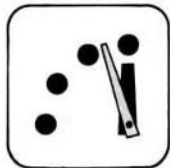
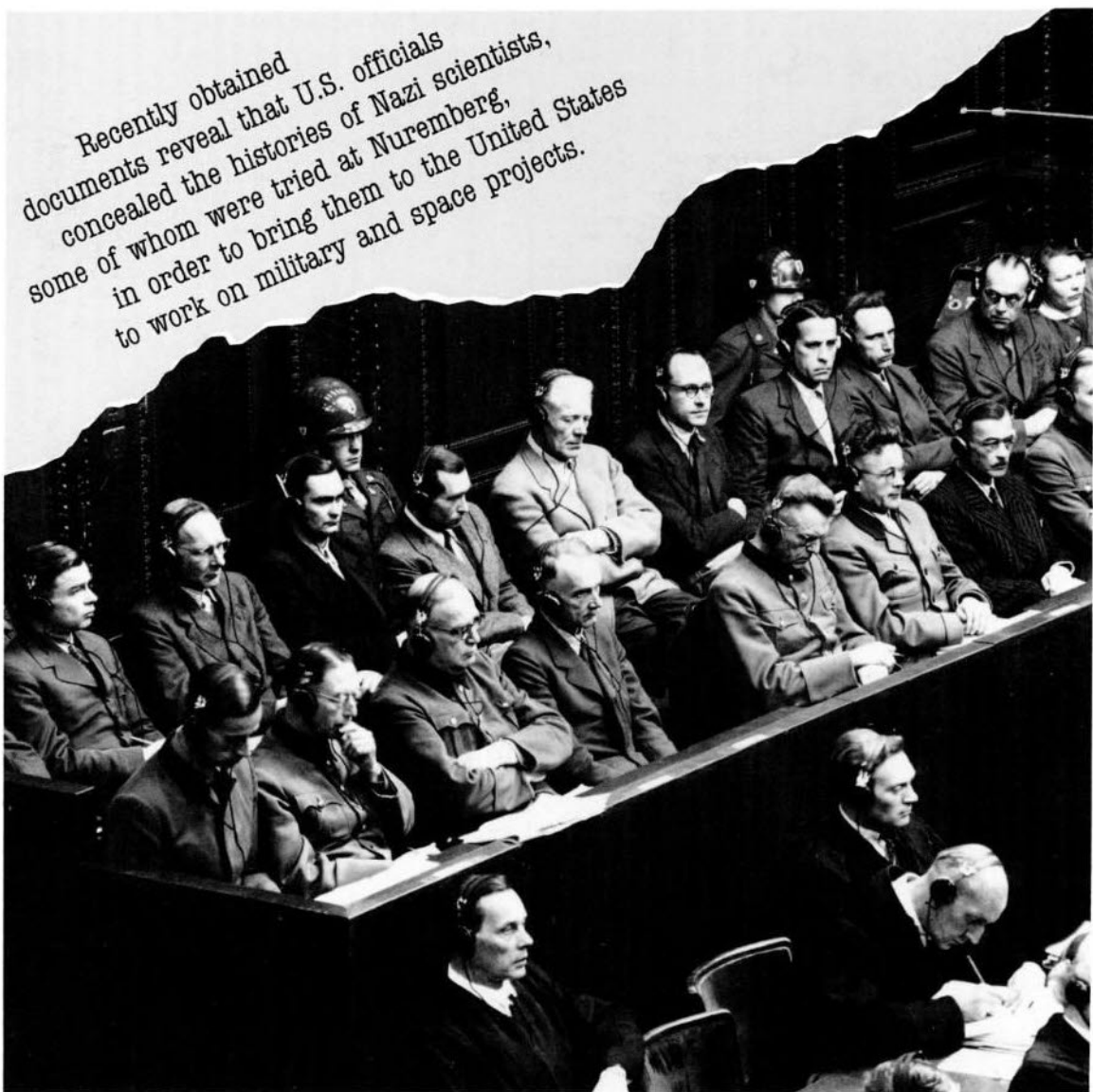


# Bulletin

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Recently obtained documents reveal that U.S. officials concealed the histories of Nazi scientists, some of whom were tried at Nuremberg, in order to bring them to the United States to work on military and space projects.

