

Project Paperclip and the Nuremberg Trials Whitewash

From: Whiteout

In the wake of Gary Webb's articles, nothing more enraged the CIA's defenders than the charges that in its dealings with crack entrepreneurs the Agency might have deliberately targeted poor black and Latino communities in the inner cities as a covert attempt at social control. As we have seen, CIA director John Deutch traveled to South Central Los Angeles to face a furious black audience and deny in the strongest terms any such suggestion. Some of the most effective attacks on Webb were couched not in substantive challenges to his account, but in imputations that he was cynically fanning "black paranoia" and engaging in irresponsible conspiracy-mongering.

The bleak truth is that a careful review of the activities of the CIA and the organizations from which it sprang reveals an intense preoccupation with the development of techniques of behavior control, brainwashing, and covert medical and psychic experimentation on unwitting subjects including religious sects, ethnic minorities, prisoners, mental patients, soldiers and the terminally ill. The rationale for such activities, the techniques and indeed the human subjects chosen show an extraordinary and chilling similarity to Nazi experiments. This similarity becomes less surprising when we trace the determined and often successful efforts of US intelligence officers to acquire the records of Nazi experiments, and in many cases to recruit the Nazi researchers themselves and put them to work, transferring the laboratories from Dachau, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, Auschwitz and Buchenwald to Edgewood Arsenal, Fort Detrick, Huntsville Air Force Base, Ohio State, and the University of Washington.

As Allied forces crossed the English Channel during the D-Day invasion of June 1944, some 10,000 intelligence officers known as T-Forces were right behind the advance battalions. Their mission: seize munitions experts, technicians, German scientists and their research materials, along with French scientists who had collaborated with the Nazis. Soon a substantial number of such scientists had been picked up and placed in an internment camp known as the Dustbin. In the original planning for the mission a prime factor was the view that German military equipment - tanks, jets, rocketry and so forth - was technically superior and that

captured scientists, technicians and engineers could be swiftly debriefed in an effort by the Allies to catch up.

Then, in December 1944, Bill Donovan, head of the OSS, and Allen Dulles, OSS head of intelligence operations in Europe operating out of Switzerland, strongly urged FDR to approve a plan allowing Nazi intelligence officers, scientists and industrialists to be "given permission for entry into the United States after the war and the placing of their earnings on deposit in an American bank and the like." FDR swiftly turned the proposal down, saying, "We expect that the number of Germans who are anxious to save their skins and property will rapidly increase. Among them may be some who should properly be tried for war crimes, or at least arrested for active participation in Nazi activities. Even with the necessary controls you mention, I am not prepared to authorize the giving of guarantees."

But this presidential veto was a dead letter even as it was being formulated. Operation Overcast was certainly under way by July 1945, approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to bring into the US 350 German scientists, including Werner Von Braun and his V2 rocket team, chemical weapons designers, and artillery and submarine engineers. There had been some theoretical ban on Nazis being imported, but this was as empty as FDR's edict. The Overcast shipment included such notorious Nazis and SS officers as Von Braun, Dr. Herbert Axster, Dr. Arthur Rudolph and Georg Richkey.

Von Braun's team had used slave labor from the Dora concentration camp and had worked prisoners to death in the Mittelwerk complex: more than 20,000 had died from exhaustion and starvation. The supervising slavemaster was Richkey. In retaliation against sabotage in the missile plant - prisoners would urinate on electrical equipment, causing spectacular malfunctions - Richkey would hang them twelve at a time from factory cranes, with wooden sticks shoved into their mouths to muffle their cries. In the Dora camp itself he regarded children as useless mouths and instructed the SS guards to club them to death, which they did.

