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COMMUNIST MISTREATMENT OF U. S. PRISONERS OF WAR. (U)
1954

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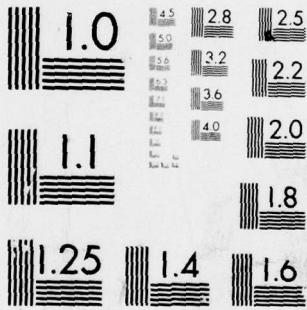
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A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Alexander Nicolini".

ALEXANDER NICOLINI
Major, Infantry
R&D Coordinator

- A -

"FACT SHEET"

"Communist Mistreatment of U.S. Prisoners of War"

Purpose of "Fact Sheet"

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The material contained in this "Fact Sheet" is furnished for the use of commanders in discharging their troop and public information responsibilities. This "Fact Sheet" has been assigned as the Command Conference subject for the week beginning 25 January 1954. This "Fact Sheet" has been reproduced, published, and distributed by the Troop Information and Education Section, The Infantry Center.

The Communist treatment of prisoners of war is an insidiously planned conspiracy with a far reaching goal - World Domination. Prisoners of war are an important segment of this well-planned scheme. The treatment, indoctrination and utilization of prisoners of war are all part and parcel of Communist policy.

The Communists refuse to concede a captured enemy any of his traditional rights as a prisoner. In their ideological struggle against "capitalism and imperialism", they concede no rights to the individual. For them, captured enemy personnel are still part of the struggle. They consider their personnel who have been taken prisoner only to be temporarily out from under their control. Prisoners, too, must be used to serve Communist ends.

The spirit of the Geneva Convention is a great moral achievement, but the Communists have violated all the humanitarian principles involved in regard to the treatment of prisoners of war. Their status and welfare were disregarded by the Communists from the time of capture to their repatriation and threats were made to secure their cooperation after repatriation.

The Communists have a very comprehensive program for all prisoners who fall into their hands. They never concede the rights of a soldier to be loyal to his country. Capture is the signal for the initiation of elaborate political indoctrination. Persuasion and coercion are employed. Those who insist on remaining loyal to their country and ideals are sentenced to "corrective education" in the form of hard labor, torture, atrocities and finally political training. Persecution and indoctrination are employed to force all prisoners to be "reasonable," that is, accept the dogmas of Communism.

The alleged policy of the Communists is the "humane" treatment of prisoners of war. According to this policy, the life of a prisoner will be protected; he will not be subjected to any forced labor; his free will must not be infringed upon; personal possessions of prisoners of war will not be confiscated; and medical care and treatment will be given to the sick and wounded. Radio broadcasts from Peiping, and the biased articles to be found in various Communist-controlled publications, attempt to convince everyone that this policy is actually being pursued, but the true circumstances are as follows.

COMMUNIST ATROCITIES AGAINST UNITED NATIONS PRISONERS OF WAR AFTER CAPTURE WHILE IN THE MARCH TO PRISON CAMPS.

During the marches from capture points to prison camps there was little or no medical attention to most of the wounded. In many cases, sick and wounded prisoners were taken from the line of march by the guards; in most cases, shots were heard soon afterwards. With few exceptions, those disappearing from the line of march were not subsequently seen alive. In other cases, the Communist captors killed prisoners in rages.

The available evidence indicates an exceedingly high death rate, both during the marches to the permanent camps and during the period of imprisonment. Malnutrition, lack of medical care, dysentery, pneumonia, freezing, and sheer brutality took a heavy toll.

THE PATTERN OF TREATMENT

A. The March

Throughout the reports made by the returning prisoners run the threads of a general pattern of treatment. Many prisoners who participated in the same marches and were in the same internment camp reported witnessing the same incidents. In other cases, different incidents reported by prisoners of war in different locations show a considerable similarity in mode of treatment. A summary of the pattern of treatment follows.

Upon capture by Communists the unwounded and the walking wounded prisoners were herded into groups for marching. The seriously wounded were left on the field and often killed by small arms fire and bayoneting. In many cases Americans carried their wounded buddies. Many marches were made under severe cold weather conditions. The Communist guards took shoes and other articles of clothing from some of the prisoners. Freezing of feet and hands was common. One prisoner reported marching in bare feet until the flesh was gone from his toe bones. Little medical treatment other than occasional bandaging was given to the wounded. The marches were long and grueling and at a pace that could not be made by most of the wounded men. Attempts were made by the guards to keep these men moving. Stragglers were frequently clubbed with sticks and guns or kicked when they fell. Many of the men who could not continue were dropped off at huts or left along the way. One of the men who was quartered in a hut

and survived reported the death of all others in the sub-zero weather. It was believed that those left along the way would not survive. On some marches, guards dropped out and shot some of the prisoners who fell behind. In two accounts prisoners were pushed off cliffs. Out of 700 men beginning one march of three weeks duration, approximately 250 arrived at the first camp. A large percentage of men disappeared from the line of march and, so far as is known, were not subsequently accounted for.

