



The Ride to Nowhere: No One Expects Prisoners to be Pitted, but Humanity Asks Something Better Than This
 Unlike cattle, they are roped together. They do not know where they are going. They do not know if they will ever see Kook. Marked on the track was the 30th Star, which should have been a guarantee of fair treatment.

"We wish you would try to do something about it; we can't—on animals that was not hostile, even if it was stupid and futile. The International Red Cross said: 'It's shameful, but there you are; everyone knows that the United Nations here means the Supreme Command For East, and that means the U.S. Army, and that means General MacArthur, and he's in Tokyo.'"
 On all the melancholy considerations brought about by this war-that-isn't-a-war, this most surely be the most dehumanizing. In the practical sense of course, this campaign is a 100 per cent Mao-Artur show, militarily and politically. Not a threat in all the prison situations.

It is ridiculous and removal to shrug it off and say "You know what these people are," when firm action from the military commanders could stop it. They know, because they have told me, that they are perfectly aware of what goes on, the impurities, the bearing-up, the tappings of drums to the terminals of hold-telephone, and they say: "We are pretty busy with other things."
 I would like to know what other things are important to the objective of the military command.



LEAVE ME
 The prisoners are crowded together in the camp.



The western column from Pyongyang, here, in North Korea, heads by way of Pusan. He is an American soldier captured by the North Koreans. He is bound through the streets, on his face a false nose, and his arms a false number, trailing in the dust a Sui and Street. This is how the Korean Communists have treated prisoners of war.



James C. his Real we feel of the ing, a show the time re of

IN THE SOUTH: THE COED

The prison comes from Pusan. They are once more being led to the camp, in the Korean Communist front.

TERROR IN KOREA: we

appeal to

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Under Tom Hopkinson's editorship, **Picture Post** was Britain's favourite news magazine and was respected worldwide. However, his sacking in 1950 put the Post on a downward spiral. Former staff photographer **John Chillingworth** describes the red-hot story that ultimately led to the Post's demise



ABOVE Bert Hardy's unpublished spread from the Korean war
ABOVE RIGHT The cover of the first *Picture Post* magazine

PICTURE POST EDITOR Tom Hopkinson's brief to aspiring journalists was: 'Your job is primarily to ensure that the photographer gets the pictures. Next, I want captions that complement his picture story. Then you can write your copy to the length specified by the art editor when he has completed the layout.'

The reporter, one might gather, was decidedly the junior partner, but the interdependence of skills was absolute and the title had a brilliant crop of seasoned writers who worked as a team with any one of eight staff

photographers. A distinctive *Picture Post* family ethos bound these teams and yielded excellent results.

When journalist James Cameron and *Picture Post*'s highly regarded staff photographer Bert Hardy returned in 1950 with the final stories from their assignments in the Far East and India, one story from the war in Korea was foremost in their thoughts. Among Hardy's most telling images were shots showing South Korean forces treating South Korean political prisoners more harshly than they treated prisoners of war. Cameron's graphic description of the incident and Hardy's pictures formed an article headlined 'Terror in Korea - We Appeal to the UN.' It was an outstanding piece of reporting with nearly political resonance.

Ready for publication, its layout, Hopkinson reworked, was the best the magazine had produced in 12 sensational years. Yet the piece never appeared, though it triggered a chain of events no one could have foreseen.

By 1950, when Hardy and Cameron left for the Far East, the United Nations had stopped the North Korean advance. Yet when the war had started a few months earlier, a *Picture Post* team was already nearby. Staff photographer Haywood Magee and journalist Stephen Szimanski were sent from Japan and reported on the chaos, suffering and bravery of the South Koreans as the invading forces swept down from the 38th parallel, which formed the border between Communist North Korea and the more or less democratic South.

Lacking direct communications with London, Magee and Szimanski returned to Japan to file their story and airfreight the films home. On the way back to Seoul, Szimanski was killed when his plane crashed. Magee, a First World War veteran with too many wars behind him, had remained in Japan, refusing to return to Korea.