This record did not inhibit Richkey's speedy transfer to the United States, where he was deployed at Wright Field, an Army Air Corps base near Dayton, Ohio. Richkey went to work overseeing security for dozens of other Nazis now pursuing their researches for the United States. He was also assigned the task of translating all of the records from the Mittelwerk factory. He thus had the opportunity, which he used to the utmost, to destroy any material compromising to his colleagues and himself. By 1947 there was enough public disquiet, stimulated by the columnist Drew Pearson, to require a pro forma war crimes trial for Richkey and a few others. Richkey was sent back to West Germany and put through a secret

trial supervised by the US Army, which had every reason to clear Richkey since conviction would disclose that the entire Mittelwerk team now in the US had been accomplices in the use of slavery and the torture and killing of prisoners of war, and thus were also guilty of war crimes. The army therefore sabotaged Richkey's trial by withholding records now in the US and also by preventing any interrogation of Von Braun and others from Dayton: Richkey was acquitted. Because some of the trial materials implicated Rudolph, Von Braun and Walter Domberger, however, the entire record was classified and held secret for forty years, thus burying evidence that could have sent the entire rocket team to the gallows.

Senior officers of the US Army knew the truth. Initially the recruitment of German war criminals was justified as necessary to the continuing war against Japan. Later, moral justification took the form of invoking "intellectual reparations" or as the Joint Chiefs of Staff put it, as "a form of exploitation of chosen rare minds whose continuing intellectual productivity we wish to use." Endorsement for this repellent posture came from a panel of the National Academy of Sciences, which adopted the collegial position that German scientists had somehow evaded the Nazi contagion by being "an island of nonconformity in the Nazified body politic," a statement that Von Braun, Richkey and the other slave drivers must have deeply appreciated.

By 1946 a rationale based on Cold War strategy was becoming more important. Nazis were needed in the struggle against Communism, and their capabilities certainly had to be withheld from the Soviets. In September 1946 President Harry Truman approved the Dulles-inspired Paperclip project, whose mission was to bring no less than 1,000 Nazi scientists to the United States. Among them were many of the vilest criminals of the war: there were doctors from Dachau concentration camp who had killed prisoners by putting them through high altitude tests, who had frozen their victims and given them massive doses of salt water to research the process of drowning. There were the chemical weapons engineers such as Kurt Blome, who had tested Sarin nerve gas on prisoners at Auschwitz. There were doctors who instigated battlefield traumas by taking women prisoners at Ravensbruck and filling their wounds with gangrene cultures, sawdust, mustard gas, and glass, then sewing them up and treating some with doses of sulfa drugs while timing others to see how long it took for them to develop lethal cases of gangrene.

Among the targets of the Paperclip recruitment program were HerMann Becker-Freyseng and Konrad Schaeffer, authors of the study "Thirst and Thirst Quenching in Emergency Situations at Sea." The study was designed to devise ways to prolong the survival of pilots downed over water. To this end the two scientists asked Heinrich Himmler for "forty

healthy test subjects" from the SS chief's network of concentration camps, the only debate among the scientists being whether the research victims should be Jews, gypsies or Communists. The experiments took place at Dachau. These prisoners, most of them Jews, had salt water forced down their throats through tubes. Others had salt water injected directly into their veins. Half of the subjects were given a drug called berkatit, which was supposed to make salt water more palatable, though both scientists suspected that the berkatit itself would prove fatally toxic within two weeks. They were correct. During the tests the doctors used long needles to extract liver tissue. No anesthetic was given. All the research subjects died. Both Becker-Freyseng and Schaeffer received long-term contracts under Paperclip; Schaeffer ended up in Texas, where he continued his research into "thirst and desalinization of salt water."

Becker-Freyseng was given the responsibility of editing for the US Air Force the massive store of aviation research conducted by his fellow Nazis. By this time he had been tracked down and brought to trial at Nuremberg. The multivolume work, entitled German Aviation Medicine: World War II, was eventually published by the US Air Force, complete with an introduction written by Becker-Freyseng from his Nuremberg jail cell. The work neglected to mention the human victims of the research, and praised the Nazi scientists as sincere and honorable men "with a free and academic character" laboring under the constraints of the Third Reich.

One of their prominent colleagues was Dr. Sigmund Rascher, also assigned to Dachau. In 1941 Rascher informed Himmler of the vital need to conduct high-altitude experiments on human subjects. Rascher, who had developed a special low-pressure chamber during his tenure at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, asked Dimmer for permission to have delivered into his custody "two or three professional criminals," a Nazi euphemism for Jews, Russian prisoners of war and members of the Polish underground resistance. Himmler quickly assented and Rascher's experiments were under way within a month.