## U.S. Coverup of Nazi Scientists

**Threats to ABM Treaty  
Reshaping NATO Policy**

# U.S. coverup of Nazi scientists

*"Paperclip" was a U.S. project to employ German scientists in sensitive military and space programs after World War II. This investigation reveals that evidence of Nazi activism and war crimes was suppressed in order to allow many of them to immigrate.*

by Linda Hunt

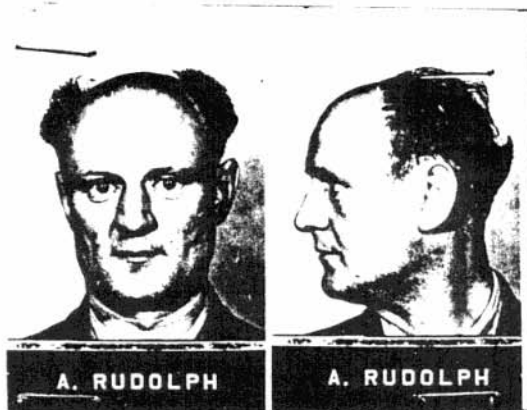
THE U.S. JUSTICE Department announced last October that Arthur Rudolph, who designed the Saturn 5 rocket that took astronauts to the moon in 1969, had relinquished his citizenship and left the United States rather than contest charges that he had committed war crimes in Nazi Germany. The Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) had found "irrefutable" evidence of Rudolph's "complicity in the abuse and persecution of concentration camp inmates who were employed by the thousands as slave laborers under his direct supervision," according to Eli Rosenbaum, the former OSI prosecutor who supervised the Rudolph case.

During World War II, Rudolph was operations director for V-2 missile production at the underground Mittelwerk factory which was part of the Dora-Nordhausen concentration camp complex in Germany. Evidence presented at a U.S. Army trial at Dachau, West Germany in 1947 disclosed that 20,000 Camp Dora prisoners had died after being starved, beaten, hanged, or overworked.<sup>1</sup>

The Justice Department's move against Rudolph is the first time that its OSI unit, established in 1979 to investigate and sue to deport Nazi war criminals, has challenged a scientist brought to the United States under a special project at the end of the war. The project, originally codenamed "Overcast" and then changed to "Paperclip" in 1946, was designed to exploit the expertise of German and Austrian scientists and prevent the remilitarization of Germany. As the Cold War later heightened, the project was also used to deny the services of these specialists to the Soviet Union and other countries. Between 1945 and 1955, 765 scientists, engineers, technicians, and other specialists were hired by the United States under this program.

The prevailing interpretation of Project Paperclip—a view not contradicted by information made public about the Rudolph case—is that only a handful of war criminals or active Nazis accidentally slipped past the watchful eyes of

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Photographs from Arthur Rudolph's Basic Personnel Record in the U.S. Army's files.

the officials who ran the program. This interpretation has been perpetuated by the only book on the subject, published in 1971, written without access to many records and, as author Clarence Lasby noted, "cleared" by the Pentagon prior to publication.<sup>2</sup>

But secret personnel files obtained by this reporter under the Freedom of Information Act during the past 18 months reveal a different story about the past lives of some German scientists and the actions and motives of top U.S. officials who ran the program. These and other formerly classified documents reveal details of the U.S. military's employment of alleged Nazi war criminals in highly sensitive defense projects. They show that government officials concealed information about many specialists in order to secure their legal U.S. immigration status. The coverup seems to have stemmed from a belief that U.S. national security would be best served by keeping these Nazi specialists away from the Soviet Union. But it was a direct contravention of the presidential directive which formally set up Project Paperclip.<sup>3</sup>

