korea*, 326.
¹⁶³ Ibid.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
agreement”. Thimayya's elaboration on his understanding of Asian psychology is particularly perceptive, as his biographer recorded:

The Chinese and North Koreans were motivated less by individual rights. In Asia, a person had powerful obligations to his family, clan, caste, or community, and his personal desires generally were subordinate to the will of his group. The group protected the individual, who invariably felt a strong attachment to it. On this basis, the Communists took the stand that to separate a person from his group was the worst possible cruelty. Even if the U.N.-held non-repats were not being detained by physical force, the Communists said, they had endured mental coercion which amounted to the same.

Thimayya was stunned by Americans’ shocking ignorance about Asian culture and customs. “A lack of understanding of Asia and Asians was the greatest deficiency of the U.N. commanders,” he observed. Initially, he had thought the Americans were merely being polite, but later he “realized that they knew appallingly little about our past of the world”.

On the contrary, the Indian Army guards were able to cultivate a sense of friendship without compromising key principles of the N.N.R.C. The C.F.I., under the leadership of Thimayya, acquired the “diplomacy, sense of humor and swift force” to successfully handle the Chinese non-repatriation prisoners, who would riot if given the slightest chance. The guards actually treated the anticommunist prisoners as “bewildered children”. In a protest against the repatriation of a fellow prisoner, who was named Wang Hsu, several violent non-repatriated Chinese dragged Major H.S. Grewal of India into their compound and held him hostage. Grewal was dramatically

655 Ibid.
657 Ibid., 296.
658 Ibid.
659 Ibid.
660 Ibid.
rescued after General Thorat and a small group of armed Indian soldiers dashed into the prisoner compound. Thorat simply remarked tauntingly, “What sort of Chinese are you? What is your hospitality and where are your manners? We have been here for an hour. You might at least offer my men tea or cigarettes.” Thorat earned respect from the suspicious anti-Red Chinese prisoners and soon returned with the Major.

The *Time of India* reported that the Chinese prisoners were impressed by the “neutrality and impartiality” of the Indian troops. The Indians treated their captives with hard candy and cigarettes and played a volleyball game with the prisoners. General Thorat and his staff officers were even invited by the Chinese into one of the compounds and presented with “crudely made artificial flowers and a ring the captives had hammered from a silver buckle”. The Indians concluded that an important factor in winning over the Chinese prisoners was having their own neutral Chinese interpreter in the Indian ranks, since Indians did not use interpreters from either the U.N. side or the Communist side. This particular Chinese interpreter proved to be highly valuable in the negotiations with the prisoners, causing the captives to develop trust in the Indian guards.

The hard-pressed Indian custodian force also learned to deftly manage opposition from different directions. One such dispute arose involving the result of the explanations. The Communists objected that the majority of prisoners had not chosen to return to their

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666 Ibid.
homelands because 85% of the non-repatriates had not heard the explanation at all. As a result, 14,000 non-repatriates had been stripped of their rights of voluntary repatriation under neutral custody and had been forcibly sent to Taiwan by the U.S. troops.\footnote{Miao Fujin, “can jia ban men dian jie shi zhan fu dai biao tuan,” in Shang lao nian, 2000, Iss. 8, 18.}

Conversely, the U.N.C. protested to the N.N.R.C. that the Communist explainers had violated the rules of the procedure by sending in unauthorized explainers, insulting neutral nations’ representatives with obscene curses and trying to forcibly drag a non-repatriated Chinese prisoner through a door for repatriation.\footnote{“POWs Interviews Suspended: North Korean Anti-Reds Refuse To See Explainers,” The Times of India, 20 Oct. 1953: 7.} The U.N. also complained that some anticommunist prisoners had been confused by the word “repatriation” and had opted for repatriation despite the fact that they had really wanted to go to Formosa or South Korea.\footnote{“P. O. W. Explanations to Continue Today: Arrangements Impress Chinese Prisoners,” U.P.A. and The Times of India, 19 Oct. 1953: 7.} In a letter to Thimayya, General Mark Clark told the Indian custodian that these 22,500 Chinese and North Koreans had already made their choices a few months ago and would “stick to it until coerced.”\footnote{Milo Farneti, “UN Insists Prisoners Already Made Choice,” The Globe and Mail, 6 Oct. 1953: 1.} Furthermore, the South Korean National Assembly Committee charged that Indian guards had killed anticommunist prisoners at “Indian Village” and coerced prisoners to be repatriated in collaboration with the Communists.\footnote{“P. O. W. Explanations to Continue Today,” The Times of India, 19 Oct. 1953: 7.}

Thimayya believed that even though both sides presented their cases with cold logic and legal hairsplitting, they did not really care about the wellbeing of the prisoners.