Hardy and Cameron arrived in Japan and found that Magee had 'gone native'. Hardy managed to persuade him to return home, then he and Cameron went to Korea. They were at the port of Pusan on the south coast of the Korean Peninsula, preparing a story on the treatment of the war-wounded, when they witnessed an incident that was to have unexpected repercussions. ▶



ABOVE *Picture Post* editor Tom Hopkinson – the man at the centre of the Korean War story storm

◀ Bert Hardy described it in his autobiography, *My Life*, '...as we were leaving the [railway] station, we were stopped in our tracks by the sight of another type of human cargo. It had come down from the North... About sixty of them – from boys of no more than fourteen to old men – were squatting miserably, dressed in rags and manacled and tied together with ropes... The human degradation reminded me of the scenes I had witnessed at Belsen... We were told that they were political prisoners – not North Koreans, but their own people suspected of having Wrong Views.'

Fearing that the group was being transported for



'Boys of no more than 14 to old men were squatting miserably, dressed in rags, manacled and tied together'

execution, Cameron and Hardy approached the International Red Cross, which agreed that the situation was deplorable but said there was nothing that could be done. The two men then turned to United Nations officials in Korea, who showed no interest in the matter.

At this point, as often happens in news work, another story moved into the frame. General Douglas MacArthur landed a major force behind the North Korean lines at Inchon. Given the secrecy of the operation, it is surprising that the press boat got there ahead of most of the US Marine Corps. Hardy was one of the first ashore and, to the embarrassment of the US administration, photographed the incoming invasion force from the beach.

After Inchon, Hardy and Cameron headed home. In London, they found that Tom Hopkinson had held over the political prisoners' article until they returned. The implications of the piece were so serious that the editor wanted to be sure he was on firm ground. Cameron assured him that he had reported the facts unvarnished, while Hardy's images spoke for themselves.

In fact, none of them should have been surprised by the story, for Magee and Szimanski had encountered the same situation and their report would have been in London before Hardy and Cameron had left. Magee photographed a lorry-load of cowering prisoners described as: 'Southerners who are suspected of being Communist sympathisers... From the lorries, they were taken to the hills, made to dig their own graves and then shot.' Another of Magee's captions speaks of: 'South Korean suspected traitors from front line areas... herded into lorries on their way to execution.' Thus, when Hardy and Cameron came across a similar group at Pusan, Cameron was able to write, 'A month before, we would have been aghast; it was shocking then only to feel it commonplace.' Magee reported that the incident he photographed had been 'investigated by a United Nations observer'. Cameron went back to the UN, who were perfectly aware of what was going on, but claimed to be 'pretty busy with other things'.

Hopkinson instructed Cameron to go through the copy and eliminate anything that might leave the magazine open to charges of political bias. He prefaced the piece with a paragraph saying that the article had been sent to the UN Secretary General and the British delegation. 'We believe,' he wrote, 'that the cause of the United Nations is best served by recognising some of the ugly things which have been happening under its flag. We believe that once these things are known, the UN will certainly take vigorous action to see that they are not repeated.' The story was planned into the next weekly issue and was approved for print and publication by the proprietor, Edward Hulton.