The program to exploit German and Austrian specialists grew from the notion that they were part of the spoils of the war which had been won against Nazi Germany. Beginning in 1945, special units of American scientists and military personnel tracked down Nazi experts in rocketry, aircraft design, aviation medicine, and other fields and the

## BASIC PERSONNEL RECORD

(Alien Enemy or Prisoner of War)

PO030 ✓

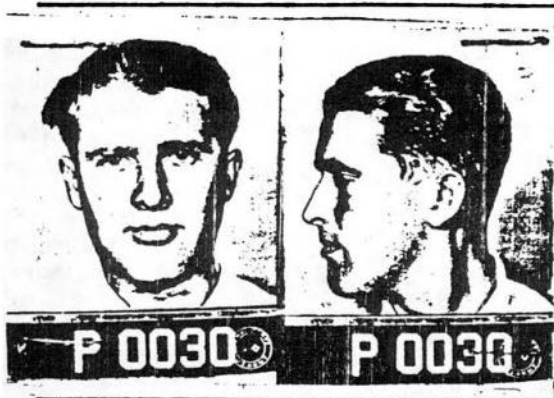
~~Mr. Felix Axster~~

~~von Braun, Werner~~

(Name of internee)

Male

(Sex)



(Internment serial number)

**AXSTER, Herbert Felix Albert**

(Name of internee)

Male

(Sex)



Photographs from Wernher von Braun's (left) and Herbert Axster's Basic Personnel Records.

scientific papers and equipment in their possession. Under the secret Overcast mission, some specialists were brought to the United States under military custody to be exploited to U.S. advantage. They included experts on V-2 missiles (including Wernher von Braun), aircraft design, wind tunnels, and other fields. The project originated to use their skills temporarily, and then these enemy aliens were to be returned to Germany.

But by early 1946, the War Department found their skills too valuable to lose and pushed for a revised program that would allow them to stay in the United States. Their technological know-how was seen as vital for U.S. military projects.<sup>4</sup> On March 4, 1946, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee drafted a policy that contained a process for legal immigration approval and long-term contracts for the specialists. A special policy was required because immigration and other laws forbade legal entry to members of fascist organizations or those who had opposed U.S. war efforts. The new project, Paperclip, absorbed the original Overcast group and brought others to the United States. President Harry S. Truman signed the policy on September 6, 1946.<sup>5</sup>

Paperclip policy forbade utilization of war criminals or those active in Nazism. The policy states in part: "No person found by the Commanding General, USFET [U.S. Forces European Theater], to have been a member of the Nazi Party and more than a nominal participant in its activities, or an active supporter of Nazism or militarism shall be brought to the U.S. hereunder."<sup>6</sup> The policy recognized that "neither position nor honors awarded a specialist under the Nazi Regime solely on account of his scientific or technical

abilities" would disqualify him. Still, the positions of esteem they had held in Nazi Germany meant that many had also played by Adolf Hitler's rules.

By 1947, THE MILITARY and industry, through the Commerce Department, employed nearly 400 German and Austrian scientists and technicians under Paperclip. The specialists were under military custody until the Departments of State and Justice approved immigration and they reentered the United States as legal immigrants. Many of these specialists knew as much about U.S. defense systems as those they had worked on in Nazi Germany. Army Ordnance gave rocket specialists access to classified information almost from the day they arrived. Others worked on jet aircraft, torpedos, bombs, and other highly secret defense projects. These specialists also were increasingly seen by U.S. officials as assets in the Cold War. To the War Department, communism, not Nazism, was the threat to national security, and the military was determined to keep the Paperclip specialists in the United States.

Paperclip policy required the War Department to conduct background investigations of specialists' wartime Nazi activities. The Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency (JIOA), the agency under the Joint Chiefs of Staff in charge of Paperclip, received the results of those investigations. Some reports disclosed that specialists may have participated in experiments on humans, brutalized slave labor, and committed other crimes. One specialist was accused of conducting experiments on humans at an institute in Prague; another's name was on an Army war crimes list as being wanted for murder. Many had been early members of the Nazi Par-

ty, the SS (Schutz Staffel—the elite security forces led by Heinrich Himmler), or the SA (Sturm Abteilung—storm troopers).