Rascher's victims were locked inside his low-pressure chamber, which simulated altitudes of up to 68,000 feet. Eighty of the human guinea pigs died after being kept inside for half an hour without oxygen. Dozens of others were dragged semi-conscious from the chamber and immediately drowned in vats of ice water. Rascher quickly sliced open their heads to examine how many blood vessels in the brain had burst due to air embolisms. Rascher filmed these experiments and the autopsies, sending the footage along with his meticulous notes back to Himmler "Some experiments gave men such pressure in their heads that they would go mad and pull out their hair in an effort to relieve such pressure," Rascher wrote. "They would tear at their heads and faces with their hands and scream in

an effort to relieve pressure on their eardrums." Rascher's records were scooped up by US intelligence agents and delivered to the Air Force.

The US intelligence officials viewed the criticism of people like Drew Pearson with disdain. Bosquet Wev, head of JOIA, dismissed the scientists' Nazi past as "a picayune detail"; continuing to condemn them for their work for Hitler and Himmler was simply "beating a dead horse." Playing on American fears about Stalin's intentions in Europe, Wev argued that leaving the Nazi scientists in Germany "presents a far greater security threat to this country than any former Nazi affiliation they may have had or even any Nazi sympathies which they may still have."

A similar pragmatism was expressed by one of Wev's colleagues, Colonel Montie Cone, head of G-2's exploitation division. "From a military point of view, we knew that these people were invaluable to us," Cone said. "Just think what we have from their research all of our satellites, jet aircraft, rockets, almost everything else."

The US intelligence agents were so entranced with their mission that they went to extraordinary lengths to protect their recruits from criminal investigators at the US Department of Justice. One of the more despicable cases was that of Nazi aviation researcher Emil Salmon, who during the war had helped set fire to a synagogue filled with Jewish women and children. Salmon was sheltered by US officials at Wright Air Force Base in Ohio after being convicted of crimes by a denazification court in Germany.

Nazis were not the only scientists sought out by US intelligence agents after the end of World War II. In Japan the US Army put on its payroll Dr. Shiro Ishii, the head of the Japanese Imperial Army's bio warfare unit. Dr. Ishii had deployed a wide range of biological and chemical agents against Chinese and Allied troops, and had also operated a large research center in Manchuria, where he conducted bio weapons experiments on Chinese, Russian and American prisoners of war. Ishii infected prisoners with tetanus; gave them typhoid-laced tomatoes; developed plague-infected fleas; infected women with syphilis; and exploded germ bombs over dozens of POWs tied to stakes. Among other atrocities, Ishii's records show that he often performed "autopsies" on live victims. In a deal hatched by General Douglas MacArthur, Ishii turned over more than 10,000 pages of his "research findings" to the US Army, avoided prosecution for war crimes and was invited to lecture at Ft. Detrick, the US Army bio-weapons research center near Frederick, Maryland.

Under the terms of Paperclip there was fierce competition not only between the wartime allies but also between the various US services - always the most savage form of combat. Curtis LeMay saw his new-

minted US Air Force as certain to prompt the navy's virtual extinction and thought this process would be speeded if he were able to acquire as many German scientists and engineers as possible. For its part, the US Navy was equally eager to snare its measure of war criminals. One of the first men picked up by the navy was a Nazi scientist named Theordore Benzinger. Benzinger was an expert on battlefield wounds, expertise he gained through explosive experiments conducted on human subjects during the waning stages of World War II. Benzinger ended up with a lucrative government contract working as a researcher at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

Through its Technical Mission in Europe, the navy was also hot on the trail of state-of-the-art Nazi research into interrogation techniques. The Navy's intelligence officers soon came across Nazi research papers on truth serums, this research having been conducted at Dachau concentration camp by Dr. Kurt Plotner. Plotner had given Jewish and Russian prisoners high doses of mescaline and had watched them display schizophrenic behavior. The prisoners began to talk openly of their hatred of their German captors, and to make confessional statements about their psychological makeup.