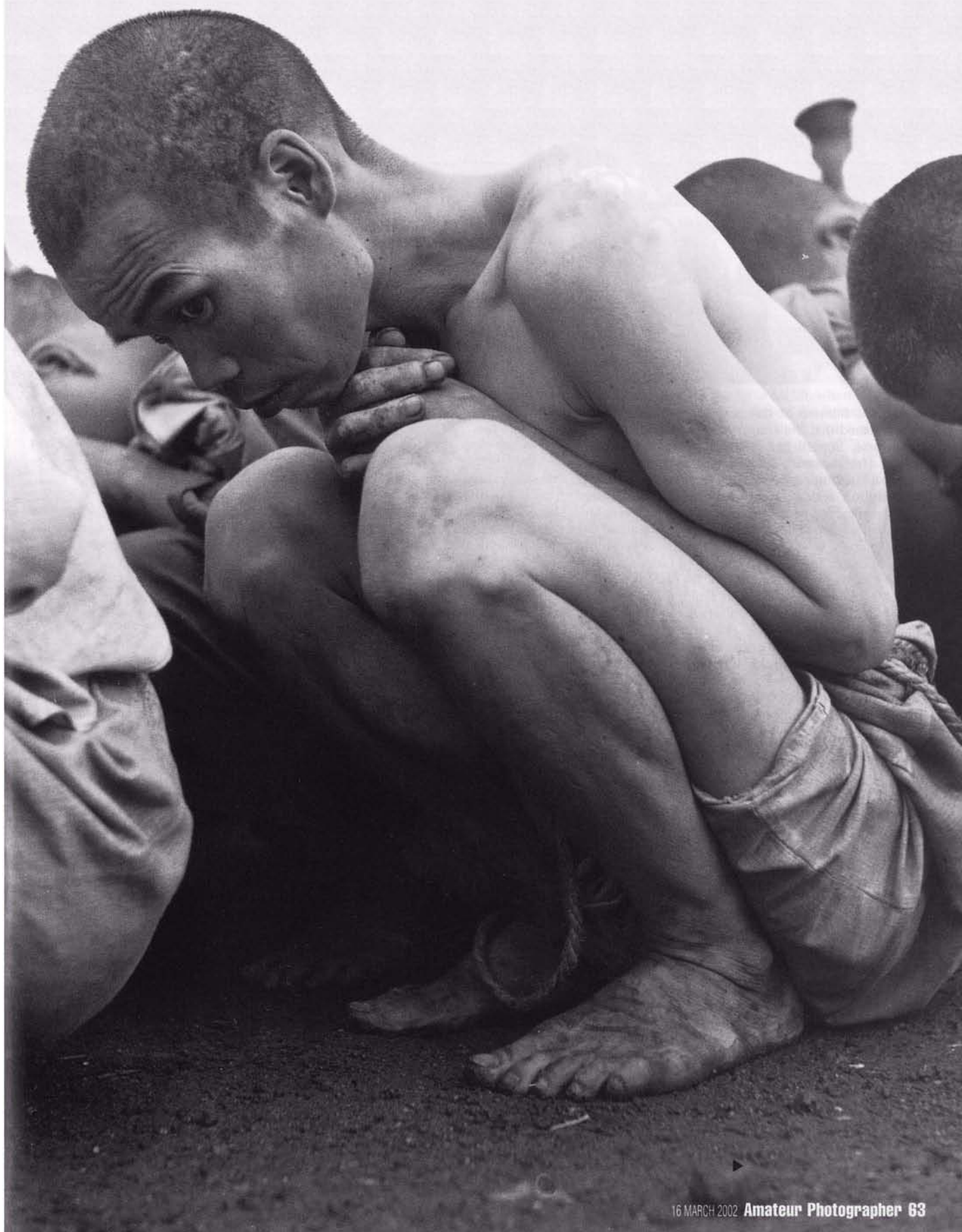
A man of considerable indecision, Hulton was particularly influenced by his wife Nika, a White Russian ▶