On one route of march, the intermediate camp was known as "Bean Camp"; at another it was called "Death Valley". Here the prisoners were herded into huts. Men died at an exceedingly high rate per day. Causes of deaths given by prisoners and accompanying medical officers were lack of medical attention, malnutrition, dysentery, and pneumonia. Food consisted of cracked corn, millet, sorghum, and soy meal balls, occasionally mixed with the flesh of dogs; this food was reported as poor and inadequate.

B. The Permanent Camps - Atrocities

From the auxiliary camp, men were marched to the permanent camps. At these camps there were at first no medical facilities, no heat, and no blankets during the winter of 1950. Estimates of prisoners, some of whom were on burial squads, indicated that approximately 1,600 men died between January and March 1951 at Camp #3. Similar conditions were reported by internees of other camps. There were many examples of the use of primitive and unsympathetic medical treatment. There are accounts of fingers being snipped off with tin shears and of toes amputated with hacksaw blades, without the use of anesthetics. A strange operation for the treatment of beri beri consisted of opening the side of the prisoner and placing in the abdomen a piece of treated chicken liver.

In the Communist camps those prisoners who were "progressives" (those who went along with indoctrination) received much better treatment than the "reactionaries" (those who resisted indoctrination). The reactionaries were threatened, put on work details, beaten with clubs, or forced to stand at attention for long periods of time in the cold. During odd hours of the night, reactionaries were frequently arrested in their barracks on reputedly trumped-up charges.

Harsh and unusual punishments took place at the camp jails. Men were hung on ropes by their hands, were put into small cages, stood in the cold with water poured over them, beaten, and thrown into solitary, unheated, dark holes, partly filled with water.

DOCUMENTATION

A. General

The facts included herein have been compiled from the case histories of thousands of returned American prisoners of war. There are many specific cases described here of atrocities committed against American prisoners by the Communists. For the purposes of convenience in presentation, these specific cases have been organized (somewhat arbitrarily) by

category of type of atrocity. The categories selected conform generally to the principles enunciated by the Geneva Convention of 1949 regarding the treatment of prisoners of war.

B. Atrocities

Atrocities and violations of humane considerations during the evacuation and movement of prisoners were numerous. Sick and wounded prisoners were often killed.

1. Many survivors stated that after being captured, they personally witnessed communist soldiers shoot and bayonet wounded prisoners who could not walk.

2. Several former prisoners of war have testified that they saw communist guards push straggler prisoners over cliffs with rifle butts and bayonets.

3. A sergeant testified that at one time on a march he heard two shots nearby and turned to investigate, whereupon he saw two communists dragging the bodies of two Americans into the bushes. Both of these Americans had been shot through the head. They had foot trouble and experienced difficulty in marching.

4. A soldier reported that shoes were frequently removed from captives; and that he personally was forced to march for 18 days in his bare feet. His feet were frozen and by the end of the march all of the flesh had dropped from his toes.

5. Another soldier confirmed the report that men's feet froze on the march and that they received no medical treatment or issue of footwear. He further reported that the march from the front commenced with 600 to 700 and that only about 250 reached the first camp. The sick were never seen again.

SUMMARY OF KOREAN WAR CRIMES CASES BY THE COMMUNISTS.

A. Atrocities Discovered and Investigated

1. United States military authorities have investigated over 1000 reported atrocities and other violations of the Geneva Convention which had been committed by the Communist forces against United Nations personnel. These atrocities and violations were investigated and a file of the cases has been compiled. This file is being enlarged as additional information is obtained.

2. The present investigation of cases reported indicates that Communist forces murdered approximately 6000 members of the United States Armed Forces whom they had taken as prisoners of war. Many sick or wounded were killed to avoid caring for them or because the transportation of them inconvenienced the Communists. An examination of the cases reported

clearly reveals that these killings were "Standing Operating Procedure" with the Communist armies. The non-walking wounded and the seriously sick were ruthlessly murdered - usually by shooting, although there are numerous instances of bayoneting, clubbing, or kicking to death. In a few cases prisoner's clothing was saturated with gasoline, ignited, and the prisoner burned to death. The bodies were usually looted and abandoned without burial.