Humphrey Evans recorded Thimayya’s thoughts when writing his memoir:

> The Communists wanted to refute the propaganda by proving that the non-repats had been coerced. The U.N. people were equally anxious to prove that their non-repats were genuinely anti-Communist. To the extent that such attitudes dominated the thinking of both sides, the non-repat
prisoners were given little personal consideration; they were pawns in the ideological cold war. Thimayya became anxious to see for himself the non-repat prisoners who were the cause of so much acrimony.\textsuperscript{672} Obviously, as Thimayya observed, both the Communist countries and U.N. Command were eager to prove that the non-repatriated prisoners wholeheartedly chose their side, whereas the non-repatriates themselves became victimized by the East-West see-saw.\textsuperscript{673}

In a similar fashion, Thimayya found himself in a very delicate situation maneuvering complicated power relations, as he lightheartedly commented on:

I always got the impression that my personal stock went up and down strictly in accordance with the value of my decisions to the UN side. The press followed these ups and downs, and exaggerated them. It was something of a strain to be always a hero or a villain—never anything between.\textsuperscript{674}

Thimayya’s troops won much praise for their “tact and impartiality, as well as their determination to carry out a most invidious task in spite of very kind of external pressure”\textsuperscript{675} The American officers of the United Nations Command developed considerably better feelings toward the Indian troops and eventually endorsed India’s last screening effort despite initial criticism of India’s pro-repatriation stance.\textsuperscript{676} The Korean and Chinese Nationalist governments established an alliance of anticommunist brotherhood and made stinging verbal attacks at the India’s custodian forces.\textsuperscript{677} More dramatically, Rhee threatened to drive the C.F.I. out of Korea by force of arms.\textsuperscript{678} On the Communist side, though the angry remonstrations persisted, both China and North Korea

\textsuperscript{672} Evans, \textit{Thimayya of India}, 297.
\textsuperscript{673} White, \textit{The Captives of Korea}, 321.
\textsuperscript{674} Thimayya, \textit{Experiment in Neutrality}, 50.
\textsuperscript{675} “As India Sees Panmunjom,” \textit{The Economist}, Saturday, Iss. 5751, 14 Nov. 1953: 473.
understood there was nothing they could do about them. The prisoners themselves, particularly the Chinese prisoners under U.N. control, were reported by the Indian media as being impressed with “the neutrality and impartiality” of the Indian troops.\textsuperscript{679}

The success of India in the field of diplomacy lay in the fact that India understood the Asian psychology. North Koreans and Chinese were deeply rooted in family and kinship. Their mindsets were embedded in pragmatism rather than Cold War games of clashing ideologies. Thimayya commented, “It is also curious that in these Asian ideological conflicts, the stated war aims, as differentiated from the unstated and basic aims, were in blunt pragmatic terms, rather than in high-sounding ideological phrases.”\textsuperscript{680}

In Thimayya’s opinion, the Korean War, as the first open hostility between Communism and liberal democracy, was “a microcosm in which the overall conflict could be seen”.\textsuperscript{681} Thimayya stated that if both sides realized, “at least subconsciously, the futility of the military function in this ideological struggle, then the value of my country’s neutrality policy, as a constructive force, was considerably increased”.\textsuperscript{682} Though suffering heavy criticism from American press and the South Korean government, the Indian troops won praises and prestige among the prisoners, as well as the British newspaper The Observer, which praised them as being “honestly neutral,” and “doing a job no other nation could do”.\textsuperscript{683}

\textsuperscript{680} Thimayya, Experiment in Neutrality, 21.
\textsuperscript{681} Evans, Thimayya of India, 294.
\textsuperscript{682} Thimayya, Experiment in Neutrality, 24.
The Situation in Korea—Four Views: America: “No fish in a dry sea” (Hesse in The St. Louis Globe-Democrat); British: “Careful, glasses are more precious than prisoners” (Cummings in The London Daily Express); French: “Where did I put that armistice convention?” (Nitro in Aux Ecourtes, Paris); Indian: “Will you please keep that brat of yours quiet.” (Ahmed in the Hindustan Times, New Delhi).

Exodus to Formosa

For the United Nations, the defection of approximately 21,000 Chinese and North Korean POWs was huge blow to Communism and thereby celebrated as the “greatest propaganda victory,” a victory which “firmly established the ‘principle of non-forcible repatriation.’”\(^{684}\) The man behind the POW orientation program, Monta L. Osborn,


received the “Distinguished Civilian Service Award” in January, 1956. Osborne was the Chief of the Operations and Policy Division, Psywar Section.  

