

92d Congress }
2d Session }

COMMITTEE PRINT

COMMUNIST TREATMENT
OF PRISONERS OF WAR

A HISTORICAL SURVEY

PREPARED FOR THE
SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY
ACT AND OTHER INTERNAL SECURITY LAWS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE



Printed for the use of the Committee on the Judiciary

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1972

81-6950

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 20 cents

UB800.036

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RESOLUTION

Resolved, by the Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, That the attached publication titled "Communist Treatment of Prisoners of War" shall be printed for the use of the subcommittee.

JAMES O. EASTLAND,
Chairman.

Approved: August 8, 1972.

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INTRODUCTION

BY

SENATOR JAMES O. EASTLAND

Chairman, Senate Internal Security Subcommittee

In asking the Library of Congress to prepare this historical survey of Communist treatment of POW's, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee was motivated by the belief that such a survey would help us to better understand the difficulties which confront our Government in its current negotiations with Hanoi on the POW issue.

What emerges from this study is that there is nothing essentially new about Hanoi's treatment, or maltreatment, of American and Allied POW's and about the numerous violations of the Geneva Convention which have characterized its treatment of prisoners. If anything, the records of the Soviet treatment of POW's in World War II and of the Chinese-North Korean treatment of POW's during the Korean War are even more grisly than the dismal record established by the Vietnamese Communists.

Allowing for differences in detail, however, there is a remarkable continuity of pattern apparent from this survey. That such a continuity should exist is not surprising because in the eyes of Communists everywhere POW's are not human beings but political pawns—to be broken psychologically so that they can be used against their own country and to be exploited, without pity of any kind, as instruments of political warfare directed, in the first instance, against their own families.

Many hundreds of thousands of Polish, German, Japanese, and other prisoners taken by the Russian forces in World War II—according to some estimates, the total figure exceeds 1½ million—were never released and never accounted for. Countless thousands of others about whom there is information died in captivity, victims of starvation, brutalization, and overwork. Eclipsing all else in this first historical experience with Communist treatment of POW's was the massacre of some 5,000 Polish POW's in Katyn Forest, which is summarized in this study. (Another 11,000 POW's disappeared at the same time from the three-camp complex which originally housed the Katyn victims. No trace has ever been found of them. Of the 15,000 POW's involved, some 8,400 were officers.)

After the Korean war, investigations established that several thousand American prisoners died or were executed in POW camps, that many of them were the object of inhuman torture, that most of them were subjected to "brainwashing" or mental conditioning. Of the 75,000 U.N. and South Korean soldiers captured by Communist forces, only 12,000 returned home, leaving more than 60,000 unaccounted for.

Of the 37,000 French Union Forces captured by the Communists during the Indochina war, less than 11,000 finally returned, the majority of them exhausted or sick in body, some of them so emaciated that they looked like Auschwitz survivors.

Hanoi's treatment of American POW's in Southeast Asia shows no significant deviation from the past record of Communist inhumanity to POW's. The U.S. Government has submitted a list of more than a dozen violations of the basic provisions of the Geneva Convention by the North Vietnamese. Prisoners have been tortured, publicly paraded through the streets, pressured into making broadcasts of alleged confessions, and denied proper medical treatment. There are several documented cases of prisoners who have not been listed as POW's in accordance with the prime requirement of the Geneva Convention.

Colonel Norris Overly, who was shot down over North Vietnam in October 1967 and released a year later, said that—

The North Vietnamese have on occasion tortured some of our men—but I think there is danger in dwelling on that particular aspect of it because the North Vietnamese are much more subtle than that. The subtle inhumanity of the whole situation was placing men in a small 8 by 10 cell and not pressuring them to do anything one way or the other, but just put them away and feed them a subsistence diet for 3, 4, 5, 6, and in several cases almost 7 years. I think we can all answer the question what kind of physical and mental condition they are going to be in when they come out of this sort of environment.

The record here presented offers little room for optimism. But, it is better for the American people to have a sober appreciation of the mentality of the Communists on the POW issue than that they should be misled by any false optimism.

The publication of this record will serve the additional purpose of letting the Communists know that history will neither forget nor forgive their monstrous inhumanity in dealing with defenseless captives of war.

Finally, this recapitulation of the record may help our negotiators to realize the futility of appealing to humanitarian motivation where none exists and the importance of exploiting every device and avenue of pressure open to us for the purpose of securing the release of the 600 or more Americans now held prisoner by the Vietnamese Communists. One of these devices is the broadest possible mobilization of international public opinion. It is to be hoped that the publication of this study will help to make this possible by placing the current situation in a broader historical perspective, involving the people of many nations.

The subcommittee is indebted to Mr. Samuel C. Oglesby, foreign affairs analyst of the Library of Congress, for the preparation of this study.

A NOTE ON THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The gathering of information for this paper on the Communist treatment of POW's was handicapped by the limitation of materials regarding certain areas discussed.

The accounts of the treatment of American and allied prisoners in Korea, of French POW's in Indochina, and of American POW's in Vietnam is based on the totality of the evidence available to the American and French authorities, including, in the first two cases, the debriefings of the many thousands of prisoners who finally did return. About the general validity of these summaries, there can be little question, despite the fact that the figures for the gross numbers of prisoners taken and the number who were killed or died in Communist captivity, must remain, by the nature of things, rough estimates.

In the case of the Polish, German, Japanese, and other POW's detained in the Soviet Union during World War II, the difficulties of research are somewhat greater. During the postwar period, a good deal of information was developed in the course of hearings and investigations, and in numerous personal narratives, relating to the treatment of POW's by the Soviet Union. The presentation of this material was generally completed by the late 1950's, but it left the record still incomplete, and little new material has been added to the record since that time. The difficulties are compounded by the complete lack of cooperation on the part of the Soviet Government. As early as 1945, the Soviet authorities "refused to allow British and American officials to visit prisoner-of-war camps in Eastern Europe, as they had pledged themselves to do in return for facilities granted Soviet officials in the West."¹ Since that time, the Soviet Union has consistently refused access to its territory for the purpose of investigating the prisoner-of-war question.

For these reasons, there is, in each case, a fairly wide range of estimates of the total number of prisoners taken by the Soviets, although the numbers ultimately released are known in a fairly precise manner. In the case of personal accounts of conditions in POW camps, there always exists the possibility of distortion through faulty memory or exaggeration or in some cases deliberate falsification. But, when scores of thousands of Polish and German and Japanese who passed through the POW camps of the Soviet Union give testimony that coincides undeviatingly on all essential points, the emerging mosaic cannot lightly be dismissed.

¹ Collier, Basil. "The Second World War: A Military History, From Munich to Hiroshima." New York, William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1967, p. 462.

COMMUNIST TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR

I. THE SOVIET UNION AND POW'S IN WORLD WAR II

(A) THE POLISH POW'S

The subject of the Polish POW's and other Polish prisoners detained by the Soviet Union in World War II merits special attention for several reasons. First, Polish prisoners of war, and Polish political prisoners not technically POW's were, in point of time, the first body of prisoners to fall into Soviet custody. Second, they constituted one of the largest groups of Europeans detained by the U.S.S.R. Third, the treatment of Poles in both categories has a vital bearing on the general subject of the Soviet handling of foreign prisoners, not only because their handling established a precedent, but also because the Polish POW's became, technically, allies of the Soviet Union after the German invasion of June 1941. Finally, there is a voluminous literature available in English concerning the treatment of the Polish POW's, and, by and large, the conditions described in this literature closely parallel the conditions described in reports and memoirs by German, Japanese, and other POW's.