B. Examples of Communist Atrocities

In a number of the reported cases the Communists displayed a particularly shocking flair for inhumanity. Some of them were as follows:

a. Case - A convoy of from 35 to 40 trucks of the U. S. 7th Division was retreating from Chosin Reservoir with an estimated 1000 wounded United States soldiers. On 1 December 1950 the Communists halted and overran the convoy. They then poured gasoline on the wounded and threw white phosphorous grenades on the trucks, causing them to burst into flames. Many of the wounded were machine-gunned and bayoneted to death as they tried to escape from the holocaust. An American soldier reported he saw the Communists place wounded and dead Americans in the middle of the road as a human roadblock.

b. Case - A captured Communist soldier stated that his commander ordered the execution of 80 U. S. prisoners near the Chongchon River in the latter part of November 1950.

c. Case - A captured Communist soldier stated he and several other Communist soldiers buried three seriously wounded U. S. prisoners alive. The incident took place on 1 February 1951.

d. Case - Groups of from 28 to 80 captured American soldiers were killed by Communists.

LIVING CONDITIONS

The UNC prisoners in the hands of the Communists attempted to survive despite miserable housing facilities; meager quantities of ill-prepared, unpalatable food, a lack of medical care; and long hours of forced labor. Their principal means of prolonging life was to appear to submit to the Communist brain-washing, and thought-cleansing programs. As a reward for submission to Communist indoctrination, food was improved in quality or increased in quantity to a life-sustaining level.

Housing

In contrast to the American method of building barracks and other buildings deemed necessary for the health and well being of prisoners, the Communists merely made use of whatever facilities were available in any given area in which it was desired to install a prisoner of war enclosure.

Sites utilized for camps included all manner of hovels and dank holes. The better locations were found in the skeletal remains of old school buildings. Into three rooms of such a building the Communists have been known to crowd two hundred prisoners.

Descending the scale of so-called adequate accommodations, prisoners were often confined in native villages. These were no more than a collection of hovels poorly constructed of mud and straw with a minimum of heat, if any. The extreme low point was reached when prisoners were forced to live in trenches, caves, holes in the ground which may or may not have been covered, and in the cold clammy shafts or pits of abandoned mines.

Within these camps prisoners existed without, in many cases, any beds or any form of bedding. At some locations the prisoners were more fortunate, having a single blanket each with which to keep themselves, while at other locales two men shared the same blanket. Consequently the prisoners, in order to attain some small degree of rest and comfort, improvised with piles of straw and empty rice bags.

Article 25, Geneva Convention of 1949, states: "Prisoners of war shall be quartered under conditions as favorable as those for the forces of the Detaining Power who are billeted in the same area. The said conditions.... in no case be prejudicial to their health." The Communists made little or no effort to have prisoners of war construct or repair buildings or other facilities. Furthermore, they continuously refused to deliver Red Cross packages or other supplies to the prisoners which might alleviate their plight. The obvious reason was that any such assistance would upset the Communists' premeditated plan of forcing prisoners of war to accept Communism.

The Communist disregard for the safety and welfare of the prisoners is also revealed by the regularity with which the enclosures were placed in areas in which vital military targets abounded. In this connection the Communists often marked their camps at random and with no regard for exactness. This was a deliberate ruse. Realizing that UNC air would spare no effort to avoid hitting a marked prisoner of war camp, the Communists deliberately took advantage of this facet of the United Nations "humanitarian" nature to enjoy protected sites for military installations. Instances are on record showing that the Communists deliberately placed prisoners waving United States flags in supply areas to dissuade UNC planes from bombing these same areas. High-ranking NKA officials in Pyongyang also cleverly took advantage of this ruse. When United Nations planes appeared over a prisoner of war camp the prisoners waved articles of clothing to signal their location to the planes. Realizing that the UNC Aircraft had noticed the location of the prisoners, the Communists moved the prisoners to some other place; and officials then moved into the camp in order to avoid attacks by UNC planes.

Food

That food is the mainstay of life is an accepted and acknowledged fact. Without adequate food, human beings cannot be expected to survive for any

lengthy period of time. This was part of the Communist persuasion system, once a prisoner of war accepted Communism or co-operated his ration was increased considerably in quantity and quality.

The average quantity of food supplied to prisoners of war by the Communists was six hundred grams per day. This is the equivalent of less than one and one-third pounds. Information has been received that at one particular enclosure only three hundred grams per day of food was issued. The largest amount received by any prisoner was eight hundred grams per day, and this was given only to those prisoners who appeared to be reacting favorably to Communist indoctrination.