American intelligence officers took a professional interest in Dr. Plotner's reports. OSS, Naval Intelligence and security personnel on the Manhattan Project had long been conducting their own investigations into what was known as TD, or "truth drug." As will be recalled from the description in Chapter 5 of OSS officer George Hunter White's use of THC on the Mafioso Augusto Del Gracio, they had been experimenting with TDs beginning in 1942. Some of the first subjects were people working on the Manhattan Project. The THC doses were administered to targets within the Manhattan Project in varied ways, with a liquid THC solution being injected into food and drinks, or saturated on a paper tissue. "TD appears to relax all inhibitions and to deaden the areas of the brain which govern the individual's discretion and caution" the Manhattan security team excitedly reported in an internal memo. "It accentuates the senses and makes manifest any strong characteristic of the individual."

But there was a problem. The doses of THC made the subjects throw up and the interrogators could never get the scientists to divulge any information, even with extra concentrations of the drug.

Reading Dr. Plotner's reports the US Naval Intelligence officers discovered he had experimented with some success with mescaline as a speech- and even truth-inducing drug, enabling interrogators to extract "even the most intimate secrets from the subject when questions were cleverly put." Plotner also reported researches into mescaline's potential as an agent of behavioral modification or mind control.

This information was of particular interest to Boris Pash, one of the more sinister figures in the CIA cast of characters in this early phase. Pash was a Russian émigré to the United States who had gone through the revolutionary years at the birth of the Soviet Union. In World War II he ended up working for OSS overseeing security for the Manhattan Project, where, among other activities, he supervised the investigation into Robert Oppenheimer and was the prime interrogator of the famous atomic scientist when the latter was under suspicion of helping leak secrets to the Soviet Union.

In his capacity as head of security Pash had supervised OSS officer George Hunter White's use of THC on Manhattan Project scientists. In 1944 Pash was picked by Donovan to head up what was called the Alsos Mission, designed to scoop up German scientists who had been involved in atomic, chemical and biological weapons research. Pash set up shop at the house of an old prewar friend, Dr. Eugene von Haagen, a professor at the University of Strasburg, where many Nazi scientists had been faculty members. Pash had met von Haagen when the doctor was on sabbatical at Rockefeller University in New York, researching tropical viruses. When von Haagen returned to Germany in the late 1930s he and Kurt Blome became joint heads of the Nazis' biological weapons unit.

Von Haagen spent much of the war infecting Jewish inmates at the Natzweiler concentration camp with diseases including spotted fever. Undeterred by the wartime activities of his old friend, Pash immediately put von Haagen into the Paperclip program, where he worked for the US government for five years providing expertise in germ weapons research. Von Haagen put Pash in touch with his former colleague Blome, who was also speedily enlisted in the Paperclip program. There was an inconvenient hiatus when Blome was arrested and tried at Nuremberg for medical war crimes, including the deliberate infecting of hundreds of prisoners from the Polish underground with TB and bubonic plague. But fortunately for the Nazi man of science, US Army Intelligence and the OSS withheld incriminating documents they had acquired through their interrogation. The evidence would not only have demonstrated Blome's guilt but also his supervising role in constructing a German CBW lab to test chemical and biological weapons for use on Allied troops. Blome got off.

In 1954, two months after Blome's acquittal, US intelligence officers journeyed to Germany to interview him. In a memo to his superiors, H. W. Batchelor described the purpose of this pilgrimage: "We have friends in Germany, scientific friends, and this is an opportunity to enjoy meeting them to discuss our various problems." At the session Blome gave Batchelor a list of the biological weapons researchers who had worked for him during the war and discussed promising new avenues of research into weapons of mass destruction. Blome was soon signed to a new Paperclip

contract for \$6,000 a year and flew to the United States, where he took up his duties at Camp King, an army base outside Washington, D.C. In 1951 von Haagen was picked up by the French authorities. Despite the tireless efforts of his protectors in US intelligence, the doctor was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to twenty years in prison.