When the Soviet Army invaded Poland from the east, after the Nazis had invaded from the west, Poland's position became doubly hopeless, so that there was little more than token resistance to the Soviet invaders. All told, 230,670 Polish soldiers of all ranks were taken prisoner as a direct result of the invasion. Subsequently, this number was increased to 250,000 as the result of the arrest and deportation by the Soviet occupation authorities of some 20,000 reserve officers. Among these POW's were 10,000 officers of the Polish Armed Forces.²

The civil administration of Soviet-occupied Poland was in the hands of the Russian NKVD. This body began its occupational activities furnished with lists of persons to be summarily arrested. Soon the lists were expanded and by November 1940 the following groups were liable for arrest and deportation: members of all political parties; members of trade unions; town councilors; organizers of working class, peasant, and youth organizations; civil servants; government officials; members of police forces; skilled workers; members of learned professions; volunteers of all armies other than Bolshevik; etc.³

In the 20-month period from October 1939 to June 1941, 1,692,000 residents of Poland—Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, and White Ruthenians—were deported to Russia. This included, in addition to the 250,000 officers and soldiers of the Polish Army, 990,000 civilians taken from their homes and deported because of their "nationalistic bourgeois background," 250,000 political "class enemies," 210,000 Poles conscripted in the Soviet Army and sent deep into the U.S.S.R., and 12,000

² Polish Government-in-Exile, Council of Ministers. (Author, Dr. Wiktor Sukienicki.) "Facts and Documents Concerning Polish Prisoners of War Captured by the U.S.S.R. during the 1939 Campaign." (Strictly confidential.) London, 1946, p. 15.

³ Anonymous. "The Dark Side of the Moon" (with a preface by T. S. Eliot). New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947, pp. 50-52.

Poles from the Baltic area. Among these deportees were 160,000 children and adolescents.⁴

The General Treatment of the POW's

Several personal accounts provide information on the Soviet treatment of prisoners—military and civilian. *The Dark Side of the Moon*, an anonymous work with a preface by T. S. Eliot, presents a political narrative helpful to an understanding of the Soviet Union's position and actions in Poland during the war years. This work traces the fate of the Polish military POW's from the military agreement by which the Soviet Government had consented to the raising, training, and equipping by Poland of a national army on Soviet soil to the creation of such a force, its partial demise, and the imprisonment of some Polish units. A similar narrative is given for the Polish civilian population that was deported and imprisoned.

There are numerous other personal histories and narratives dealing with Polish POW's, the most recent of which is *The Silver Madonna*, published in 1971, in which Eugenia Wasilewska recounts the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland, her deportation to Siberia, and her subsequent escape.⁵

Another valuable work is the account of the Polish painter, Joseph Czapski, who was initially confined in the prison camps where Moscow concentrated the officers of the Polish Army—that group which was later to be eliminated en masse at Katyn. This narrative, entitled *The Inhuman Land*,⁶ details the work of Joseph Czapski, who was appointed by the Polish General Anders to search for the traces of 15,000 Polish prisoners, including 8,000 officers who had simply disappeared. In the introduction to this book, Edward Crankshaw points out the author's surprising moderation towards the U.S.S.R. and his eagerness to give the Kremlin the benefit of the doubt in matters relating to detainees and Soviet policy toward Poland in general. This attitude seems representative of Poles on various levels and in different capacities, who were anxious to maintain their country intact after its long eclipse and who recognized that Poland's fate was largely in the hands of her great Eastern neighbor. The Russians deported hundreds of thousands of Poles of all ages and occupations to the Russian hinterlands and jails. Yet, even after a period of long imprisonment, these same Poles in 1941 swore loyalty to their recent jailers so that they could fight the Germans. Czapski concludes by saying that perhaps the world will never know the full truth about the Katyn massacre and other like occurrences, but at least one can know the truth about its context.

One account describes exposure to harsh climatic conditions:

We were thrust into a shed of sorts with no windows and no roof. Portions of bread were distributed once a day and absolutely nothing else, not even hot water. As we were pretty well freezing (10 degrees below zero), we tore out the planks of the floor and burned them to keep ourselves from freezing entirely.⁷

Regarding inhumanly cramped prison conditions another former POW says:

⁴ U.S. Congress. House. Select Committee on Communist Aggression. "Communist Takeover and Occupation of Poland." Special report No. 1. 82d Cong., first sess. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955, pp. 11-12. (Hereafter cited as "Communist Takeover . . .")

⁵ Wasilewska, Eugenia. *The Silver Madonna*. New York, John Day Co., 1971.

⁶ Czapski, Joseph. *The Inhuman Land*. New York, Sheed & Ward, 1952.

⁷ *The Dark Side of the Moon*, p. 90.

The prisons were more crowded than seems humanly possible and became more so everyday * * * The room had been an office * * * and at the moment when I entered it there were already 63 persons in it. The fortunate ones were squeezed tightly up against the walls, almost pushed through them. The others simply stood up on the floor. It was impossible to sit. Each new arrival meant additional misery for the others, and especially so at night when the attempt was made to sleep. For this attempt we disposed ourselves in rows, our legs drawn up to our bodies. Each row had a prescribed side towards which they were allowed to lie, and to turn on to one's other side meant violent discomfort for all one's fellow sleepers, protests and even serious quarrels and assault.⁸

Medical attention was more than inadequate—no concessions were made to illness:

A doctor visited us once and noted the cases of sickness and never came back. Once when one of the prisoners had a very severe heart attack, we beat on the door and demanded help. After a moment our guards looked in, glanced with complete indifference at the man and said, "Let the brute die, then there'll be one less of you".⁹

Many other examples underline the extreme cruelty which prevailed, involving unsanitary, inhumane and degrading conditions. Some personal accounts documented brutal and perverted sexual abuse that was practiced by prison guards on female prisoners of war. Rape was not an exceptional practice in the prisons and was often followed by such severe beating that the victims died.¹⁰

Disease was rampant, and cases of consumption, typhus, dysentery, and syphilis were left unattended with no attempt to separate and treat the affected persons.¹¹

The "cultural" aspects of the camps are described in one passage:

Of all the cultural provisions, the most gruesome surely is the orchestra. In many camps it performs even at the worksite. The music has its own rhythm; the rhythm of gangs bowed by labor, who may not pause in that labor for the shortest breathing space. Like sailors hauling on ropes and singing as they haul, yet not joyfully, as sailors are said to do, but sorrowfully and in fear, the convicts wield their pick and bars and pile their burdens, to its beat. All Russian music is haunting and sad, but there can be no other Russian music quite the same as this. The forest echoes from one site to another, not only with the chink of axes and picks and the shouting of commands, but with the point and counterpoint of half-stifled voices, swelling in sorrowful choirs and dying away among the infinite somber ranks of the northern pines. This is a Soviet opera, unknown to the rest of the world.¹²

As extreme as the descriptions given in these and in other more lurid narratives appear, there is abundant evidence in the literature to suggest that they are not fabrications for propaganda or other purposes. Although there have been no official investigations of the Soviet prison camp situation, and hence no "impartial" report exists, the number of detailed and highly descriptive accounts from diverse individuals and groups indicates a substantial basis in fact for the allegations made over the past 30 years.

