



# THE BLACK VAULT

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# Washed Brains of POW's: Can They Be Rewashed?

These Chinese characters stand for *hsi-nao*—pronounced something like “she now.” They mean “brainwash.” The Chinese coined the word to connote the forcible purging of “unclean” ideas from a man’s mind so that new ones may be forcibly substituted. But the technique of brainwashing was perfected in the Soviet Union, and has been used to control the thoughts of the people in every Iron Curtain country. The American and other United Nations prisoners who were exchanged at Panmunjom provided a new and first-hand insight into how the Reds wash brains.

the Western world. *hsi-nao* seems to be. But intelligence officers in Korea were stamping “No Interviews” on identification cards of some homecoming American POW’s. All GI ex-prisoners, even after being flown to the States, were kept under wraps in two hospitals. Visitors needed two different passes to enter their wards. The Korean Government planned to exchange ROK prisoners through months of re-education without seeing them to their families.

The reason: the minds of some of the POW’s, like the hapless citizens of the Communist-controlled countries, had been washed by Communist brainwashing. How the Red technique works:

**Confessions and Collapse:** Brainwashing starts with a group—the workers in a shop, a class of students, a single prisoner compound—which meets for several hours each day. Trained “thought leaders” compel each member to confess every past experience, every thought, which was not “democratic.” The group leader and the rest of the group discuss each political fault and criticize it. No detail is too minor: Does he get angry for his ruinously taxed farm-ers? The “People” are his true parents; their interests must come first. Did he once make an envious remark about Americans? The truth is, the exploited workers are ragged and hungry. After the initiate must confess all over again, stressing his sins and explaining proper attitudes himself. Again he is criticized. Again he repents and explains. So it goes, meeting after meeting. In the same way, group members must attend loaded lectures (“Why Did America Invade Korea?”) and then discuss them “correctly.” They must make oral “progress reports” on their friends’ thoughts, as well as their own.

Whenever someone slips off the party line, he is instantly corrected. He must repent and revise some more—until finally a question on the subject, almost mechanically, brings a faultlessly Communist answer to his mind.

His gradual brainwash continues for

long periods. But for those who resist, or for special cases who must be dealt with quickly, there is a more drastic technique. It involves straining the brain of the victim so cruelly that he literally retains no real thoughts of his own and willingly adopts the ideas of his captors.

Violent physical torture is not generally used. Instead, the subject is allowed little sleep and weakened by hunger, thirst, and despair. Night after night he is yanked from fitful rest to a dark room to stand motionless in a painful position. A brilliant light beats at his eyes. Hour after hour, teams of specialists interrogate him, deny his every answer, produce “proof” of every “lie,” din their own story into his ears. The Central Intelligence Agency thinks some drug or “be serum” may possibly be used to speed up his collapse.

After one week of this routine in Red China, for instance, a devoted Catholic missionary, the Rev. Robert W. Greene (NEWSWEEK, April 13), found that “my mind was incapable of reflection.” He even doubted that he was really a priest, and dreamily wondered if the incredible charges against him were true. The complete process takes about three months. By then the prisoner is ready to stand in



Bley broadcasts a “confession”

open court, as Cardinal Mindszenty did in Hungary, and confess to crimes that could not have happened. And he will believe that he is telling the truth.

**“Number One Boys”:** All of these methods, returned American prisoners testified last week, were used in the POW camps in North Korea. Prisoners had up to ten hours of classes a day. They had to make “progress reports.” They were told: “You will be punished if you do not learn your lessons.” The main lesson, according to Sgt. Odie Lawley, was: “The United States started the whole war. All they could talk about was General MacArthur and President Truman. They called them warmongers.”

For willing pupils, called “number one boys” by the rest, there were rewards—cigarettes, better food, and even unguarded billets outside the stockade, and girls. For “inautonomous elements,” there were hard-labor “reactionary camps” and threats of uncomfortable cages as punishment for active resistance. Possibly for these reasons, rather than out of conviction, a few prisoners “wrote some pretty bad stuff” for Communist magazines. Others “preached just like the Chinese.”

A small number evidently underwent concentrated brainwashing. Some went on propaganda tours of the Soviet satellites, giving party-line “interviews” to the Red press. Others, like Col. Frank H. Schwabie and Maj. Roy H. Bley, American Marine airmen, made public “confessions” of having waged bacteriological warfare. Major Bley was quoted by the Reds as admitting that his unit “dropped germ bombs” and that he personally handled “germ-bomb supply.”

**“I Laughed”:** South Korean authorities believe many freed ROK soldiers have been deeply influenced. But for the majority of Western prisoners, at least, the indoctrination program was apparently crude and ineffective, and it was speedily dropped in several camps. Most reacted like Navy Hospital Corpsman Thomas H. Waddill of Fort Worth, Texas: “I just laughed at them.”