From the Paperclip assignment, Pash, now in the new-born CIA, went on to become head of Program Branch/7, where his ongoing interest in techniques of interrogation was given ample employment. The mission of Program Branch/7, which came to light only in Senator Frank Church's 1976 hearings, was responsibility for CIA kidnappings, interrogations and killings of suspected CIA double agents. Pash pored over the work of the Nazi doctors at Dachau for useful leads in the most efficient methods of extracting information, including speech-inducing drugs, electro-shock, hypnosis and psycho-surgery. During the time Pash headed up PB/7 the CIA began pouring money into Project Bluebird, an effort to duplicate and extend the Dachau research. But instead of mescaline the CIA turned to LSD, which had been developed by the Swiss chemist Albert Hoffman.

The first CIA Bluebird test of LSD was administered to twelve subjects, the majority of whom were black, and, as the CIA psychiatrist-emulators of the Nazis doctors at Dachau noted, "of not too high mentality." The subjects were told they were being given a new drug. In the words of a CIA Bluebird memo, CIA doctors, well aware that LSD experiments had induced schizophrenia, assured them that "nothing serious or dangerous would happen to them." The CIA doctors gave the twelve 150 micrograms of LSD and then subjected them to hostile interrogation.

After these trial runs, the CIA and the US Army embarked on widespread testing at the Edgewood Chemical Arsenal in Maryland starting in 1949 and extending over the next decade. More than 7,000 US soldiers were the unwitting objects of this medical experimentation. The men would be ordered to ride exercise cycles with oxygen masks on their faces, into which a variety of hallucinogenic drugs had been sprayed, including LSD, mescaline, BZ (a hallucinogen) and SNA (sernyl, a relative of PCP, otherwise known on the Street as angel dust). One of the aims of this research was to induce a state of total amnesia. This objective was attained in the case of several subjects. More than one thousand of the soldiers who enlisted in the experiments emerged with serious psychological afflictions and epilepsy: dozens attempted suicide.

One such was Lloyd Gamble, a black man who had enlisted in the air force. In 1957 Gamble was enticed to participate in a Department of Defense/CIA drug-testing program. Gamble was led to believe that he was testing new military clothing. As an inducement to participate in the program he was offered extended leave, private living quarters and more

frequent conjugal visits. For three weeks Gamble put on and took off different types of uniform and each day in the midst of such exertions was given, on his recollection, two to three glasses of water-like liquid, which was in fact LSD. Gamble suffered terrible hallucinations and tried to kill himself. He learned the truth some nineteen years later when the Church hearings disclosed the existence of the program. Even then the Department of Defense denied that Gamble had been involved, and the coverup collapsed only when an old Department of Defense public relations photograph surfaced, proudly featuring Gamble and a dozen others as "volunteering for a program that was in the highest national security interest."

Few examples of the readiness of US intelligence agencies to experiment on unknowing subjects are more vivid than the foray of the national security establishment into researches on the effects of radiation exposure. There were three different types of experiments. One involved thousands of American military personnel and civilians who were directly exposed to radioactive fallout from US nuclear testing in the American Southwest and South Pacific. Many have heard of the black men who were the victims of four decades' worth of federally funded studies of syphilis in which some victims were given placebos so that doctors could monitor the progress of the disease. In the case of the Marshall Islanders, US scientists first devised the H-test - a thousand times the strength of the Hiroshima bomb - then failed to warn the inhabitants of the nearby atoll of Rongelap of the dangers of the radiation and then, with precisely the equanimity of the Nazi scientists (not surprising, since Nazi veterans of the German radiation experiments rescued by CIA officer Boris Pash were now on the US team), observed how they fared.

Initially the Marshall Islanders were allowed to remain on their atoll for two days, exposed to radiation. Then they were evacuated. Two years later Dr. G. Faill, chair of the Atomic Energy Commission's committee on biology and medicine, requested that the Rongelap Islanders be returned to their atoll "for a useful genetic study of the effects on these people." His request was granted. In 1953 the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense signed a directive bringing the US government into compliance with the Nuremberg code on medical research. But that directive was classified as top secret, and its existence was kept secret from researchers, subjects and policy makers for twenty-two years. The policy was succinctly summed up by the Atomic Energy Commission's Colonel O. G. Haywood, who formalized his directive thus: "It is desired that no document be released which refers to experiments with humans. This might have adverse effects on the public or result in legal suits. Documents covering such fieldwork should be classified secret."