In June 1941 Germany declared war on the Soviet Union and occupied part of its territory. Immediately the whole position of the Polish prisoners was changed. The Soviets called on them to join in the common fight against the Germans who were then occupying three-fourths of Poland. In accordance with the Polish-Soviet Pact of July 30, 1941, a Polish Army was formed in the U.S.S.R.

⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

⁹ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 96-113.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. pp. 139-140.

under the leadership of General Anders. This army, plus families and other accompanying nonmilitary, eventually numbered some 114,500 and was based, after constant shifting, on the steppes of Turkestan. From this inhospitable location General Anders led the Poles into Persia and then to Western Europe where they saw combat against the Axis powers in such places as Monte Cassino in Italy.¹³ Some eventually found their way back to Poland.

Another provision of the Polish-Soviet Pact stated that all Poles were to be released. Only a small percentage of the Poles, however, were released from forced labor camps.¹⁴ Thus only the 114,500 deportees led by General Anders left the U.S.S.R.

It is impossible to determine how many of the more than 1,500,000 Poles left in Russia have survived. Those who returned to Communist-controlled Poland after the war represented only a small minority.¹⁵

The Katyn Massacre

One of the most tragic events involving the deported Polish POW's was the Katyn Forest massacre.

On April 13, 1943, the German radio broadcast the announcement that they had discovered, in the Katyn Forest in the Smolensk region, mass graves containing the bodies of more than 10,000 Polish officers who they charged, had been shot down and buried by their Soviet captors.¹⁶

The Soviet radio was quick to respond to the German charge with the countercharge that the Nazis had executed the prisoners in 1941 after their forces had occupied the area. To this the Nazis replied by inviting an International Commission consisting of medical specialists from 12 countries, and a separate nine-man commission of the Polish Red Cross, to conduct an on-the-spot investigation. The members of the commission had complete freedom of movement and all told examined some 1,000 bodies before signing their report.

The Katyn Forest massacre, as it has come to be known, involved a total of approximately 15,000 Polish POW's, of whom 8,300 to 8,400 were officers. (Both the Nazi and Soviet accounts erred in describing all of the victims as "officers.") The officer POW's, most of whom had been called up as reservists before the invasion of Poland, included numerous doctors (approximately 800), engineers, lawyers, and specialists in various areas—the cream of the Polish intelligentsia. They had been detained in three prison camps. When all of the men in all three camps stopped writing home in April of 1940, the Polish Government in exile, in London, became concerned and embarked on the first of a series of approaches to the Soviet authorities, in an effort to locate the missing POW's who, it would seem, had vanished from the face of the earth. Their numerous inquiries, from July 1940 to

¹³ Czapski, Joseph. *The Inhuman Land*. New York, Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1952, pp. xiii-xiv.

¹⁴ Select Committee on Communist Aggression, p. 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Some confusion about the numbers involved in the Katyn massacre still persists in consequence of the conflicting figures put out by the Nazi propagandists, the Soviet Government, and the Polish Red Cross. The essential facts are as follows: The total number of Polish POW's who disappeared from three Soviet prison camps in the Smolensk area (Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk) was 15,570 according to a computation submitted to the Soviet authorities by the Polish Government in exile. While the Nazi Government spoke of 12,000 bodies in the Katyn Forest, the Polish Red Cross Commission reported a total of 4,243 bodies. Adding to this number 200 bodies excavated from a subsequently discovered grave, the total would come to roughly 4,440. The Soviet Commission spoke of a total of 11,000 bodies, but it turned out that this figure was an extrapolation from 925 bodies actually examined by the Soviet medical experts. The question of what happened to the 11,000 missing POW's whose bodies were not discovered in Katyn is discussed at a later point in this chapter.

April 1943, brought nothing but evasions. When General Sikorsky and General Anders met with Stalin on December 3, 1941, and asked where the missing men were, Stalin replied, "They escaped." General Anders asked, "Where could they escape to?" "To Manchuria," Stalin replied—not troubling to explain how 15,000 Poles could escape from their Soviet captors in the Smolensk area and make their way 4,000 miles to Manchuria.¹⁷

The first word of the missing men was the announcement about the mass graves over the German radio on April 15, 1943. An eyewitness to the exhumations gave this report to the House Select Committee on Communist Aggression in 1955:

A typical feature of the bodies exhumed from this grave [No. 5] was the fact of the hands of all of them being tied behind their backs with a white cord tied in a double knot. Their greatcoats were tied round their heads. These greatcoats were tied with the same kind of cord at the neck level and sometimes a second knot had been made over the head of the victim. At the neck there was a simple knot and the rest of the cord was passed down the back, wound round the tied hands and then tied again at the neck. In this way the hands of the victims were pulled up to the height of the shoulder blades. Victims tied up in this way were unable to give any resistance because every move of the hands tightened the noose round the neck thereby throttling them. They were besides, unable to make any sound on account of the greatcoats over their heads * * * such a way of tying up the victims before execution was inflicting especially refined torture before death.¹⁸

Initially there were conflicting items of evidence, pointing to both the Nazis and the Soviets as the possible perpetrators. The uniform lengths of rope used in tying the hands of the victims were established to be of Soviet manufacture. In addition, the bayonet holes in the clothing had all been made by the four-cornered bayonets used by the Soviet Armed Forces at that time. On the other hand, the bullets used had been German.¹⁹

The Germans charged that the men had been executed by the Soviets in April–May of 1940, when the area was under Soviet control. This charge was substantially accepted by the International Commission and by the Polish Red Cross Commission. The Soviets charged that the Nazis had murdered the Polish POW's after occupying the area in August–September of 1941, and adduced the report of a special Soviet Medical Commission in support of this charge. Who was telling the truth?

In his war memoirs, Winston Churchill wrote: "It was decided by the victorious governments concerned that the issue should be avoided and the crime of Katyn was never probed."²⁰ The House Select Committee on Communist Aggression, in a special report on the Katyn Massacre, came to the conclusion that the facts pointed unchallengeably to Soviet responsibility. Data recently released by the British Defense Ministry also points to the U.S.S.R. as the responsible party.²¹

The bodies discovered in the Katyn Forest left some 11,000 Polish POW's unaccounted for. No trace has ever been found of them. All that is known for certain is that they were moved out of their camps at the same time as the POW's who wound up in the mass graves of Katyn. It is believed by Polish nationals who have investigated the

¹⁷ Minutes Sikorski-Stalin meeting, M.S.Z., pp. 81-95.

¹⁸ "Communist Takeover * * *" hearings, pt. 6, exhibit 32, p. 1817.

¹⁹ J. K. Zawodny, op. cit., p. 20.

²⁰ Winston Churchill, "The Hinge of Fate," (Boston, Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1950) p. 761.

²¹ New York Times, July 6, 1972, p. e, and Washington Post, July 6, 1972, p. 15.

fate of their wartime POW's that many, if not all, were placed on barges and drowned in the White Sea.²²

Among the major factors influencing the finding of the International Commission, the Polish Red Cross Commission, and the U.S. House Select Committee on Communist Aggression, were the following:

1. Thousands of letters received by the Polish Red Cross and the Polish Government in exile from the families of POW's in the Soviet Union attest to the fact that the POW's in the three camps involved in the Katyn Massacre suddenly stopped writing in April of 1940.