On February 26, 1947, JIOA Director Bosquet Wev submitted the first specialists' dossiers to the Departments of State and Justice for immigration consideration. Since the dossiers did not contain raw investigative reports, the key document included in each dossier was a security report filed by the Office of Military Government U.S. (OMGUS) that summarized investigations of war crimes or membership in Nazi organizations. Of primary concern to the State Department was OMGUS's judgment of whether the individual was an "ardent Nazi," and thus a security threat to the United States.<sup>7</sup>

To obtain legal immigration status, the JIOA had to get these reports past the State Department representative on JIOA's governing board, Samuel Klaus, who had pressed the War Department to conduct more thorough background investigations. Klaus believed that Nazis were a threat to U.S. security, and to give them legal immigration status violated Paperclip policy.<sup>8</sup>

Klaus and other State officials had seen some incriminating reports and also suspected that many specialists had lied about their Nazi backgrounds. During a May 26, 1947 meeting with the JIOA, one State official "hit the ceiling" after finding discrepancies between OMGUS reports and the specialists' statements concerning Nazi organization memberships.<sup>9</sup>

By July 2, 1947, the State Department and the JIOA were deadlocked in an angry battle over immigration. State balked at approving visas for the few applications submitted thus far, in part because OMGUS had judged them security threats. In a scathing secret memo, JIOA Director Wev warned that to return the scientists to Germany, where they could be used by potential enemies, "presents a far greater security threat to this country than any former Nazi affiliations which they may have had or even any Nazi sympathies that they may still have." Wev told Maj. Gen. S.J. Chamberlin, the director of intelligence, War Department General Staff, that State officials were "sabotaging by delay"

the immigration procedure by focusing on the security issue and that it was imperative "that the most positive and drastic action possible be taken in order to break the impasse which currently exists."<sup>10</sup>

**T**HE SOLUTION was very simple. If State would not approve immigration due to derogatory OMGUS reports, the JIOA would change the reports. On November 18, 1947, JIOA Deputy Director Walter Rozamus sent a memo to Intelligence Division General Staff Army advising the Army to withhold dossiers that contained incriminating information. Rozamus enclosed seven dossiers of individuals

whose *OMGUS Security Report* classified them as "wanted for denazification" and warned: "It is not considered advisable to submit any of the enclosed dossiers to the Departments of State and Justice at this time." Wernher von Braun's dossier was one of those enclosed. Rozamus said von Braun's *OMGUS Security Report* "indicates that he is regarded as a potential security threat to the United States and he will be wanted for denazification trial in view of his party membership."<sup>11</sup>

Ten days later, the JIOA sent three more incriminating dossiers to Navy Intelligence and said they intended to ask European Com-

mand to "reevaluate" the OMGUS reports to revise the "ardent Nazi" classification. JIOA's deputy director noted that Paperclip policy excluded ardent Nazis and told Navy there was "little likelihood" the Germans could immigrate "if the Theater Security Reports are forwarded to the State Department in their present form."<sup>12</sup>

In a secret memo to European Command, on December 4, 1947, the JIOA asked that OMGUS reports of 14 individuals, including von Braun's, "be reviewed and that new security reports be submitted where such action is deemed appropriate." JIOA Director Wev made it clear that there was "little possibility" State or Justice would approve immigration for specialists deemed "potential or actual" security threats. "This may result in the return to Germany of specialists whose skill and knowledge should be denied other nations in the interest of national security." Army



Maj. Gen. Walter Dornberger (left), commander of the Peenemünde missile base, with Lt. Col. Herbert Axster, Wernher von Braun (with sling), and Hans Lindenberg after they surrendered to U.S. Seventh Army troops May 3, 1945. Dornberger was contracted by the U.S. Air Force and Axster, von Braun, and Lindenberg by Army Ordnance under Paperclip. (courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps, DAVA)

sources quoted in the memo said OMGUS reports were "unrealistic" since "none of the subject specialists is described as politically active."<sup>13</sup>

JIOA files reveal that one of the individuals in question had been arrested by Army Counter Intelligence Corps agents in 1946 as a war crimes suspect but was not charged. There was evidence that two had mistreated slave labor. Most had been long-time Nazi Party members; three were in the SS, one in an SS Deaths Head unit; four in the SA; and most had belonged to other Nazi organizations.