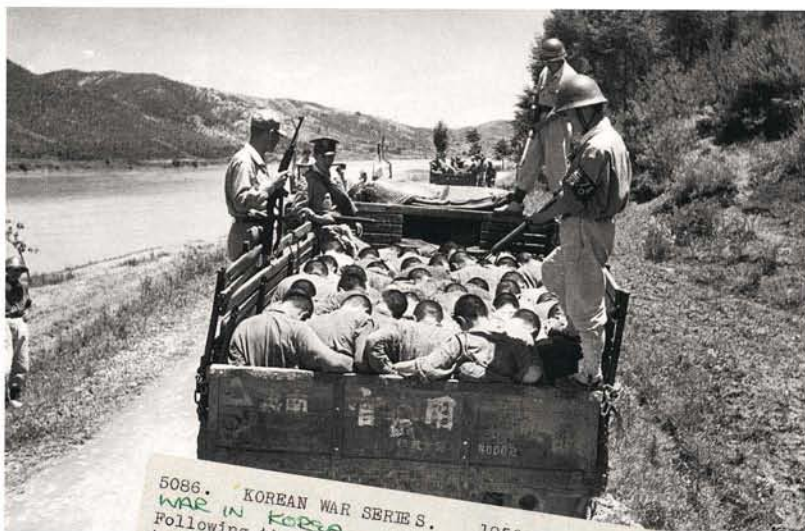
ABOVE A 12-year-old boy waiting for possible execution. One of Bert Hardy's pictures that never appeared in the pages of *Picture Post*



ABOVE *Picture Post*'s top team of photographer Bert Hardy (left) and reporter James Cameron share the dangers of war in Korea

Rows of people waiting to be shot. One of Hardy's moving Korean War images that was never published





5086. KOREAN WAR SERIES. 1950. PHOTOGRAPH UNUSED.
WAR IN KOREA.
 Following the crossing of the 38th Parallel by North Korean troops and the United Nations intervention, 'Picture Post' sends cameraman Haywood Magee to the scene of the fighting to record the story of the retreat South, the stop-gap efforts that are being made to reform and the tangle of refugees, reinforcements and wounded. He arrived at a time when U.S. and Korean troops were being driven back to the sea, prior to the arrival of substantial United Nations aid in the form of men and materials.

Photograph showing one of the incidents that has been investigated by a United Nations observer. South Korean troops stand guard over prisoners who are suspected of being Communist sympathisers. They are packed in lorries, they are struck with a rifle butt and forced to attempt to move. From the lorries, they were taken to the hills, made to dig their own graves, and then shot.

Photograph showing an incident which has been investigated by a United Nations observer. South Korean suspected traitors from front line areas, are herded into lorries on their way to execution. They are made to sit with their heads between their knees. When they move, they are struck with a rifle butt by the South Korean police who stand over them. It is the kind of brutality which was common on both sides in the early days of the war. Few prisoners were taken by either side!

TAEJON AREA

ABOVE *Picture Post* photographer Haywood Magee's dramatic pictures of political prisoners being carted away for execution. The original caption read: 'They were taken to the hills, made to dig their own graves, then shot.' The pictures never appeared and the caption was later changed

princess. Rumour at the time suggested that Nika Hulton feared that the story would embarrass the UN and, worse, imperil her chances of becoming Lady Hulton. Her husband, apparently, had recently been offered a knighthood for services to publishing. In any case, Hulton suddenly decided to spike the story. Hopkinson agreed to hold it over for a week, to enable them to discuss the matter, whereupon he was asked for his resignation. When he refused, Hulton sacked him. Assistant editor Ted Castle, husband of former Labour minister Barbara Castle, briefly took his place.

Hopkinson's daughter Amanda, senior research fellow at the School of Journalism, University of Cardiff, is the keeper of many of his papers. She recalls, from conversations with her father, that his refusal to resign was a refusal to accept proprietorial interference with editorial independence. There was a boundary of propriety that Hulton had overstepped. At an emotionally charged meeting of the editorial staff, Hopkinson pleaded with

'Without Tom Hopkinson's social conscience, the magazine was losing its edge'

the others not to resign in protest. As always, he had the interests of the magazine at heart.