Henry Cabot Lodge, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, commented that the event proved that 96 to 97 percent of those who had lived under Communism would not return but would choose freedom. The release of the anticommunist prisoners “vindicated the UN Command’s stand for the humanitarian principle that ex-soldiers should not be forced against their will to return to their countries of origin” but should have the right to seek political asylum. One American observed that particularly for the United States, the prisoner-of-war issue reinforced American commitment to freedom and democracy in Taiwan, and it urged Taiwan to take the initiative to stimulate and maintain the momentum of anticommunism:

Americans cannot fight for you Taiwanese people. However they might fight for the freedom and democracy in Taiwan, even sacrifice for such a role model for the world as a democratic and free country.

After weary months of waiting, the Chinese prisoners of war who desired freedom rather than the return to their communist homelands finally arrived, escorted by U.S. marines. Seven United States Air Force planes flew the first batch of 142 sick and wounded released prisoners to Formosa from Seoul. Chiang extended greetings to the arrivals, bringing with him a large entourage—Lt. General Chiang Ching-kuo, the Secretary of Defense; General Chen Cheng, the Chinese Nationalist Prime Minister; George Yeh, the Foreign Minister; and American Army, Navy, and Air Force attaches.

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686 Ibid.
688 Ibid.
689 “Gao wen jun xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 309.
Pretty Chinese girls came out to greet the repatriated prisoners, dressed in rustling silk dresses and walking on stilts to appear more attractive. An estimated 100,000 people in Taiwan from all walks of life lined up around the street corners in the city of Taipei, waiting in the chilling rains to give the anticommunist Chinese ex-prisoners a hero’s welcome. The 4,692 returnees, as the first contingents of the 14,000 ex-prisoners, arrived at Taiwan’s northern port of Keelung, waving Nationalist flags and vowing loyalty to Chiang and the Nationalist cause. There they were greeted by “exploding firecrackers, lively band music, and ringing cheers”. The rest of the non-repatriated Chinese would arrive within the next two days.

In Taiwan, the prisoners were given redemptive opportunities to join Chiang’s cause of “retaking” the mainland and fighting against Communism. As General Chen Cheng announced passionately on their arrival date: “We shall give you all opportunities to serve your country and erase the humiliation you have gone through.” These “stout hearted men,” as Chiang himself addressed them, were said to have “made history” by their decision and actions, and Chiang said that the freedom-loving Chinese people of Formosa welcomed them back with “warmth and admiration”. These non-repatriated prisoners, numbering more than 14,000 people, converted to civilian status and were taken by 225 U.S. Army trucks from the Indian Village on January 23, 1954. This epic day was declared to be “Anticommunist Freedom Day”. Premier Chen Cheng hailed the day as “The Communists’ Doomsday”.

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692 Thimayya, Experiment in Neutrality, 24.
Only three days before, the N.N.R.C. had transferred the jurisdiction of the southern camps from the Indians to the U.N. Command, which was responsible for transporting the 14,000 non-repatriates to Taiwan. Lai Ming-Tang, a top official in the R.O.C. Department of Defense, directed this operation, while Lt. General Chiang was responsible for absorbing the ex-prisoners into life in Taiwan. Ninety-six North Koreans and Chinese who wanted to start fresh in a neutral country were made subject to the ruling of a political conference.

The choices made by these prisoners, Chiang declared, proved that the Chinese people in the mainland would rise up against Communist totalitarianism if they were given an opportunity:

The vehemence and determination with which they objected to being returned to Communist enslavement leaves no room for doubt that were the people on the mainland given the same chance they would not hesitate to fight for their freedom in the same heroic manner as has been demonstrated by these compatriots.

On February 3, 1954, Chiang received 120 representatives of 14,000 anti-Red Chinese War prisoners sent from Korea in January 1954 in Taipei. It was Chiang’s first personal meeting with any of the former prisoners. “You are kidnapped sons,” he proclaimed emotionally, “…who have returned home after a long bitter battle against your abductors.”

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694 They were released from Indian custody on January 20, 1954.
695 *Lai Mingtang xian sheng fang tan lu* (Xindian Shi: Guo shi guan, Min guo 83 [1994]).
696 “Probable Action Regarding Release of 22,000 Non-Repatriated POWs and Preliminary Checklist of Measures to Exploit the Situation,” Operations Coordinating Board, Jan. 15, 1954, pg. 1 of 4; Ike-Jackson, CD Record, Box 5.
699 “Main content area Chiang Tells Ex-POWs They Are Kidnaped Sons,” *The Hartford Courant*, 4 Feb. 1954: 20A.
Under the sponsorship of the Nationalist government, the Free China Committee for Aiding Anticommunist Chinese POWs in Korea launched a spectacular global and domestic political show. The Committee had been organized during the period when the prisoners were transferred from Cheju Island into neutral custody. Chaired by Ku Chen-kang, the committee was coalesced by the Free China Relief Association (led by Fang Zhi), the Friends of the Army Club (led by Jiang Haidong), and 446 other civic bodies and was formally inaugurated on September 26, 1953.  