Rice, millet, corn, wheat, paste, and beans comprised the greater portion of even the largest allowance of food. At various times small quantities of meat, vegetables, and soy sauce were included in the daily ration to nurture prisoners through the Communist indoctrination process. Due to lack of vitamins and minerals in the prisoners' diet, except for the small amount obtained from vegetables, a prisoner's resistance to disease was lowered and he readily became sick.

UNC prisoners of the Communists received roughly one-fourth of the amount of food to which they had been accustomed, while South Koreans who were prisoners received about one-half of their usual quantity. Since subsistence was unvaried and in small quantities, malnutrition was prevalent. This is well born-out and verified by reports of the condition of prisoners in the various camps. They returned weak, underfed, and suffering from intestinal disorders caused by the diet and unsanitary conditions.

Article 26 of the Geneva Convention states that, "The basic daily food rations shall be sufficient in quantity, quality, and variety to keep prisoners in good health and to prevent the loss of weight or the development of nutritional deficiencies. Account shall also be taken of the habitual diet of the prisoners." This was met, in part, only after the prisoner assumed a "cooperative" attitude.

Clothing

Clothing is another of the items required to maintain health, bodily comfort, and a reasonable degree of decency. On this score, the Communists fell far below the level which might be expected of any Civilized people. Once a soldier was unfortunate enough to become a prisoner of war, he had to rely on his captors to supply him with replacements for worn-out items. In some instances the Communists stripped or stole the superior American clothing and shoes from captives and gave them old, worn-out Communist uniforms and canvas shoes or forced them to go barefooted.

Clothing and footwear cannot normally be expected to wear indefinitely, especially when used under war-time conditions or while performing the hard labor required of a prisoner. UNC prisoners of the Communists were wearing ragged, dirty remnants of United States uniforms. Occasionally prisoners had nothing more than a pair of shorts or pants. As replacements

for the worn-out clothing of prisoners of war the Communists supplied shabby second-hand North Korean army uniforms or blue cotton coveralls. Some prisoners received items of Chinese padded winter uniforms

Medical care

Medical care as furnished by the Communists was so poor as to be almost non-existent. Near the front lines and during the relatively short period a prisoner was still under the control of the capturing unit, medical care in the form of first aid was given; wounds were dressed and bandages changed at frequent intervals. This was done to impress the newly-captured soldier with Communism's blessings. In the camps and enclosures which were farther to the rear medical care was sadly lacking or non-existent for the definitely anti-Communist prisoner.

Despite the pretense of maintaining dispensaries or hospitals staffed with doctors, nurses, and medical attendants, a bare minimum of care was afforded the prisoners. The typical pharmaceutical stock of any medical installation in or near a prisoner of war camp consisted of iodine, mercurochrome, aspirin, and an unknown type of pill for the relief of stomach disorders. Adequate care of the sick and wounded can hardly be maintained with such a meager supply of medicines.

An estimated average for all prisoner of war camps indicate a monthly death rate of three percent which rose at one camp to eighteen percent. In addition, approximately twenty percent of the repatriated prisoners have some form of disease.

Labor

The Communists utilized prisoners to perform various tasks, but no set pattern can be evolved. Types of work engaged in and length of working hours seemed dependent upon seasonal requirements in the case of farming, and in all other cases upon conditions prevalent at individual camps. One very definite factor which determined working conditions was susceptibility to Communism. Those prisoners of war who showed any inclination toward Communism or were readily influenced by the Red brain-washing process were required to perform little or no labor.

Tasks ranged from a minimum of maintenance duties necessary to preserve some semblance of cleanliness in a camp to long hours of hard labor of various kinds. South Korean prisoners were required to work in mines; dig air-raid shelters and underground bunkers; plant, cultivate, and harvest crops; cut and haul logs for construction purposes and for firewood; collect bricks from damaged or destroyed buildings; remove rubble from bombed-out areas and rehabilitate these areas; construct air fields; and build, repair, and maintain roads, railway lines, and bridges. The average work day was eight to nine hours, but in addition to this, prisoners were subjected to from one to three hours of Communist indoctrination a day.

Republic of Korea soldiers who were captured by the Communists were not considered as prisoners of war; rather, they were referred to as "liberated warriors". They were organized into labor units referred to as "liberation

units" and "liberation construction regiments" and employed in direct support of the Communist war effort.

INDOCTRINATION

A brief explanation of the Communist method of indoctrination must be made in order to clarify the allusions to it contained in previous paragraphs.