Following that memo, all 14 reports were changed. Originally, von Braun's September 18, 1947 report had read in part: "He was an SS officer but no information is available to indicate that he was an ardent Nazi. Subject is regarded as a potential security threat by the Military Governor."<sup>14</sup>

But five months later, OMGUS issued a new report that changed the security threat classification: "The extent of his Party participation cannot be determined in this Theater. Like the majority of members, he may have been a mere opportunist." OMGUS noted that von Braun had been in the United States more than two years and that, if his conduct had been exemplary, "he may not constitute a security threat to the U.S." The report showed von Braun had joined the Nazi Party in 1937, and was a major in the SS and a member of four other Nazi organizations.<sup>15</sup>

Herbert Axster, wartime chief of staff to General Walter Dornberger at the Peenemünde missile base on the Baltic Sea, was also on the list. Axster's September 18, 1947 OMGUS report stated: "He should—ideologically speaking—be considered a potential security threat to the United States."<sup>16</sup> Six months later, OMGUS concluded an investigation based on a March 25, 1948 intelligence agent's report of interviews with Axster's wartime neighbors and affidavits of his acquaintances. Witnesses said that Axster had beaten and starved foreign slave labor on his two estates. In one instance, Axster had hit a Frenchman caught laying rabbit traps. Villagers told the agent that the man was probably hungry since the workers frequently begged for food from the townspeople. The report made clear that villagers were outraged that Axster's wife had escaped trial, by denazification court, as a major offender because she was in the United States. As a notorious leader of NS Frauenschaft, a women's Nazi Party auxiliary, witnesses said she beat workers and made pro-Nazi speeches.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the damaging evidence in that investigation, OMGUS changed the report to conclude: "Subject was not a war criminal and was not an ardent Nazi. The record of Herbert Axster as an individual is reasonably clear and as such, it is believed that he constitutes no more of a security threat than do the other Germans who have come to the U.S. with clear records in entirety." OMGUS said Axster was influenced by his wife, who was "gullible" to Nazism, but if his conduct in the United States was exemplary, "he might not constitute a security threat to the U.S."<sup>18</sup>

As a result of this cover-up, the War Department, in direct defiance of Paperclip policy, eventually obtained legal im-

## Wernher von Braun's security report: before and after

Security evaluation from Wernher von Braun's September 18, 1947 report:

Based on available records, subject is not a war criminal. He was an SS officer but no information is available to indicate that he was an ardent Nazi. Subject is regarded as a potential security threat by the Military Governor, Office of Military Government for the U.S. [OMGUS]. A complete background investigation could not be obtained because subject was evacuated from the Russian Zone of Germany.

Letter from Bosquet Wov, JIOA director, to the European Command director of intelligence, December 4, 1947:

1. OMGUS security reports recently forwarded from your headquarters classify (14) specialists [including Herbert Axster and Wernher von Braun] as potential or actual threats to the security of the United States....
3. There is very little possibility that the State and Justice Departments will agree to immigrate any specialist who has been classified as a potential or actual security threat to the United States. This may result in the return to Germany of specialists whose skill and knowledge should be denied other nations in the interest of national security....
4. It is requested that the cases of the specialists listed in paragraph one be reviewed and that new security reports be submitted where such action is deemed appropriate in view of the information submitted in this letter.