In the minds of the anticommunist prisoners, the Nationalist government in Taiwan’s psychological warfare initiatives had become increasingly energetic, which greatly strengthened the “heroes’ determination to ‘Come Back to Taiwan’.” The Committee had also influenced the prisoners through the aforementioned Voice of Free China and taped records of anticommunist broadcasts, which had been propagated throughout the United Nations Command camps. After the prisoners relocated to Indian Village, the Committee had solicited 150,000 comfort letters from Taiwan and overseas and delivered them in batches through the Republic of China Embassy in Korea.

Internally, the committee initiated a series of exhibitions and events to display the prisoners’ blood letters and their homemade flags dyed red with blood, enhancing public awareness. The committee report stated that more than 100,000 people had attended the exhibitions in major cities such as Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung. In less than one year, the Committee sponsored two fundraising campaigns with a sum of

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700 How We Helped the Anti-communist Chinese POWs Regain Freedom (The Free China Committee for Aiding Anticommunist Chinese POWs in Korea, June 1954), 2. Both Jiang Haidong and Fang Zhi visited Korea and urged non-repatriates to choose Taiwan if not they could go to neutral countries.

701 Ibid., 1.
TWS$1,678,889.2 (approximately $51,623.19) and TWS$908,805.06 (approximately $27,936.76), respectively.

The Committee garnered extensive international attention through a series of appeals to more than fifty Free China-sympathizing American congressmen, including Walter H. Judd and William F. Knowland.\textsuperscript{702} Both Judd and Knowland were prominent members of the so-called “China Lobby” in the U.S. Congress during the postwar period of 1949-1954. The Lobby exerted significant pressure on U.S. foreign policy regarding China. The prisoner-of-war issue became exploitable for China Lobby to advocate a pro-Chiang Kai-shek China policy in the U.S. Congress. During Vice President Nixon’s goodwill visit to Taipei in mid-November 1953, Chairman Ku Cheng-kang presented a memorandum and a visual exhibition of the anticommmunist prisoners’ living situation, and he received Nixon’s immediate assurance to carry through American promises to the prisoners.\textsuperscript{703}

The Committee also exploited the prisoners’ situation to increase the anticommmunist psychological warfare initiatives toward oversea Chinese living in Southeast Asia, the United States, and Japan. Broadcasts narrating the living conditions of these anticommmunist Chinese were transmitted in English, Japanese, Malay, Cantonese, and Fujianese. A delegate of twenty ex-prisoners was sent in four groups to make a whirlwind tour in Philippe, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan.\textsuperscript{704} On August 8, 1954, a fifth group of seven ex-prisoners, accompanied by two consultants, started their three-month visit to the United States, Canada, Cuba, and Europe.\textsuperscript{705} In this way, the prisoner-

\textsuperscript{702} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{703} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{704} Su Xuelin, “Hui Dao Zu Guo de Huai Bao,” in Fan Gong Yi Shi Hui Yi Lu, 273.
\textsuperscript{705} Ibid., 277-279
of-war issue became a strategic topic that promoted and strengthened “the unity of the democracies” in Asia.

The way in which the Nationalist Chinese government exploited the result of the explanations galvanized the anticommunist movement in Asia and the United States. The propaganda value of the non-repatriate ex-prisoners was extracted maximally—they were celebrated by the regime as true “heroes behind barbed wire” and the “living symbols of the struggle between freedom and tyranny”. The heightened voice among the anticommunist non-repatriate prisoners not only re-energized the beleaguered Nationalist cause, but it also accelerated the momentum of anticommunism in the United States, Japan, and Southeast Asia. The propaganda tours of ex-prisoners effectively spread the Nationalist government’s political influence among overseas Chinese and weaned them away from the Communist forces. In particular, extensive publicity campaigns identified the anticommunist prisoners’ cause with American ideals and commitment to democracy and advocated continuing support from the United States to Chiang’s goal of recovery of mainland China from Mao Zedong and the Communist Party. The prisoner-of-war issue became a magic wand for Chiang Kai-shek to call on anticommunist Chinese in Taiwan and abroad to step up preparations for his counterattack against the Communist-controlled China mainland.