How seriously the few who did not laugh were affected is not yet clear. One official in the Far East confidently asserts: “There’s nothing to this brainwashing that a good steak and an ice-cream cone won’t cure.” The Pentagon, which hopes so, decided last week to lift the security cover from all ex-prisoners when they reach the United States. By then, it felt, any “confusion” in their minds should have been dispelled.

But if the free environment does not clear up the symptoms of *hsi-nao*, corrective treatment—rewashing the brains—may take a long time. The Army has never had to face the problem before.

VICE ADMIRAL C. TURNER JOY:

# It's More Than Korea

Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, now Superintendent of the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, watched every twist of Communist maneuvering as senior U.N. delegate to the truce talks from July 1951 until May 1952. As the Panmunjom talks resumed, A. T. Hadley of Newsweek's Washington bureau interviewed Admiral Joy for his expert slant on the Reds' motives and the prospects for peace.



afterthought to their decision to request a resumption of the talks.

The exchange did not cost them anything and served the useful purpose of creating a favorable atmosphere for the resumption of the talks.

As for brainwashing, if there has been any, the most effective antidote will be a breath of free air and the sight of home.

How can we best conduct further negotiations with the Communists in Korea? Are there any particular pitfalls the U.S. should be wary of in the negotiations?

I have not been involved with the negotiations for nearly a year now and am not conversant with current detailed exchanges. Hence, I am not in a position to point out specific pitfalls—the Communists are always devising new ones. The important thing in negotiating with the Communists is to know what you want and why, and then go after it with patience and unmistakable firmness. It isn't complicated; it's just difficult.

Of course, by far the best way to negotiate with the Communists in a military situation is to apply sufficient military power to give emphasis and meaning to your arguments.

What do you think of the chances for a truce settlement now? Do you think that the Communists are ready to compromise on forcible repatriation?

There is good reason to believe the Communists may want an armistice. Basically, they want to get us off the Korean peninsula. They haven't been able to drive us off the peninsula, and I believe they see their best hope of doing so through an armistice and the political conference to follow it. You will remember that one topic they insist be taken up at that political conference is the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea.

If the Communists find a way to save face on the prisoner-repatriation issue, I believe we may see an end to the fighting. However, I hope no one is so naïve as to believe that an armistice will be the magic solution and the end to our problems in Korea, let alone the Far East or the world.

on many fronts in many ways, we are not likely to regard an event like the invasion of Laos as being unrelated to the over-all pattern. On the contrary, we will see it as a confirmation of what we know the pattern to be.

It is a mistake to consider the invasion of Laos and the resumption of the truce talks as isolated from each other. In the same breath, I would say that a great many thinking people must be genuinely concerned that the net effect of an eventual truce in Korea would be to create an illusion that the global war is over.

It should be remembered that Ko-

Why do you believe the Chinese and North Korean Communists decided to reopen the stalled Korean truce talks at this time? Do you think they did this of their own volition or as part of an over-all plan laid down by the Kremlin?

In dealing with the Communists it is idle, not to say foolish, even for a Communist, to pretend omniscience. If I were to guess, I would say that the Communists no longer see any advantage to themselves in playing a waiting game. I think it must be clear to them by now that we are not going to be victims of our own impatience.

Also, I think it may be a matter of disappointment to them that the change in our national administration has not resulted in any change in our national attitude toward Korea and, in fact, has resulted only in a reaffirmation of the validity of our purpose.

In short, they have failed to uncover any advantage in stalling and are now ready to take their chances on a more dynamic approach, hoping to engineer us into awkward situations and to exploit any mistakes we might make. As for where the idea of resuming the talks originated, I do not know, but I do not believe it would ever have been acted on without the approval of the Kremlin.

Do you think that the Communist invasion of the Kingdom of Laos in Indo-China has any connection with the truce talks? Is it probable that the Reds are using the talks as a shield for further aggression in Indo-China?

If we take the realistic view that we are confronted by an enemy whose announced objective is world domination and that we are in the middle of a war that is fought around the globe



International—U.S. Navy

Joy: No illusions, no surprises

rea is only a phase, though the "most painful phase," of a war that is fought around the globe.

Were you surprised at the stories of maltreatment told by some of the returning prisoners of war? What do you think the Reds hope to gain from the exchange of sick and wounded POW's? And do you anticipate that many of our soldiers will have been brainwashed?

I would have been a lot more surprised if our returning prisoners had not brought back stories of maltreatment. Of course, the Communists are not above treating small numbers of our prisoners well for propaganda purposes. I think the Communist decision to accept our proposal on the exchange of sick and wounded was an