2. The Soviet claim that the prisoners were murdered by the Nazis in August–September of 1941, after their occupation of the Smolensk area, is difficult to square with the fact that the Soviet Government—until the German announcement of the discovery of the mass graves in April 1943—refused to give any explanation or any information concerning the disappearance of the 15,000 Polish POW's to the representatives of the Polish Government in exile. Had the three POW camps in question been taken over by the Nazis, it should have been the simplest thing in the world for Moscow to tell General Sikorsky that it had no knowledge of the fate of the 15,000 Polish POW's because they had all fallen into Nazi custody. This Moscow did not do.

3. All the prisoners were dressed in winter clothing and had their greatcoats buttoned up. The mean temperature for August–September in the Katyn Forest area, however, is 65 degrees Fahrenheit—hardly conducive to the wearing of winter clothing.²⁴

4. The International Commission and the Polish Red Cross Commission, in examining almost 1,000 bodies, found no diary entries, letters, or other documents that bore dates after April 1940. In the light of this, it is difficult to attach credence to the nine documents bearing later dates which Moscow presented as having been discovered on the bodies by the Soviet Medical Commission. (The documents were listed, but the contents not described in the Soviet report.)

5. The Nazi Government requested an investigation by the International Red Cross. The International Red Cross agreed to undertake such an investigation if all parties concerned, including the Soviet Government, agreed to the investigation. The Soviet Government never gave its assent, however.

(B) THE GERMAN POW'S

Calculations made on the basis of official Soviet statements regarding POW's, issued from 1947 to 1950, indicate that the U.S.S.R. was holding, or had failed to account for, approximately 1,952,000 German POW's in 1950.²⁵ Other statements by the U.S.S.R. itself have cast doubt on these figures. An official TASS release of May 4, 1950, asserted that all German prisoners had been repatriated, except some 13,500 still detained for war crimes. Moscow had however, announced in May 1945, that the Soviets had captured more than 3 million Germans—a figure generally in accord with Western estimates that from 3 to 4 million German fighting men were captured by the Russians during World War II.

²² Interview with Mr. Stefan Korbonski, Chairman, Polish Delegation of the Assembly of Captive Europe Nations, July 13, 1972.

²⁴ J. K. Zawodny, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

²⁵ Thompson, Elizabeth M., War Prisoner Repatriation. Editorial Research Reports. December 3, 1953, p. 332.

Given the body of information available—mostly personal accounts and purloined Soviet documents—it is concluded by numerous sources that Soviet treatment of German POW's stood in direct violation of the provisions of modern prisoner of war conventions.²⁶ These conventions are designed to protect the lives and welfare of prisoners, to insure notification of relatives on their whereabouts and state of health, and ultimately to permit their release from captivity and return home after war's end. The Soviet authorities have not utilized the recognized procedures for dealing with war captives, the various postwar repatriation agreements, and have not responded to the repeatedly expressed interest of Western powers in cooperative undertakings to repatriate ex-enemy prisoners.

(C) THE JAPANESE POW'S

Russian treatment of Japanese POW's—both fighting men and captured civilians—was similar. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan in 1945, only 6 days before hostilities ended in that theater of war, and in December 1946, specifically agreed to repatriate not only Japanese war prisoners, but all Japanese civilians in territories under its control who wished to go home. In April 1950, TASS announced that all Japanese prisoners had been repatriated, with the exception of 1,487 detained in the U.S.S.R. for war crimes and 971 who had been turned over to the Chinese Communists for criminal prosecution.²⁷ Investigation by Allied and Japanese authorities has shown that 376,000 Japanese nationals of some 600,000 known to have fallen into Soviet hands remain unaccounted for and that the total number missing includes at least 10,000 Japanese soldiers captured by the Russians before the surrender.²⁸

(D) THE OTHER POW'S—AND OTHER FOREIGN PRISONERS

The POW's in Russia formed only a part of the foreign prisoner population of the U.S.S.R. resulting from the war. The bulk of the foreign prisoners, who were technically not POW's—one and a half million by general estimate—were Polish, German, Italian, Austrian, and Japanese. Many of this number must be presumed dead, but there is still evidence, according to Charles Joy's preface to "One Great Prison,"²⁹ that from 100,000 to 200,000 German and from 300,000 to 400,000 Japanese prisoners remained in Russia as of the early 1950's.³⁰

Soviet authorities have apparently released no information regarding other ex-enemy prisoners, including approximately 180,000 Rumanians, 200,000 Hungarians, and 63,500 Italians—even though peace treaties signed in 1947 expressly provided for the repatriation of all POW's. Other war prisoners taken by the Soviet Union in the Second

²⁶ U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. The Geneva Convention, Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. 82d Cong., first sess. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955, pp. 1-68.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 832.

²⁸ Fehling, Helmut M., *One Great Prison*. Boston, Beacon Press. 1951, pp. 93-172.

²⁹ Joy translated Fehling's book (which contains a foreword by Konrad Adenauer) and compiled documents used in it concerning Germans and Japanese war prisoners in the U.S.S.R.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. XIII.

World War who remain unaccounted for include 5,000 Austrians, 200 Dutch, 12,000 French, and several thousand Spaniards.³¹

Charles Joy in his preface to Helmut Fehling's "One Great Prison" estimates that as of the mid-1950's, one and a half million prisoners of war taken by the Soviets had not been accounted for and hundreds of thousands of this number were still unreleased.³²

Many of the missing prisoners have certainly died and some of them may have reverted to a civilian existence within the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, evidence offered by a number of prisoners who have been repatriated indicates that several hundred thousand of the missing persons were still being held as forced laborers or prisoners 10 years after the cessation of hostilities.³³ Also, General Lucius Clay reported in his book "Decision in Germany" (1950) that in 1946 discharged German prisoners from the West, returning to their homes in East Germany, were being screened by Soviet authorities and that officers and skilled specialists were being detained.³⁴

Most of the prisoners who were still in the Soviet Union in the mid-1950's apparently occupied the status of laborers. In 1946, the Soviets themselves indicated that more than 2 million prisoners of different nationalities were working as laborers on a northern link of the trans-Siberian railroad. Additionally, repatriated prisoners have subsequently described the harsh conditions in the Soviet camps where they have spent time.³⁵

II. THE KOREAN WAR: ALLIED POW'S IN KOREA AND CHINA

More is known of the Asian Communists' treatment of POW's during the Korean war. Investigations, hearings, and reports have documented these activities to a degree that far surpasses the information on Soviet treatment of World War II POW's. Two of the most pertinent documents relating to Korean war POW's are the reports of the Senate Committee on Government Operations made by its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations entitled "Korean War Atrocities" (January 1954, Report No. 848), and "Communist Interrogation,

³¹ Editorial Research Reports. War Prisoner Repatriation. December 3, 1953, p. 833. Estimates as to the number of prisoners unaccounted for vary significantly according to source. The discrepancies serve to emphasize that the statistics and information regarding POW's is at best educated guesswork. The paucity of documented information precludes a definitive statement regarding these figures. Also the definition as to what constitutes a prisoner of war may differ with the source, some using the term to describe generally all internees captured during hostilities, others limiting the use of this category to military prisoners. The latter use of the term seems to have been employed more during the Korean war whereas the more inclusive definition was used during the Second World War. Even with recently modified criteria as to what constitutes a POW, the distinction between "political prisoner" and POW is not always clear and easy to make. The conditions for classification as a POW under the Geneva Convention Relative to POW's would not seem to exhaust the possibilities of what constitutes a prisoner of war—for example, the status of imprisoned Jews during the Second World War who survived imprisonment. There is currently a desire in international law circles to revise the Convention to make the definition of POW more inclusive, since the spirit of the Convention is to resolve the question of who is a POW in favor of as broad a definition as possible so that the maximum number of people in prisoner status will be accorded the amenities and rights that are set forth in the Convention. The absence of recognition of a state of belligerency has heretofore limited inclusion of certain groups in the POW category when in fact their status is that of a POW—official U.S. civilians in Indochina, for example.