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“Free China’s Freedom Day Campaign” This political advertising advocated the general population collectively rising up to support the anti-righteous men’s cause. More than 100,000 people gathered in front of Taipei Zhong Shan Hall to celebrate Freedom Day. Students, workers, and children all demonstrated their enthusiasm. Zheng-feng Chang, a Peking Opera superstar, gave a charity performance to express support. Radio stations in Taiwan produced all kinds of political publicity programs on Freedom Day.707

Chapter V
Conclusion

This prolonged struggle over enemy prisoners of war provocatively demonstrated the connections between Cold War legitimacy and Cold War power. Superpower rivalry between the East and the West imposed Cold War boundaries on decolonizing nations like Korea, Vietnam, and China, further complicating the fratricidal Asian civil wars. The Cold War was a transnational phenomenon, but it was also a way of life, especially for the prisoners of war, who were caught in the clash of the geostrategic rivalry and Cold War calculations. Their fates were entangled with nationalism, prestige, legitimacy, and Cold War ideologies.

The international spotlight was focused on the U.N. captives and the cruelties they suffered at the hands of the enemy. Appalling living conditions resulted in part from the lack of good nutrition, causing many to lose the will to continue living. In these extreme circumstances, American servicemen behaved selfishly, occasionally stealing from and committing murder against their fellow prisoners. Additionally, U.N. prisoners of war along the Yalu River were subjected to lengthy lectures capsulizing capitalist evils and Communist virtues; this ideological education was soon entitled “brainwashing”. After enduring constant harping on the theme of revolution and peace, twenty-one American G.I.s and one British marine willingly switched sides and crossed the Iron Curtain.
This mind-boggling act of the twenty-one who opted for non-repatriation, especially in the heyday of McCarthyism, threatened U.S. interests and challenged American way of life in America. China, dominated by a “brainwashing” political regime, was rated as the country that most threatened U.S. interests domestically and overseas. Journalistic CIA agent Edward Hunter, who coined the term “brainwashing” in the English language, warned American people in his testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activities that brainwashing would subjugate America to a “new world order” benefiting the Soviet Union and that the ultimate goal of brainwashers was to conquer America. Hunter continued, “The United States is the main battlefield… the people and the soil and the resources of the United States”. 

Half a century later, Tim Weiner wrote, “It took Mao’s China the forced ‘confessions’ of some American prisoners of war during the Korean conflict to make brainwashing a centerpiece of 1950s culture”.

More than 14,000 Chinese prisoners’ loud and ferocious refusal was deeply intertwined with America’s imperial hegemony in East Asia and hardened the Cold War division in East Asia. A vicious struggle between organized pro-and anti-Communist factions ensued after the U.N. built their prisoner of war camps in Koje-do and invited interventions from outside. Spasms of rioting periodically exploded behind the barbed wires, which served as violent demonstrations of their professed allegiance to one China over the other, one Cold War ideology over the other. Ideological slogans were tattooed on the Chinese prisoners’ bodies as well as emblazed to their personhood. Their twisted faces and deformed bodies bore witness to the extreme violence they inflicted against

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each other. Besides Chinese prisoners’ side-switching and reenlisted stances, the administrative and organizational shortcomings on the U.N. side unfortunately exacerbated the intensity and frequency of prison rebellion and riots. Accounts of 14,321 non-repatriates who had foresworn Communism, describing their loud and ferocious refusal, deeply intertwined with America’s imperial hegemony in East Asia and hardened the Cold War division in East Asia. Social scientists, media celebrities, and anticommunist heroes traveled to and from Taiwan in a series of solidarity citizens’ diplomacy tours.

The Communist China only applied the unsuccessful ideological indoctrination and lenient policy on a micro level; for example, the policy of releasing UN prisoners on the front line demonstrated the Chinese’ unfamiliarity with international law norms and practices. At the same time, the Chinese side lacked a coherent and systematic POW policy and an international outlook. Though the internal historical continuities of CCP policy could be traced back to the Chinese Civil War and China’s War against Japan, there were no systematic rules regulating their own POWs during the Korean War. The old and insufficient rules of handling returned POWs would not work during the new period of an ideological Cold War. How to handle the returned POWs became a complicated question when the POWs themselves blurred the line between hero and traitor.