Security evaluation from von Braun's February 26, 1948 report:

Further investigation of Subject is not feasible due to the fact that his former place of residence is in the Russian Zone where U.S. investigations are not possible. No derogatory information is available on the subject individual except NSDAP records, which indicate that he was a member of the Party from 1 May 1937 and was also a Major in the SS, which appears to have been an honorary commission. The extent of his Party participation cannot be determined in this Theater. Like the majority of members, he may have been a mere opportunist. Subject has been in the United States more than two years and if, within this period, his conduct has been exemplary and he has committed no acts adverse to the interests of the United States, it is the opinion of the Military Governor, OMGUS, that he may not constitute a security threat to the United States.

migration status for specialists suspected of war crimes. Of more than 130 incriminating OMGUS reports examined thus far by this author, all had been changed to eliminate the security threat classification.

IN ADDITION to this deception, a second pattern emerges from Paperclip records. Some forms the JIOA gave the State Department for specialists with extremely damaging information in their backgrounds were “clean” from the start. Among those found in this category are Arthur Rudolph and two defendants charged in a major war crimes trial with conducting experiments on humans.

OMGUS stated in two reports that Rudolph was “not an ardent Nazi” despite his early (June 1, 1931) Nazi Party membership—a factor that had caused others to receive negative reports—and despite a 1945 U.S. military appraisal of Rudolph that concluded: “100% NAZI, dangerous type, security threat. . . ! Suggest internment.” On December 8, 1948, the JIOA signed the final form for Rudolph’s dossier before it was sent to State. The *Security Certificate* certified that the JIOA had checked all records and found “nothing in his records indicating that he was a war criminal, an ardent Nazi or otherwise objectionable” for immigration.<sup>19</sup>

When Rudolph’s form was signed, the Army had evidence in its own records of war crimes committed against inmates of the Dora concentration camp which provided slave labor to the V-2 rocket

factory where he and some other specialists worked. This evidence—presented at a 1947 war crimes trial, *U.S. Army v. Kurt Andrae et al.*—not only implicates Rudolph, it also dispels a myth which one Dora survivor calls a “monstrous distortion of history” about the factory.<sup>20</sup>

Over the years, scientists such as von Braun, who regularly visited the factory, sought to distance themselves from the unspeakable horrors perpetrated on the slave laborers, while others never hinted that their fantastic weapons were built by concentration camp inmates.<sup>21</sup> Even Albert Speer, the Nazi armaments minister, was more honest than the scientists about the true nature of the factory. After a visit, he described conditions there as “barbarous” and wrote in his memoirs that the men accompanying him “were so affected that they had to be forcibly sent off on vacations to restore their nerves.”<sup>22</sup>

But the truth about Dora appeared in the largely overlooked 1947 trial. Evidence showed that the Dora camp existed for the primary purpose of providing slave labor for the Mittelwerk factory. The prisoners worked in the factory alongside the German missile technicians and were beaten by German “civilians” and hanged in full view of them. (The horrors of Dora also were documented in a U.S. Signal Corps film showing American soldiers in tears and outrage as they care for the few starving survivors and bury the 2,000 bodies left by the German civilians and SS members as they fled the advancing Allied forces.)<sup>23</sup>

The specific Army evidence regarding Rudolph was linked

## “Beating a dead Nazi horse”

Memorandum from Bosquet Wev, director of the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency, to Maj. Gen. S. J. Chamberlin, director of intelligence, War Department General Staff, July 2, 1947.

... [T]he best interests of the United States have been subjugated to the efforts expended in “beating a dead Nazi horse.” It is a known fact that any German who lived in Germany during the war and who possessed any capabilities whatsoever, was a member of some affiliation of the Nazi Party. Otherwise he was placed in a concentration camp. The determining factor lies in the question of just what constitutes an active Nazi. Furthermore, loyalty to one’s country can be above party ideologies even when the party is synonymous to the government and therefore the fact that an individual was a loyal German or was affiliated with the Nazi Party does not in itself imply that he is now a security threat to the United States. The scientists desired for exploitation and who are recommended for immigration have been determined by competent War Department officers as not being objectionable for entry into, nor a security threat to the United States. These scientists are proving to be an asset to the scientific research and development programs of the United States. The return of these scientists to Germany would present a far greater security threat to the United States than their retention in this country.