³² Fehling, *op. cit.*, p. IX.

³³ Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 833.

³⁴ Clay, Lucius. "Decision in Germany." Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, 1950, p. 139.

³⁵ Such books as Helmut Fehling's "One Great Prison" provide personal accounts as well as documents and official announcements.

Indoctrination and Exploitation of American Military and Civilian Prisoners" (December 1956, Report No. 2832).³⁶

During the Korean war, of the 75,000 U.N. and South Korean soldiers captured by Communist forces, more than 60,000 were unaccounted for while 12,000 were allowed to go home.³⁷ Investigations established that several thousand American prisoners died or were executed in prisoner-of-war camps. According to the report of the Congressional Committee on Government Operations titled *Korean War Atrocities*, during the 3-year period covered by the Korean war, the North Korean and Chinese Communist armies were guilty of the following war crimes: murder; assaults; torture—perforation of the flesh of prisoners with heated bamboo spears, burning with lighted cigarettes, et cetera; starvation; coerced indoctrination; and other illegal practices. Virtually every provision of the Geneva Convention governing the treatment of war prisoners was violated or ignored by the North Koreans and Chinese Communists. More than 5,000 American prisoners of war died because of Communist war atrocities and more than a thousand who survived were victims of war crimes.³⁸ Furthermore, several thousand American soldiers who had not been repatriated were believed to have been victims of war crimes, had died in action, or were still confined in Communist territory. According to the committee, Communist forces violated the agreement providing for the repatriation of sick and wounded prisoners in accordance with the Panmunjom truce. Finally, the committee charged, the Korean Communists, by false propaganda, attempted to portray the treatment accorded by them to American POW's in an inaccurate and misleading fashion.

In the field of interrogation and indoctrination, the Senate Government Operations Committee's investigation of "brainwashing" concluded that the popular conception of this practice was not correct. While it was true that the Communists had considerable skill in the extraction of information from prisoners, the investigation rendered the opinion that the Communists did not possess new and remarkable techniques of psychological manipulation.³⁹ In connection with these practices, the Chinese Communists and North Koreans, according to the committee, violated articles 13, 14, 16, 17, and 38 of the Geneva Convention with their use of isolation techniques, their shackling of prisoners, their exposure of prisoners to the curiosity of local populations, their inadequate medical attention, poor clothing, gross inadequacy of foods, improper hospital facilities, and physical mistreatment of prisoners. Coercive interrogation and extraction of false confessions were other practices employed.

³⁶ U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Government Operations. *Korean War Atrocities*. 83d Cong., second sess. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954. (Hereafter cited as "Korean War.") U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Government Operations. *Communist Interrogation, Indoctrination, and Exploitation of American Military and Civilian Prisoners*. 83d Cong., second sess. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956. (Hereafter cited as "Communist Interrogation * * *," 1956.) The following accounts are based primarily on these documents.

³⁷ White, William Lindsay. *The Captives of Korea*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957. 330 pages.

³⁸ *Korean War Atrocities*, p. 15.

³⁹ U.S. Congress. Senate. "Communist Interrogation of American Prisoners." Committee on Government Operations. 84th Cong., second sess., report No. 2832. Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957, p. 22. (Hereafter cited as "Communist Interrogation * * *," 1957.) See Paul Jeandel's account on p. 14 for a conflicting view.

III. THE INDOCHINA WAR (1946-54): VIETMINH TREATMENT OF FRENCH UNION FORCE POW'S ⁴⁰

Part of the cease-fire agreement ending the Indochinese war on July 20, 1954, was the exchange of all prisoners of war held by both belligerents to the conflict. The POW's held by the French were brought by their captors to repatriation points by vehicle or boat. By contrast, the POW's held by the Vietminh were returned from captivity on foot with the exception of litter cases.

Not only were there not as many French returnees as expected; most of those who did return were walking skeletons similar to those who had survived Nazi concentration camp internments. However, in order not to jeopardize the chances of return of other civilian and military prisoners who were still being held by the Communists, the French command made a deliberate effort to play down the fate and condition of the French returnees.⁴¹

At the beginning of the Indochinese war, prison camps on the Communist side did not exist in the formal sense owing to the irregular nature of the conflict. In what was a guerrilla insurrection, operations were hit and run, and remained highly fluid and mobile. Thus, prisoners were deposited in mountain retreats or carried along with the military forces or simply eliminated when expediency dictated. By 1950, however, camps had been organized to accommodate what had become a greatly increased number of POW's—now running into the thousands—a direct result of the expansion and conventionalization of the war.⁴²

The Vietnam People's Army policy was to disregard the state of health of the POW's. French medical officers captured with the troops were almost never allowed to administer first aid to stricken French Union troops because of the strict practice of separating officers and enlisted men into different camps. As a result, not a single POW with injuries of the abdomen, chest, or skull survived Communist captivity. Occasionally, some of the more serious cases were transported to VPA field hospitals, where the cure was often worse than the illness. If they survived the lengthy trips of sometimes hundreds of kilometers on bamboo stretchers, they were often left for months without adequate care.⁴³

In certain camps, the wounded POW's were classified for surgical treatment according to a system of "People's Democratic urgency,"⁴⁴ ex-prisoners of the French to be treated first, then North African enlisted men, Foreign Legion enlisted men, French enlisted men, and finally French officers. The result was often that patients whose condition required immediate attention died before help could be given to them.

A large number of POW deaths resulted from the long marches to the designated prison camp areas. Distances of up to 900 kilometers were covered by unmerciful rates of march with the POW's sustained only by a bit of cold rice once a day. Various races and nationalities responded differently to the forced marches and to conditions in

⁴⁰ This account is taken, in large part, from Bernard Fall's "Street Without Joy" (Harrisburg, Pa., The Stackpole Press, 1961), in which he treats the POW situation in detail.

⁴¹ Fall, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

general. Statistics on the percentage of liberated POW's requiring hospitalization illustrate that Europeans and North Africans suffered most from the ordeal: ⁴⁵

Required hospitalization upon release:	
French Mainland.....	66. 7
Foreign Legion.....	69. 04
North Africans.....	60. 7
Africans.....	24. 0
Vietnamese.....	24. 45

The Vietnamese members of the French Union forces, however, had the lowest percentage of returnees,⁴⁶ indicating that more of them were either killed in captivity or never taken prisoner:

Unit type	Missing, 1945-54	Returned July- October 1954	Percent of returnees
French mainland.....	6, 449	2, 587	40. 1
North African.....	6, 695	3, 369	50. 7
Foreign Legion.....	6, 328	2, 567	40. 6
African.....	1, 748	796	45. 6
Vietnamese.....	15, 759	1, 435	9. 1
Total.....	36, 979	10, 754	28. 5

As in Korea, political indoctrination of POW's was standard operating procedure. According to Bernard Fall the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) was better equipped to deal with various national minorities of the French Union Forces than its North Korean counterpart had been in dealing with captives from the United Nations Command. Propaganda in the form of broadcasts and leaflets was directed at the French Union troops in French, German, Arabic, and African dialects. Political cadres in each POW camp directed the "reeducation" programs and attempted to pit one national group against another. The practice of separating the officers from the NCO's served to further reduce morale.