The American psychological warfare experts were able to successfully maneuver and exploit for their own agenda the situation of large numbers of former-Nationalist soldiers being captured as prisoners of war, placing the issue of America’s crusade against Communism on a global scale. Despite the losses of face on a micro-level during
the Dodd Incident and the twenty-one non-repatriates being the collateral damage of the voluntary repatriation policy, America-led psychological warfare was employed successfully on the macro and strategic level. As the brainchild of Brigadier General Robert McClure, U.S. Army’s chief of psychological warfare, the U.S.’s policy of voluntary repatriation was a stroke of brilliance, which highlighted the tremendous difference between the democratic ideas and the totalitarian Communism. The argument that the enemy prisoners embraced freedom of choice to defy the Communist totalitarian state was cogent and powerful, aligning with America’s grand strategy in the Cold War. The fundamental essence of U.S. policy lay in the fact that America would not acquiescence to the systematic slaughter and oppression of ordinary people by their totalitarian government. Even the prison riots and violence were exploited by America, as they perfectly demonstrated that the stakes were high and that the prisoner situation was in great need of American intervention. President Harry S. Truman himself nicely summarized the situation:

It is perfectly clear that thousands and thousands of prisoners we hold would violently resist being returned to the Communists because they fear the slavery or death which would await them. It would be a betrayal of the ideals of freedom and justice for which we are fighting if we forced these men at bayonet point to return to their ex-masters. We won’t do it. We won't buy an armistice by trafficking in human slavery.710

Similarly, in the words of Secretary of State Dulles, “no Red Army prisoners who want freedom will be sent back to captivity”. A State Department release insisted that “the

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principle that force shall not be used to compel resisting prisoners to go home excludes every form of coercion”.

On the prisoner-of-war issue, American domestic Cold War policy and foreign policy in East Asia became enmeshed with each other and reinforced each other, succeeding in accomplishing the overall goal of discrediting Communism both within America and in East Asia. Following World War II, U.S. foreign policy redefined itself to focus on the role of the defender as one who protects not only of the freedom of its own citizens but also of the freedom of people everywhere. American intervention fundamentally altered the historical trajectories of Korea, China, and Taiwan in the aftermath of the Second World War. In the psychological warfare dimension, ideas and ideology were waged as essential weapons in Cold War confrontation. The policy of “voluntary repatriation” was tailor-made for the ex-Nationalist soldiers among the Chinese prisoners and achieved spectacular success with the employment of Nationalist infiltrators. One government source points out that “Chinese enlisted men were found the most amenable to UN psychological warfare messages, while the hard-core North Korean officer corps were least inclined to believe or act on such appeals”.

U.N. leaflets, radio broadcasts, and loudspeakers had a decisive impact in converting surrendered prisoners, as POW interrogation records indicated that one in three Communist prisoners had admitted their decision to surrender was influenced by leaflets. Prior to the release of prisoners, USIA sent information specialists to Korea to ensure that the press, radio, and

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713 Ibid.
motion pictures in the U.S. received full coverage of the propaganda victory.\textsuperscript{714} In the months following the release, USIA sought to propagandize, especially to the people of Asia, the stories of the prisoners who voluntarily chose freedom as way of life.\textsuperscript{715}

The policy manifested both mental dexterity and ideological sophistication, as it sought to forever shatter the myth that the Chinese troops consisted of volunteers.

“Nothing can restore it [the myth].”\textsuperscript{716} A \textit{Voice of America} broadcast on May 4, 1952, told the world that three-fourths of Chinese POWs refusal to go back to their “police-state homeland exposed “the fiction of the Chinese volunteers”:

That means that there are 14,900 who are through with communism, 14,900—75 per cent who want no further part of the so-called enlightened regime of Mao Tse-tung… They [Moscow and Peiping] insisted that they [14,900 captives] were volunteers, and volunteers of their own free will … Now Moscow and Peiping are seeing some real volunteering! Now Moscow and Peiping are seeing them volunteer out.\textsuperscript{717}

The ruling family in the displaced Taiwan regime always saw itself in exile, dreaming to recapture the mainland with American patronage. After 1949, the United States blamed Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, whose government was riddled with self-interest, corruption, and incompetence, for America’s “loss of China” to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{718} Despite receiving lavish American aid, Chiang’s nationalist government had appeared more interested in fighting Chinese Communists than in confronting the

\textsuperscript{714} “Probable Action Regarding Release of 22,000 Non-Repatriated POWs and Preliminary Checklist of Measures to Exploit the Situation,” Operations Coordinating Board, Jan. 15, 1954, pg. 2 of 4; Ike-Jackson, CD Record, Box 5.

\textsuperscript{715} “Probable Action Regarding Release of 22,000 Non-Repatriated POWs and Preliminary Checklist of Measures to Exploit the Situation,” Operations Coordinating Board, Jan. 15, 1954, pg. 3 of 4; Ike-Jackson, CD Record, Box 5.


Japanese Army directly. When the Korean War broke out, Communist China was in the midst of preparing for the liberation of Taiwan in a final campaign of its protracted civil war. Chiang first harbored the delusion that he could send troops to Korea to enlarge the scale of the war. Later, he attempted to become included in the armistice negotiations, to no avail.