to trial defendant Georg Rickhey, the Mittelwerk general director who also had been hired under Paperclip. Rickhey was brought to the United States on July 4, 1946 and worked for the Army Air Forces for nearly a year while being investigated for war crimes. The charges stemmed from an October 17, 1946 letter written by Paperclip recruit Herman Nehlson that claimed Rickhey was the “chief culprit” when 12 foreign workers were hanged at Mittelwerk. He was arrested and returned to Germany to stand trial in the Army’s Camp Dora case.<sup>24</sup>

In a pretrial investigation of Rickhey, Air Corps Major Eugene Smith interrogated Rudolph, who gave conflicting answers, first denying seeing prisoners abused, then later describing incidents of abuse. In one example, Rudolph said, “I did not see them punished, beaten, hung, or shot.” Later,

when asked to describe the time 12 prisoners were hanged from the crossbeam of a crane used to move rockets through the factory, Rudolph said he did not know if they were dead when he arrived, but “I do know that one lifted his knees, after I got there.”<sup>25</sup>

In a June 10, 1947 report of that interrogation, Smith concluded: “Mr. Rudolph impressed the undersigned as a very clever, shrewd individual. He did not wish to become involved in any investigations that might involve him in any way with illegal actions in the underground factory and as a result, was cautious of his answers.” Despite Smith’s suspicions, Rudolph was never investigated.<sup>26</sup>

One charge against Rickhey at the trial was that he signed sabotage reports against prisoners. The reports were turned over to the SD (security force) or the SS, who then tortured or hanged the prisoners. Management secretary Hannelore

Bannasch testified that it was Rudolph who “passed on” sabotage reports, and “if anybody had signed it at the Werke, it would have been Mr. Rudolph, and never Rickhey, because he never had anything to do with that factory.”

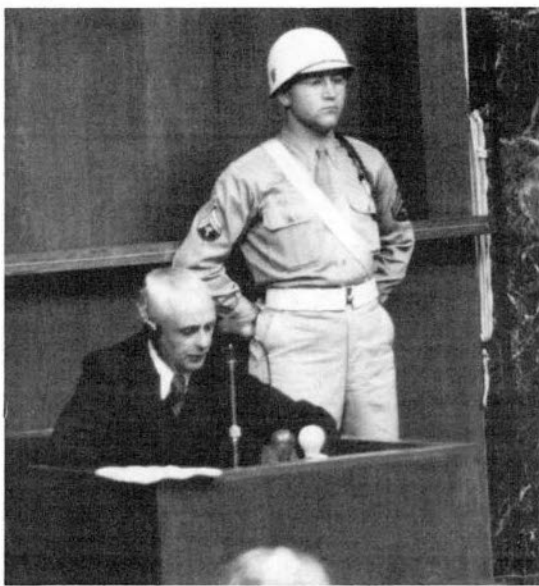
The military court found Rickhey not guilty of all charges. The trial records raise the question of whether the Army tried the wrong man. “Not necessarily the wrong man,” said former OSI prosecutor Eli Rosenbaum. “But Rudolph should have been in that dock either in Rickhey’s place or certainly alongside him.” None of the Paperclip investigations of Rudolph contain evidence about him that emerged in the Dora trial, or even mention the trial itself. On November 16, 1948, Army Ordnance recommended his immigration in the interest of national security, and his “clean” forms sailed through State and Justice. As a result, Rudolph later obtained U.S. citizenship.<sup>27</sup>