Hardy, on assignment in Birmingham with staff writer Bert Lloyd, learnt about the drama by telephone. On their return to London, Lloyd, a brilliant journalist with extreme left-wing views, along with writer Lionel Birch and fashion editor Marjorie Beckett, resigned in protest at Hopkinson's sacking. The rest, including Hardy and Cameron, got on with their jobs. January 1951 saw Hardy and Cameron on their way to Tibet, where the Dalai Lama was fleeing from the invading Chinese.

Back in London, it was becoming clear that without Hopkinson's social conscience, the magazine was losing its edge, as a succession of editors came and went. However, the star of Hardy, the ebullient golden boy of the photographic team, continued to ride high, while new writers of real talent continued to vie for a place on the title. Later in 1951, Hardy was confident enough of his position to forgo the chance to accompany the then Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh on a tour of Canada, nominating me in his place.

By the time Bert Hardy died in 1995, Sheila, his widow,

had known him for 54 years, though they had not married until 1957. At the time of the 1950 Korean drama, she was a picture researcher with the magazine and recalls the emotional turmoil of Hopkinson's departure. She also recalls the aftermath, with a dreary procession of editors over the following seven years. In the post-Hopkinson era, the quality and content of many stories improved, but the soul of the magazine was adrift.

When, in 1955, Trevor Philpott and I were sent to Korea to look at the post-war chaos, there was still foreboding among management that we might create another crisis. But when we were ushered into the proprietor's elegant office for a briefing, Hulton chose to talk about his pre-war memories of Japan in orange-blossom time. We left confused, but relieved. Some of our stories were given space, but others were hidden at the back of the book.

In January 1956, I was given an airline ticket to Switzerland with instructions to meet the proprietor's wife in St Moritz. She had apparently overspent and needed more cash. I found her with a management lackey whose name I cannot recall. Much to his horror, Nika Hulton took me into her confidence concerning plans



FAIR RIGHT An American soldier paraded through the streets by his North Korean captors. This was another Bert Hardy exclusive that was destined never to appear in *Picture Post*

RIGHT Facing the firing squad? A prisoner is led away to a fate unknown. From the famous Bert Hardy story



BELOW RIGHT Prisoners herded into trucks to be taken away for possible execution at Pusan, South Korea

BELOW South Korean political prisoners at Pusan wait for their future to be decided

for the magazine and my place of favour – if I toed her line. Filled with foreboding, I returned to London but said nothing. With a young family to feed and unwilling to put my head in Nika's noose, I prepared my plans. When the time seemed good, I resigned to freelance.

Nine months later, the last issue of *Picture Post* (see left) appeared on the bookstalls. A contradictory shambles of a once highly professional magazine, it carried some of Bert Hardy's earlier stories, as well as those by other staff photographers and even a couple of mine. Somewhere in the disorganised layout appeared Edward Hulton's thoughts on 'The Last *Picture Post*'. His rambling valedictory revealed something of the confused thinking of the man whose father had been one of the great press barons of the 1920s. He was seldom seen again. Regarding the closure of the magazine, Amanda

Hopkinson says, 'Much later in his life, when asked what caused the demise of *Picture Post*, my father observed, "Who really killed Cock Robin? I think it just lost its sense of direction and wandered off into the fog".'

It was a succinct analysis of a great loss to British journalism. I always regarded it as a domino effect from Bert Hardy's spiked story. **AP**

■ We are grateful to Mrs Sheila Hardy for permission to reproduce copies of the Hardy/Cameron story layout. Mrs Hardy holds the personal Bert Hardy Archive. Together with Charles Keeble, a photo-printer who had joined *Picture Post* as a trainee, she provides a black & white processing and printing service through her company, The Bert Hardy Darkroom Ltd, 2 Burrows Mews, off Ufford Street, Blackfriars, London SE1 8LD. Tel: 020-7928 1603.

■ All the *Picture Post* images used in this article have been supplied courtesy of Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images. For more information, contact Hulton Archive on 020-7266 2660. Other images from the Korea story and the collection in general can be viewed on the Hulton Archive website at www.hultonarchive.com