Chiang finally set his eyes on a new goal: the prisoners of war. Chiang came to realize that if he could maneuver tens of thousands of CPV POWs to Taiwan, they would be a great addition to the existing Taiwanese military manpower. In the meantime, for propaganda purposes, he circulated the rumor that tens of thousands of Communist CPVs had “volunteered” to go to Taiwan rather than Mainland China, thus reinforcing the illegitimacy of the Communist regime in the eyes of Chinese people. 80 Taiwanese agents facilitated American CI&E officers in interrogation and translation. The Taiwanese agents often secretly brought to the camps recent copies of the Taiwanese newspaper Zhongyang Ribao (Central Daily News) and Hong Kong publications such as Xinwen Tiandi (News World) and Ziyou Huabao (Central Illustrations) so that the prisoners would realize the Taiwan regime was supporting the cause of the anticommunist prisoners in the camp.

The Republic of China seized the opportunity presented by their American patron and began to wage unremitting psychological warfare as a life-or-death struggle with the

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719 General Clark welcomed the idea of employing Chiang’s troops in Taiwan. However, the idea was shot down, mainly due to strong objections from European countries. See This Kind of War, 634.
720 The number of Taiwanese working at CI&E, 120 of them, see “Wen Jianyo (hua ming) fang wen ji lu, recorded by Ma guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 348. During MacArthur’s’ brief visit to Taiwan in July 22, 1950, his chief intelligence officer requested Taiwan to submit a list of English-speaking military officers who were knowledgeable about the Chinese Communist military. The Ministry of Defense in Taiwan submitted a list of 26 to the Americans in January 1951. The second, third, and fourth groups were also sent in the following months. These Taiwanese military officers played a key role in executing psychological warfare initiatives among the Chinese prisoners of war.
regime at stake. The drawn-out prisoner repatriation operation offered the previously faltering Nationalist government a golden opportunity to play the role of a faithful ally, one which stood by the United States and staunchly fought against Communism. At the end of the Korean War, the Taiwan regime rose up to be a bastion of anticommunism in East Asia, boosting its prestige on the international stage and further aggravating its relationship with Mainland China. The fact that 14,321 Chinese prisoners of war refused to return to the mainland created a spectacular propaganda triumph for the Republic of China regime and provided a great boost to the anticommunist momentum in Asia. Taiwan elevated the non-repatriated Chinese to the status of national heroes, galvanizing the anticommunist sentiment on the global scale. Chiang’s regimes made a spectacular propaganda show out of these “anticommunist righteous men” by sending them on a blizzard of publicity tours to Japan, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United States. Taiwan’s rash gamble finally reached its happy conclusion at a time when the U.S. signed a Mutual Defense Treaty on December 2, 1954. The recent development of U.S.-R.O.C. relations significantly boosted anticommunist Chinese prisoners’ morale. The prisoners subsequently became emboldened by the upcoming U.S.-China Mutual Defense Treaty, as well as the founding of the Anti-Righteous Men and Women Alliance Association (Fu lian hui). 721

In the aftermath of the Korean War, America found itself committed to a region where it had never been deeply involved before. Shortly afterward, the Chinese Civil War

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721 “Gao wen jun xian sheng fang wen ji lu,” recorded by Ma Guozheng, in Han zhan fan gong yi shi fang tan lu, 311. After the spring of 1951, the Truman Administration began to endorse NSC 48/5, a major document outing substantial U.S. military and financial aid to the R.O.K and R.O.C. See United States Department of State, Foreign relations of the United States, 1951. Asia and the Pacific (1951) East Asia and the Pacific: multilateral relations, 33. In May 1951, the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), Taiwan was established officially in Taiwan, publicly signaling the U.S.’s determination to resume its military commitment to Chiang’s regime. In the first four years, Major General William C. Chase, a career U.S. Army officer and self-claimed “MacArthur man,” directed the MAAG, Taiwan.
temporarily broke out again around the offshore islands of Kinmen and Matsu, where the People’s Republic bombarded the Nationalist troops, sparking the first (1954–55) and second (1958) Taiwan Strait crises. The Eisenhower Administration applied the policy of “massive retaliation” to formally defend the island of Taiwan. In addition, the same administration provided Taiwan $1 billion in financial aid, which laid out the foundation for Taiwan’s postwar economic development.\textsuperscript{722}