Recalcitrant prisoners were subjected to severe treatment and, if they were particularly resistant to the program, they were transferred to the feared "reprisal camp" which was in reality little more than a death camp.⁴⁷ The "reeducated" prisoner became a "new man" and violations of the camp rules by him were considered a relapse into reactionary thinking—a crime punishable by death. Punishments for acts such as escape attempts were of much greater severity when committed by a "reformed" prisoner than by a recently captured POW. The former were adjudged to have had their eyes opened to the truth so that they were no longer granted the measure of "irresponsible" conduct that might have been tolerated before "reeducation."

Communist methods of indoctrination of POW's in Indochina and Korea, which carry the principle of prisoner reeducation several steps further, is elaborated on by Father Paul Jeandel, a prisoner for three years in Communist camps:

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 296.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 294.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 299.

Medieval tortures are nothing in comparison to the atomic-age torture of brainwashing * * * It amputates your soul and grafts another one upon you. Persuasion has taken the place of punishment. The victims must approve and justify in their own eyes the measures which crush them. They must recognize themselves guilty and believe in the crimes which they have not committed * * * I have seen men leave camp who were dead and did not know it, for they had lost their own personality and had become slogan-reciting robots * * * I myself nearly lost my reason.⁴⁸

The basic principle employed is the evolution of the discussion from the verifiable true fact taken out of context to the unsubstantiated large-scale lie. It began, for example, with the true statement that the Communist forces were a regular force of excellent fighters. This was an obvious fact that could not be denied and would be followed by another statement more in the form of a value judgment which nonetheless contained an element of truth: that the Vietnamese non-Communist government was a puppet regime of the French. From here the approach would lead to the premise that the regime was unpopular and to the apparently logical conclusion that the Communist government was popular. Other aspects of the brainwashing process involved "criticism and self-criticism" or spying on one's comrades and denouncing one's own sins in public. The goal was ultimately to create a "collective conscience" wherein the individual prisoner became as much a captive of his own comrades and fellow prisoners as of the enemy. Father Jeandel summed up the experience of indoctrination in a single phrase saying, "The worst wasn't to die, but to see one's soul change."⁴⁹

IV. A COMPARISON OF CHINESE/KOREAN (KOREAN WAR) AND SOVIET (WORLD WAR II) PRACTICES

At this point several generalities might be made regarding basic differences in techniques of indoctrination and interrogation as practiced on prisoners of war by the Soviet and Chinese/Korean Communists. Under the Chinese/Korean system, the general timetable for interrogation and extraction of a confession was quite different from the Russian practice, as in the former there was an attempt to produce a long-lasting change in the basic attitude and behavior of the prisoner.⁵⁰ Thus, indoctrination played a very important role in the Chinese/Korean system. Prolonged isolation as used in the U.S.S.R. was not used in these Asian Communist countries. The Chinese/Korean emphasis was on group interaction as distinct from private confinement. In these Asian countries a prisoner was usually in a cell with six to eight other prisoners.⁵¹ This method emphasized public self-criticism and group criticism for indoctrination and the use of diary writing as distinct from verbal discussions as the method for the prisoner's giving his autobiography. Chinese/Korean interrogators were generally less experienced and less knowledgeable about Americans and Europeans than the Russians.⁵²

In "Soviet Indoctrination of German War Prisoners," Wilfred O. Reiners points out that there were certain fundamental differences

⁴⁸ Jeandel, Paul. *Soutane Noire—Beret Rouge*. Paris, Editions de la Pensée Moderne, 1957, p. 37.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵⁰ "Communist Interrogation * * *," 1957, pp. 1-240.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-13.

between the situation of American POW's in Korea and European POW's—especially Germans—in the U.S.S.R. First, the overwhelming majority of American POW's had no basic quarrels with their government or American political and social institutions. By comparison, there were, among the Europeans, distinct groups opposed to their political regime at home, or at least to certain aspects of that government. Again, the European belligerents during the Second World War were locked in a life-and-death struggle, while the Korean War remained throughout a local conflict. This difference implied major differences in the waging of war and, as a part of this activity, the treatment of POW's. Further the American soldier who collaborated with the enemy knew he had to accept full responsibility for this action after repatriation, whereas the European was not necessarily faced with that problem. Finally, the vast numbers of POW's held by the Soviet Union precluded the kind of intensive indoctrination that American soldiers received from the Chinese during the Korean war.⁵³

The Soviets mounted their indoctrination program for POW's with two basic objectives in mind. After appropriate training, POW's were used as propaganda instruments and later as political tools in occupied countries. The propaganda division of the Red army utilized individual POW's for the production and dissemination of propaganda, leaflets and radio broadcasts. Prisoners were sometimes persuaded to render such service almost immediately after their capture, prior to being sent to permanent camps. Others were put through an "anti-Fascist" school and then assigned to psychological warfare duties.⁵⁴ Such propaganda activities were aimed at both the military and civilian populations and were designed to reduce fighting spirit and the will to resist. Another objective to be achieved through POW indoctrination was the creation inside the U.S.S.R. of a group of anti-Nazi Germans—friendly to the U.S.S.R., which could either be the nucleus of a future German government or could exert influence on a possible coup d'etat. After the war many of these indoctrinated Germans were transferred to the Soviet-occupied area of Germany to occupy key positions in the administration and bureaucracy.⁵⁵

V. THE PUEBLO INCIDENT

The men of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* who were captured and detained by the North Korean authorities were not, in a technical sense, prisoners of war, since there was no state of hostilities at the time, declared or undeclared, between the North Korean Government and the United States Government. However, they were military personnel captured by the armed forces of another government and held prisoner in a military fashion and under military custody. From this standpoint, whatever the technicalities, it is proper to consider them as de facto POW's.

The U.S.S. *Pueblo* was one of a fleet of electronic surveillance ships in the U.S. Navy used for gathering intelligence.⁵⁶ The major mission

⁵³ Reiners, Wilfred O. *Soviet Indoctrination of German Prisoners of War*. Cambridge, M.I.T., pp. 3-5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

⁵⁶ This account is taken, in large part, from M. T. Haggard, "The *Pueblo* Incident—A Short Narrative Summary." Washington, U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, multilith F-368, Apr. 15, 1969.

for this type of vessel is collection of information on enemy submarines, and the charting of enemy radar signals as a means of identifying radar systems and thereby roughly determining enemy dispositions. Another purpose is to analyze radio traffic in order to obtain information on troop buildups or movements. The particular mission of the *Pueblo* on its voyage along the Korean coast in January 1968 related to an appraisal of the defense forces of North Korea. Information was sought on how these forces would react, on their strength, and on their radar capability.