Among such fieldwork thus classified as secret were five different experiments overseen by the CIA, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense involving the injection of plutonium into at least eighteen people, mainly black and poor, without informed consent. There were thirteen deliberate releases of radioactive material over US and Canadian cities between 1948 and 1952 to study fallout patterns and the decay of radioactive particles. There were dozens of experiments funded by the CIA and Atomic Energy Commission, often conducted by scientists at UC Berkeley, the University of Chicago, Vanderbilt and MIT, which exposed more than 2,000 unknowing people to radiation scans.

The case of Elmer Allen is typical. In 1947 this 36-year-old black railroad worker went to a hospital in Chicago with pains in his legs. The doctors diagnosed his illness as apparently a case of bone cancer. They injected his left leg with huge doses of plutonium over the next two days. On the third day, the doctors amputated his leg and sent it to the Atomic Energy Commission's physiologist to research how the plutonium had dispersed through the tissue. Twenty-six years later, in 1973, they brought Allen back to the Argonne National Laboratory outside Chicago, where they gave him a full body radiation scan, then took urine, fecal and blood samples to assess the plutonium residue in his body from the 1947 experiment.

In 1994 Patricia Durbin, who worked at the Lawrence Livermore labs on plutonium experiments, recalled, "We were always on the lookout for somebody who had some kind of terminal disease who was going to undergo an amputation. These things were not done to plague people or make them sick or miserable. They were not done to kill people. They were done to gain potentially valuable information. The fact that they were injected and provided this valuable data should almost be a sort of memorial rather than something to be ashamed of. It doesn't bother me to talk about the plutonium injectees because of the value of the information they provided." The only problem with this misty-eyed account is that Elmer Allen seems to have had nothing seriously wrong with him when he went to the hospital with leg pain and was never told of the researches conducted on his body.

In 1949 parents of mentally retarded boys at the Fernald School in Massachusetts were asked to give consent for their children to join the school's "science club." Those boys who did join the club were unwitting objects of experiments in which the Atomic Energy Commission in partnership with the Quaker Oats company gave them radioactive oatmeal. The researchers wanted to see if the chemical preservatives in cereal prevented the body from absorbing vitamins and minerals, with the radioactive materials acting as tracers. They also wanted to assess the effects of radioactive materials on the kids.

Aping the Nazis' methods, the covert medical experiments of the US government sought out the most vulnerable and captive of subjects: the mentally retarded, terminally ill, and, unsurprisingly, prisoners. In 1963 133 prisoners in Oregon and Washington had their scrotums and testicles exposed to 600 roentgens of radiation. One of the subjects was Harold Bibeau. These days he's a 55-year-old draftsman who lives in Troutdale, Oregon. Since 1994 Bibeau has been waging a one-man battle against the US Department of Energy, the Oregon Department of Corrections, the Battelle Pacific Northwest Labs and the Oregon Health Sciences University. Because he's an ex-con he has not, thus far, obtained much satisfaction.

In 1963 Bibeau was convicted of killing a man who had tried to molest him sexually. Bibeau got twelve years for voluntary manslaughter. While in prison another inmate told him of a way he might get some time knocked off his sentence and make a small amount of money. Bibeau could do this by joining a medical research project supposedly managed by the Oregon Health Sciences University, the state's medical school. Bibeau says that though he did sign an agreement to be part of the research project, he was never told that there might be dangerous consequences for his health. The experiments on Bibeau and other inmates (all told, 133 prisoners in Oregon and Washington) proved damaging in the extreme. The research involved the study of the effects of radiation on human sperm and gonadal cell development.

Bibeau and his fellows were doused with 650 rads of radiation. This is a very hefty dose. One chest X-ray today involves about 1 rad. But this wasn't all. Over the next few years in prison Bibeau says he was subjected to numerous injections of other drugs, of a nature unknown to him. He had biopsies and other surgeries. He claims that after he was released from prison he was never contacted again for monitoring.