The indoctrination process was a continuous program starting, as has been stated, in a small way with immediate care for wounded captives. It picked up intensity and enlarged in scope in the prisoner of war camps. Those prisoners who appeared to succumb to the Communist propaganda received better food and treatment and were relieved from hard labor details. Instead of working long hours, the prisoners found themselves subjected to a more lengthy and intensified indoctrination program. Those prisoners thought to be probable or partial converts to Communism were segregated and transferred to separate camps devoted solely to the preaching of Communist doctrine. Subjects generally covered during this indoctrination program were:

- Marx-Lenin and Communist theory
- The Lenient policy of the CCF in the treatment of prisoners
- The US as aggressor in the Korean conflict
- China and the Soviet Union, champions of peace
- Why China entered the Korean conflict
- The need for a new government in the US
- Unemployment in the US
- USSR and NK politics

This indoctrination process was carried out in camps under control of the Chinese, by the officer "teachers" who were members of the Prisoner of War Control and Training Section of the Political Department of the Chinese Communist Forces. In some camps, confirmed Communists disguised as bona-fide prisoners were slipped in to act as spies among the real prisoners of war. These spies reported to their superiors on the results of the indoctrination program. These reports were used to determine what prisoners should be segregated for further intensified brain-washing and exploitation as puppets of the Communist propaganda mill.

At several times and places prisoners were released after relatively short stays in the hands of the Communists. Upon their return to the UNC lines they told of the good care, treatment, and food received while they were held captive. These returnees failed to realize that the treatment afforded them was considerably above the normal standard for prisoners of war, and was especially designed to impress them. This comparatively small group of returnees are products of the indoctrination program and are one of the means used to spread the flow of Red propaganda.

QUESTIONS FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

The following sequence of questioning is suggested for returned prisoners of war. The questions are presented in an order that will give chronological sequence to the former prisoners' story, and thus facilitate interviews and the preparation of stories for news media.

1. GENERAL

(Note: These questions are merely suggested as a device to get the returnee to develop his own story of what happened to him. Human interest aspects of his experiences should be exploited.)

- a. Who are you?
- b. Where's your home town?
- c. What was your battle experience?
- d. When and where were you taken prisoner? Under what conditions?
- e. What was the temperature when you were captured? How were you clothed?
- f. Where did you spend your first Christmas?

2. ATROCITIES

- a. Did you witness or do you have knowledge of Communist atrocities against UN (US) military personnel? Against South Korean civilians? Give details.
- b. Do you have any idea why the Communists murdered those victims? (Note: This question should elicit the fact that the atrocity was premeditated.)
- c. What were the conditions of the men before they were murdered? Were there any wounded personnel murdered? Were the victim's hands tied?
- d. With what kind of weapons were the murders committed?
- e. Was there any attempt to interrogate the victims before they were murdered?

3. MISTREATMENT OR DEATH MARCH

- a. Did you participate in one of the "death marches"? On what date did you depart PYONGYANG, SEOUL, or _____?

- b. Were you marched on foot or were you transported by train? How many days did your journey take?
- c. Describe the conditions of the train.
- d. How many wounded soldiers were with your group? How were they treated?
- e. Did any men die on the march? How many and what caused their deaths? Describe.
- f. Did your group go through "Bean Camp" or "Death Valley"?
- g. Describe conditions in these intermediate camps.
- h. What sort of and how much food were you fed during the march?
- i. What sort of clothing were you issued?
- j. What was the attitude of the Communist guards?

4. PRISON CAMP CONDITION AND TREATMENT

- a. In which Communist prison camp were you held?
- b. Where was this camp located?
- c. How long were you a prisoner in that camp?
- d. How many prisoners of war would you estimate were in your camp?
- e. To what types of brutality were you subjected?
- f. Describe your average daily diet.
- g. Did many of your camp comrades die? How many? From what cause?
- h. Did the camp authorities subject your group to any form of torture such as the water treatment? Describe.
- i. What type of medical attention was given the sick and wounded?

5. INTERROGATIONS AND INDOCTRINATION

- a. How long after you arrived in POW Camp _____ did the Communists begin their attempted indoctrination?
- b. What was the nature of the Communist indoctrination program?
- c. What types of coercion were used to attempt to force you to accept this indoctrination?

- d. Were you forced to subject yourself to the Communist gimmick of "self criticism"?
- e. What was the attitude of the majority of prisoners to the Communist attempted indoctrination?

6. OVERT SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE KOREAN WAR

- a. Did you see any Russians while you were in North Korea? Were they in uniform?
- b. What were these Russians doing in North Korea? Manning AA? Flying aircraft? Advising NKPA and CCF?

NOTES TO INSTRUCTORS -

The possible presentation of this material should be related as closely as possible with the current conditions and events in Korea.