The nature of the *Pueblo's* mission dictated that it be lightly armed, thus rendering it incapable of thorough self-defense. An added element of vulnerability existed in that many such intelligence-gathering vessels often operate in areas where speedy military assistance in case of trouble is not available. Further, since much intelligence gathering must be clandestine, obvious escorts would hamper such operations substantially.

The *Pueblo* was converted from a light cargo vessel for its intelligence-gathering role in 1966 and 1967. Comdr. Lloyd Bucher, before the Navy court of inquiry in January 1969, stated that his request for the installation of a system to destroy secret documents and equipment was turned down because of the time and expense involved. Compliance with his request for such "destruct" equipment would have made it necessary to rebuild the existing system. Although Commander Bucher's request for additional weapons was fulfilled and a defective steering system was repaired in Japan, the ship never received an improved telephone system which was deemed necessary for coordinating operations in case of attack or boarding. Commander Bucher stated that the Navy had allotted \$11 million for overhaul of the *Pueblo* and its sister ship, but that this was cut back \$1 million on each ship. He also said that he had been told that if the ship got into trouble, "help couldn't get to me on time, but that the Air Force and Navy had plans for retaliation."⁵⁷ However, Navy authorities felt that enemy seizure of the *Pueblo* was highly improbable and later Commander Bucher testified that "I never considered I would ever be attacked on this mission. It never occurred to me that I would ever be put in the position I found myself in that afternoon."⁵⁸

The ship had orders not to go closer than 13 miles to the North Korean shore and Commander Bucher later said that the *Pueblo* followed these orders during the mission. This statement was supported by the ship's executive/navigation officer who said that the *Pueblo* had stayed at least a mile outside of North Korea's 12-mile limit during the entire voyage.

The capture of the *Pueblo* occurred on January 23, 1968. At noon on that date a North Korean submarine chaser and support ships approached the American ship. After several exchanges of communication between the vessels in which a demand for nationality identification was made and a reply was given, the North Koreans ordered the *Pueblo* to "heave to" or risk being fired upon. The *Pueblo* answered that the ship was in international waters—some 16 miles from the nearest land. After approximately two and a half hours and further demands to "heave to," accompanied by shelling from the Communist

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

craft, the *Pueblo* halted and was boarded by a North Korean party of 10 to 12 persons.

According to subsequent testimony by crewmembers, the hours on board the ship immediately before its seizure were characterized by confusion, concerted activity to destroy as much intelligence material as possible, and difficult decisionmaking by Commander Bucher. He had been wounded during the shelling but continued to exercise his command functions throughout the confrontation, ordering the crew to remain below deck and commanding that all classified equipment, documents, and related material be destroyed. The alternatives of scuttling the ship, resisting, or escaping were not deemed feasible by the commander since there was only 180 feet of water below the *Pueblo* at the time, since the North Koreans had an overwhelming advantage in numbers and firepower, and the enemy ships had approximately twice the speed capability of the American ship. He decided that he would surrender the ship since "any further resistance on our part would end up in a complete slaughter."⁵⁹ One of the principal problems at this point was the destruction of classified material. Dumping intelligence equipment and documents into the sea would not have been an effective solution in such shallow water while burning the material on board would have required up to 12 hours, according to some estimates. The result of this quandary was that a sizable amount of such material was seized by the North Koreans.

Throughout the period leading up to the boarding, the *Pueblo* kept in radio contact with its home base in Japan, but Commander Bucher's repeated requests for assistance proved fruitless. The *Pueblo* was considered to be engaged in a minimal risk type of operation, and therefore no rescue forces had been placed on alert to back up the ship. The commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Japan later said that he could find no American forces, neither ships nor planes, that could go to the rescue. Planes of the 5th Air Force and vessels of the 7th Fleet were the forces closest to the *Pueblo*, but air support could not be mobilized in under 3 hours and the *Enterprise* was 600 miles from the North Korean port of Wonsan.

At the time of boarding by the Koreans, the crew was forced to the fantail of the ship, blindfolded and hands tied. Commander Bucher was taken to the pilot house where he was struck repeatedly while being interrogated. Bucher's personal accounts described the type of treatment that the commander and crew of the *Pueblo* received during their 11 months of captivity in North Korea. He said that he "was continually beaten to induce me to sign a confession . . ." and added that "I was beaten less than anybody else. . . . I was kept in solitary confinement during the entire 11 months and there were many occasions when I didn't think I was going to make it."⁶⁰ He recounted episodes of beating that caused him to "black out" and how he was later shown examples of extreme torture that had been performed on South Korean "spies" as a threat to what could happen to him and members of his crew. A primary objective of the North Koreans was to obtain signed "confessions" of guilt from the crew. This became the main theme in the treatment of the *Pueblo* prisoners and in signing his "confession" Commander Bucher said that his men's lives were

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ *Washington Post*, Sept. 24, 1968, p. A5.

more valuable than "my signature on a scrap of paper containing nothing but obvious lies and propaganda."⁶¹ Although Japanese journalists reported that living quarters and diets were adequate for prisoners, Bucher's remarks about filth, lice and untended wounds together with his accounts of solitary confinement and beatings indicate that there were widespread violations of the standards of the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war.

Immediately after their capture, the United States began negotiations with North Korea to obtain the release of the crew and vessel. Twenty-eight meetings were held in Panmunjom and on December 22, 1968, an arrangement was agreed upon for the release of the crew. To obtain the release of the 82 survivors and the body of the one crew-member who was killed during the seizure, the United States signed a document containing an apology and an admission of espionage and violation of North Korean territory while North Korea accepted a U.S. disclaimer regarding the accuracy and validity of the charges contained in the document before it was signed. The U.S. State Department said that the chief U. S. negotiator "made clear that his signature did not imply the acceptance by the United States of the numerous false statements in the document. * * *"⁶²

The negotiations between the two nations were aimed at the release of the crew, the U.S. Government considering the recovery of the ship as a separate problem. The North Korean statements signed by the United States referred to the *Pueblo* as "confiscated."

VI. AMERICAN POW'S IN INDOCHINA (1964-1972)

As of April 20, 1972, 492 Americans were prisoners of war in Indochina. It is also assumed that some of the 1,086 men listed as missing in action, may be captives of the Indochinese Communists.⁶³

*POW Missing Count in Southeast Asia*¹

Currently missing from hostile action.....	1, 086
Currently missing from nonhostile causes.....	127
Died while missing.....	2, 263
Returned to U.S. military control.....	95
Died in captivity.....	20
Returned from captivity.....	71
Currently captive.....	492

¹ Department of Defense release, May 6, 1972.

The length of time that the United States has been involved in the Indochinese war surpasses that of American participation in any previous armed hostilities. This timespan is reflected in the long periods of detention that American prisoners of war have experienced in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Two Americans have been prisoners of war for more than 8 years: Air Force Capt. Floyd Thompson was lost in South Vietnam in March 1964 and Navy Lt. Everett Alvarez was captured in August of the same year. Some 300 prisoners have been missing or have been in captivity for over 4 years.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1970, p. A6.

⁶² Haggard, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁶³ Department of Defense release, May 6, 1972.

⁶⁴ Acting to Aid the Forgotten Men. *Time*, Dec. 7, 1970, p. 18.