The Oregon experiments were done for the Atomic Energy Commission, with the CIA as a cooperating agency. In charge of the Oregon tests was Dr. Carl Heller. But the actual X-rays on Bibeau and the other prisoners were done by entirely unqualified people, in the form of other prison inmates. Bibeau got no time off his sentence and was paid \$5 a month and \$25 for each biopsy performed on his testicles. Many of the prisoners in the experiments in the Oregon and Washington state prisons were given vasectomies or were surgically castrated. The doctor who performed the sterilization operations told the prisoners the sterilizations were necessary to "keep from contaminating the general population with radiation-induced mutants."

In defending the sterilization experiments, Dr. Victor Bond, a physician at the Brookhaven nuclear lab, said, "It's useful to know what dose of

radiation sterilizes. It's useful to know what different doses of radiation will do to human beings." One of Bond's colleagues, Dr. Joseph Hamilton of the University of California Medical School in San Francisco, said more candidly that the radiation experiments (which he had helped oversee) "had a little of the Buchenwald touch."

From 1960 to 1971 Dr. Eugene Sanger and his colleagues at the University of Cincinnati performed "whole body radiation experiments" on 88 subjects who were black, poor and suffering from cancer and other diseases. The subjects were exposed to 100 rads of radiation the equivalent of 7,500 chest X-rays. The experiments often caused intense pain, vomiting and bleeding from the nose and ears. All but one of the patients died. In the mid- 1970s a congressional committee discovered that Sanger had forged consent forms for these experiments. Between 1946 and 1963 more than 200,000 US soldiers were forced to observe, at dangerously close range, atmospheric nuclear bomb tests in the Pacific and Nevada. One such participant, a US Army private named Jim O'Connor, recalled in 1994, "There was a guy with a mannequin look, who had apparently crawled behind a bunker. Something like wires were attached to his arms, and his face was bloody. I smelled an odor like burning flesh. The rotary camera I'd seen was going zoom zoom zoom and the guy kept trying to get up." O'Connor himself fled the blast area but was picked up by the Atomic Energy Commission patrols and given prolonged tests to measure his exposure. O'Connor said in 1994 that ever since the test he had experienced many health problems.

Up in the state of Washington, at the nuclear reservation at Hanford, the Atomic Energy Commission engaged in the largest intentional release of radioactive chemicals to date in December 1949. The test did not involve a nuclear explosion but the emission of thousands of curies of radioactive iodine in a plume that extended hundreds of miles south and west as far as Seattle, Portland and the California-Oregon border, irradiating hundreds of thousands of people. So far from being alerted to the test at the time, the civilian population learned of it only in the late 1970s, although there had been persistent suspicions because of the clusters of thyroid cancers occurring among the communities downwind.

In 1997 the National Cancer Institute found that millions of American children had been exposed to high-levels of radioactive iodine known to cause thyroid cancer. Most of this exposure was due to drinking milk contaminated with fallout from above-ground nuclear testing carried out between 1951 and 1962. The institute conservatively estimated that this was enough radiation to cause 50,000 thyroid cancers. The total releases of radiation were estimated to be ten times larger than those released by the explosion in the Soviet Chernobyl reactor in 1986.

A presidential commission in 1995 began looking into radiation experiments on humans and requested the CIA to turn over all of its records. The Agency responded with a terse claim that "it had no records or other information on such experiments." One reason the CIA may have felt confidence in this brusque stonewalling was that in 1973, CIA director Richard Helms had used the last moments before he retired to order that all records of CIA experiments on humans be destroyed. A 1963 report from the CIA's Inspector General indicates that for more than a decade previously the Agency had been engaged in "research and development of chemical, biological and radiological materials capable of employment in clandestine operations to control human behavior. The 1963 report went on to say that CIA director Allen Dulles had approved various forms of human experimentation as "avenues to the control of human behavior" including "radiation, electroshock, various fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology, graphology, harassment studies and paramilitary devices and materials."