The returned American ex-POWs soon found themselves entangled in bitter ideological arguments and never received the “hero’s welcome” which their WWII predecessors received.\textsuperscript{723} They were referred to as “communists in olive drab” by Senator Joseph McCarthy, who waged an implacable war against Communists and Communist-sympathizers on the home front of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{724} Claude J. Batchelor and Edward S. Dickenson, the first returned non-repatriates, were hastily court-martialed and sentenced to life in prison. The U.S. Army was dogged by McCarthy’s moribund accusations and was quick to find scapegoats to prove its political correctness. In 1956, the Army sent Major William Ewin Mayer on a speaking tour across the country to prepare Americans mentally and psychologically for the Cold War. In his well-publicized lecture, he that charged one-third of American POWs had succumbed to Communist brainwashing without coercion or torture. Mayer deftly “shifted the blame from the Communists to the soft liberalism of the United States, charging that the permissive society had raised a generation of weaklings and men prone to communism”.\textsuperscript{725} The military forces, social

\textsuperscript{724} Michael A. Bellesiles, \textit{A People’s History of the U.S. Military} (The New Press, 2013), 273.
\textsuperscript{725} Ibid.
scientists, and media celebrities in postwar America embarked on a soul-searching mission to exhibit its ideological stronghold to its own people and society.

The repatriated Chinese prisoners suffered severe discrimination as authorities marginalized them in civil society, excluded them from politics, and placed them under surveillance. Prioritizing economic reconstruction and political consolidation, the new Chinese Communist regime finally decided to abandon these repatriated POWs and labeled them as contaminated elements, thereby shutting down the potential floodgate of having to confront the issue of the 14,321 non-repatriated POWs who opted to go to Taiwan. It was the time when the Republic of China in Taiwan was the only legitimate representative of the Chinese people in the United Nations. The repatriated POWs constantly served as a reminder that the non-repatriates posed a challenge to the legitimacy of the communist regime, and this led the regime to suppress their voices and to even disown the repatriated POWs.

Maybe it is appropriate to end by contemplating a quote from a speech given by Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, in 1951: “Let us not imagine that foreign policy is like a game of chess played by superior statesmen sitting in their chancelleries. It is much more complicated than that.”

Many pictures come to mind for those who contemplate the plight of the POWS: pictures of haggard U.N. POWs limping in the “death marches,” dying prisoners fighting for scraps of food in Communist-run prison camps; an American POW wearing a Mao suite and cap, toeing the party line and lecturing fellow prisoners on the topics of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism; faceless Chinese and North Korean Communist prisoners, with their twisted arms and

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tattooed bodies, uttering unspeakable words as they shout and protest; prisoners of both sides in explanation interrogation rooms defying the final pleas of their countries of origins, in the presence of neutral Indian guards in Panmunjom; and statesmen holding earnest conversations in the boardrooms in Washington to contrive psychological warfare strategies. In this tug-of-war to win hearts and minds of prisoners, American policymakers learned about the Communist idea that the prison camps—both U.N.-run and Communist-run—served as an extension of military battlefields. Through manipulating POW issues, American policymakers not only solidified the ideological apparatus at home but also deepened America’s commitment to East Asia unprecedentedly. However, the prisoners themselves—of both U.N. and Communist sides—with their wrenching choices and experience, became sacrificed at the altar of ideological madness—Communism and McCarthyism in Cold War era. The choice presented in the prisoner-of-war camps was symbolic of the choice confronted by ordinary people worldwide in the Cold War in a microcosm. The binary ideas of Cold War politics were made into lived reality.

As Claude Batchelor came to the painful realization, after being behind bars for five years after repatriation, that his “suicidal” political innocence was “seen more sinned against sinning”.

Batchelor, the “young Lenin” to his Chinese guards, looked back at his POW days when he struggled “toward the light” and “floundered amid suicidal capitalist, black-marketeering diplomats, and problems of Leninism”.

… he was plummeted into the works of Lenin, into Socialism and the Individual. He struggled to understanding meaningless phrases. “The emancipation of the masses is the main condition of the emancipation of

728 Ibid, 266.
the individual.” He moved his lips over unfamiliar words, “metaphysical,” “proletariat,” “oligarchy,” “collectivization.”

This “young Lenin” had been promised a high-ranking position after orchestrating a communist overthrow of the United States government two years after the conclusion of the Korean War. Batchelor, however, grew uneasy wearing the mantle of Lenin and decided to switch sides again at the end of the ninety-day explanation session in Panmunjom. Henry Luce’s *Time* magazine compared Batchelor to an unabashed seal, who flipped from democracy to Communism, and when the circumstances suited his needs, flopped right back to the western camp again. Speaking at a press conference with blatant political innocence, Batchelor gave the *Time* reporters a glowing account of his role in the Communist-run prison camp:

> I just wanted to be a peace fighter. I just wanted to help the Communists advance some of their ideas—such as that America was an aggressive nation and the Soviet Union was peaceful.

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729 Ibid., 264.
731 Ibid.
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