Accounts of Hanoi's treatment of American prisoners of war are limited largely to Communist sources, returnee reports, and information given by certain persons whom the North Vietnamese Government has admitted to the country for interviews and inspection trips. Many charges have been made that the Vietnamese Communists have violated the Geneva Convention of 1949. President Nixon, in proclaiming a National Week of Concern for American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action on March 19, 1971, accused North Vietnam of "continuing disregard for this Convention and basic human standards . . . refusal to identify all of the Americans being held, to permit impartial inspection of their camps, to release seriously sick and wounded prisoners, to provide humane treatment, and to permit prisoners to correspond regularly with their families."⁶⁵

One violation of the Geneva Convention occurred in 1966 and 1967 when North Vietnam paraded captured American fliers through the streets of Hanoi on several occasions; article 13 of the Convention requires the protection of POW's "against insults and public curiosity." This was apparently done to generate public opinion in North Vietnam that would serve as an appropriate background to public "war criminal" show trials, but the latter were never held, probably due to the adverse world reaction.

Col. Norris Overly, who was shot down over North Vietnam in October 1967 and released a year later, said that—

The North Vietnamese have on occasion tortured some of our men—but I think there is danger in dwelling on that particular aspect of it because the North Vietnamese are much more subtle than that. The subtle inhumanity of the whole situation was placing men in a small 8-by-10 cell and not pressuring them to do anything one way or the other, but just put them away and feed them a subsistence diet for 3, 4, 5, 6, and in several cases almost 7 years. I think we can all answer the question what kind of physical and mental condition they are going to be in when they come out of this sort of environment.⁶⁶

There have been indications that U.S. prisoners of war, in an apparently dazed condition, were publicly displayed in Hanoi, and there have been a number of broadcasts of alleged "confessions." Some U.S. personnel captured by the enemy in South Vietnam have been executed⁶⁷ and on June 15, 1967, the Vietcong "Liberation Radio" implied that Gustav C. Hertz, an AID official captured in 1965, had been murdered as an act of reprisal.

The following is a list of alleged violations of Geneva Convention articles committed by the North Vietnamese in their treatment of American prisoners:

⁶⁵ Compilation of Presidential Documents, vol. 7, No. 12, Mar. 22, 1971, p. 504.

⁶⁶ U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. American POW's in Southeast Asia, 1971. Hearings, Mar. 23, 1971, p. 6.

⁶⁷ Casella, A. The Politics of Prisoners of War. New York Times Magazine, May 28, 1972, p. 31. Nhan Dan (North Vietnamese official news agency) as quoted by Radio Hanoi, Sept. 28, 1965:

"The punishment of Sept. 26, of U.S. Capt. Humbert R. Versace and Sgt. Kenneth M. Roarback is a fully justified act, severe and well deserved * * * a proper protest against the fascist sentence and execution by the lackey government of three patriots (convicted by the Government of Vietnam of terrorist acts). To prevent further such crimes on the part of the U.S. aggressors and their henchmen, the NLF has carried out its severe verdict against the aggressors." (These two prisoners were executed by the Vietcong.)

DRV VIOLATIONS OF 1949 GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR (TO WHICH THE DRV ACCEDED IN 1957)¹

Article	Requirement	DRV performance
13	POW's must be humanely treated, protected; reprisals against POW's prohibited.	Paraded in streets, forced to make statements, some torture.
21	POW's not to be held in "close confinement"	Many POW's held in solitary confinement for years.
23	Mark PW camps so as visible from air, give information on camp locations.	No markings on camps; locations concealed.
26	Provide sufficient food, prevent loss of weight, take account of normal diet.	Released POW's state that standard fare consists of: pumpkin soup, rice, bread, pig fat. All POW's underweight and suffering from malnutrition.
30	Adequate medical care	Much evidence of inadequate medical care (photos, released POW's); prisoners dying in camps.
34	Regular religious services	Only evidence is films of some Christmas services.
70	Write to family within 1 week of capture	Some have not written for 5 years.
71	Minimum of 2 letters and 4 cards a month	Average of 2-3 letters per year (none at all for some).
72	Free receipt of parcels	DRV states that POW's can receive a package every other month. Evidence indicates delivery is irregular; parcels sent to "dead" not returned.
109	Immediate repatriation of seriously sick and wounded. Release of POW's long held in captivity.	No regular release of sick and wounded or long-held POW's; state of health or duration of imprisonment has not appeared to be a determining factor in those releases which have taken place.
120	Advise of deaths in captivity, full official information on circumstances, cause, burial, grave identification.	Bare assertion of death through unofficial and irregular channels, no details.
122	Advise promptly names of all POW's held	Never released official or complete list.
126	Neutral inspection of all camps, interview of POW's without witnesses.	No inspection; propaganda interviews only.

¹ U.S. Congress. Hearings on American POW's in Southeast Asia, p. 560. Inserted after remarks by Ambassador Bruce at 99th plenary session of Paris peace talks.

North Vietnam maintains that the Geneva Convention is not applicable to any part of the conflict in Southeast Asia because war has not been declared and that a state of war has not been recognized by more than one of the parties to the conflict. Consequently the North Vietnamese and their allies have asserted that the prerequisites for application of the convention set out in article 2 ("the present convention shall apply to all cases of declared war or of any other armed conflict which may arise between two or more * * * parties, even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them.") remain unsatisfied and the convention does not bind them in this conflict. The American reply to this contention is that article 2 obviously pertains to the Indo-chinese conflict since it clearly states that "any other armed conflict" should be included "even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them" (the parties to the conflict).⁶⁸

The North Vietnamese further assert that the Geneva Convention does not protect American military men who are shot down and captured in North Vietnam because these men are not prisoners of war, but are "air pirates" or "criminals" subject to punishment according to their laws. The North Vietnamese contend that the bombing of North Vietnam without a declaration of war constitutes a war crime and that prisoners prosecuted for such crimes should not enjoy the benefits of the provisions of the present Convention as provided in article 85 (POW's must be treated as required by the Convention even after they have been convicted by the detaining power for acts committed prior to capture.)

While there have been negative reports of South Vietnamese treatment of POW's, the Republic of South Vietnam and its allies have made considerable effort to insure that the Geneva Convention is

⁶⁸ American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. The Prisoner of War Problem. Analysis No. 28, Dec. 28, 1970.

applied. The Republic of South Vietnam has opened all detention camps to inspection by the International Committee of the Red Cross and has given the names of prisoners of war it holds to the Red Cross. POW's have the right to send and receive mail and packages and many alleged violations of prisoners' rights have been investigated and punishment meted out to those found guilty of violating the convention.⁶⁹

The United States has made numerous efforts to effect prisoner of war exchanges, but thus far only token results have been realized. The Saigon Government, however, has usually responded to Hanoi's unilateral release of American and South Vietnamese POW's by freeing sizable numbers of enemy captives. Since 1965 a total of 33 U.S. servicemen have been freed—nine by North Vietnam and 24 by the Vietcong. South Vietnam has released 237 North Vietnamese and more than 4,300 Vietcong captives.⁷⁰ A widely publicized effort by Saigon in June 1971 to repatriate 660 sick and wounded North Vietnamese prisoners was initially accepted and then rejected by Hanoi when only 13 captives agreed to be repatriated.

⁶⁹ Department of State Bulletin, Dec. 11, 1967, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Costello, Mary. "Status of War Prisoners." Editorial Research Reports, Apr. 26, 1972, p. 328.

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