The Inspector General's report emerged in congressional hearings in 1975 in a highly edited form. It remains classified to this day. In 1976 the CIA told the Church committee that it had never used radiation. But this claim was undercut in 1991 when documents were unearthed on the Agency's ARTICHOKE program. A CIA summary of ARTICHOKE says that "in addition to hypnosis, chemical and psychiatric research, the following fields have been explored ... Other physical manifestations including heat, cold, atmospheric pressure, radiation."

The 1994 presidential commission, set up by Department of Energy secretary Hazel O'Leary, followed this trail of evidence and reached the conclusion that the CIA did explore radiation as a possibility for the defensive and offensive use of brainwashing and other interrogation techniques. The commission's final report cites CIA records showing that the Agency secretly funded the construction of a wing of George town University Hospital in the 1950s. This was to become a haven for CIA-sponsored research on chemical and biological programs. The CIA's money for this went via a pass-through to Dr. Charles F. Geschickter, who ran the Geschickter Fund for Medical Research. The doctor was a Georgetown cancer researcher who made his name experimenting with high doses of radiation. In 1977 Dr. Geschickter testified that the CIA paid for his radio-isotope lab and equipment and closely monitored his research.

The CIA was a major player in a whole series of inter-agency government panels on human experimentation. For example, three CIA officers served on the Defense Department's committee on medical sciences and these same officers were also key members on the joint panel on medical aspects of atomic warfare. This is the government committee that planned,

funded and reviewed most human radiation experiments, including the placement of US troops in proximity to nuclear tests conducted in the 1940s and 1950s.

The CIA was also part of the armed forces' medical intelligence organization, created in 1948, where the Agency was put in charge of "foreign, atomic, biological, and chemical intelligence, from medical science's point of view." Among the more bizarre chapters in this mission was the dispatch of a team of agents to engage in a form of body-snatching, as they tried to collect tissue and bone samples from corpses to determine levels of fallout after nuclear tests. To this end they sliced tissue from some 1,500 bodies - without the knowledge or consent of the relatives of the deceased. Further evidence of the Agency's central role was its lead part in the Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee, the clearing house for intelligence on foreign nuclear programs. The CIA chaired the Scientific Intelligence Committee and its subsidiary, the Joint Medical Science Intelligence Committee. Both these bodies planned the radiation and human experimentation research for the Department of Defense.

This was by no means the full extent of the Agency's role in experimenting on living people. As noted, in 1973 Richard Helms officially discontinued such work by the Agency and ordered all records destroyed, saying that he did not want the Agency's associates in such work to be "embarrassed." Thus officially ended the prolongation by the US Central Intelligence Agency of the labors of such Nazi "scientists" as Becker-Freyseng and Blome.

Sources

The story of the recruitment of Nazi scientists and warfare technicians by the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency is told in two excellent but unjustly neglected books: *Tom Bower's The Paperclip Conspiracy* and *Linda Hunt's Secret Agenda*. Hunt's reporting, in particular, is first rate. Using the Freedom of Information Act, she has opened up thousands of pages of documents from the Pentagon, State Department and CIA that should keep researchers occupied for years to come. The history of the experiments of the Nazi doctors comes largely from the trial record of the medical cases at the Nuremberg tribunal, Alexander Mitscherlich and Fred Mielke's *Doctors of Infamy*, and Robert Proctor's frightening account in *Racial Hygiene*. The US government's research into biological warfare is admirably profiled in Jeanne McDermott's book, *The Killing Winds*. The best account of the US government's role in developing and deploying chemical warfare agents remains Seymour Hersh's book *Chemical and Biological Warfare* from the late 1960s. In an attempt to track down the cause of Gulf War Syndrome, Senator Jay Rockefeller held a series of

remarkable hearings on human experimentation by the US government. The hearing record provided much of the information for the sections of this chapter dealing with unwitting experimentation on US citizens by the CIA and the US Army. Information on human radiation testing by the Atomic Energy Commission and cooperating agencies (including the CIA) comes largely from several GAO studies, from the massive report compiled by the Department of Energy in 1994 and from author interviews with four of the victims of the plutonium and sterilization experiments.

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