The absence of Dora trial evidence in Rudolph’s Paperclip file is reminiscent of the controversy that arose in 1952 regarding Maj. Gen. Walter Schreiber. At the time Schreiber was employed under Project Paperclip by the Air Force School of Medicine at Randolph Field in Texas. A storm of protest erupted after columnist Drew Pearson and others publicized the extensive evidence presented at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial (a U.S. military tribunal, not the International Military Tribunal), revealing that Schreiber had assigned doctors to experiment on concentration camp prisoners and had made funds available for such experimentation. That evidence against Schreiber was spelled out in a 1952 memorandum prepared by Alexander Hardy, former Nuremberg assistant prosecutor. He concluded that the trial records contained enough evidence against Schreiber “to have successfully convicted him in the Medical Case at Nuremberg” if the Soviets, who held him as a prisoner of war from 1945 to 1948, had agreed to U.S. requests that he be made available for the trial which occurred from late 1946 to August 1947.<sup>28</sup>

As in the case of Rudolph, no Paperclip investigation reports on Schreiber mentioned any of the evidence submitted to the U.S. military tribunal at Nuremberg. And even after all the publicity about Schreiber’s alleged crimes, JIOA Director Benjamin Heckemeyer told a State Department representative on February 29, 1952 that “these allegations are not supported by available records.”<sup>29</sup> However, the negative publicity caused JIOA officials to arrange a visa and job for Schreiber in Argentina, where his daughter was

living. On May 22, 1952, he was flown to Buenos Aires.<sup>30</sup> Contacted recently by this reporter, Heckemeyer declined comment.

Lt. Col. M.C. Taylor of G-2 U.S. Forces European Theater had told the War Department on March 8, 1947 that some persons who were deemed “major offenders”—the category of the most serious offenders under the Allied denazification laws—might have been sent to the United States under Paperclip earlier, but that practice had been stopped. Taylor claimed that the specialists were now “carefully screened” to determine the subjects’ Nazi status.<sup>31</sup>



Maj. Gen. Walter P. Schreiber testifies as a witness for the Soviet prosecution at the International Military Tribunal Trial of Major War Criminals, August 26, 1946. At the time Schreiber was a Soviet prisoner of war. (courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps, DAVA)

**AMONG THOSE** contracted under Paperclip were several defendants in the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial Case I, *U.S. v. Karl Brandt, et al.* In what is more commonly known as the Medical Case, 23 defendants were charged with participation in gruesome medical experiments on prisoners at Dachau, Buchenwald, and other concentration camps. Among those defendants were four who worked for the U.S. military: Hermann Becker-Freysing, Siegfried Ruff, Konrad Schaefer, and Kurt Blome.

Prior to the trial, the Army Air Forces (AAF) employed Becker-Freysing, Ruff, and Schaefer at the AAF Aero Medical Center in Heidelberg. They worked at first under regular staff contracts, then on June 2, 1946 Brig. Gen. N.B.

Harbold, in a memo from AAF Headquarters to the War Department, asked that Konrad Schaefer “be contracted for Project Paperclip for exploitation at Wright Field” in Ohio but be permitted to continue his work at the Aero Center until November 1. On June 14, Harbold sent an identical secret memo to request Paperclip contracts for Becker-Freysing and Ruff.<sup>32</sup> The Aero Center paid these men to write reports or conduct laboratory tests for Army Air Forces use that were based on wartime experiments that the Nuremberg prosecutors later charged had been conducted on concentration camp inmates.

Siegfried Ruff had headed the Department for Aviation Medicine at the German Experimental Institute for Aviation and was the Luftwaffe’s expert in high-altitude research. An Aero Center *Monthly Status Report* dated March 31, 1946 states that “test runs were begun” that month using a “German built low pressure chamber.” Two Army Air Forces privates were assigned to the job of “Altitude Chamber Operator.” Later, the Nuremberg tribunal heard charges

of Ruff's wartime participation in high-altitude experiments that had killed up to 80 Dachau camp inmates who were locked in a low-pressure chamber that simulated altitudes up to 68,000 feet. The tribunal acquitted Ruff in what they called a "close" decision because much evidence created a "grave suspicion" that Ruff was "implicated" in the experiments.<sup>33</sup>

The Nuremberg prosecutors charged Becker-Freysing and Schaefer with participation in sea water experiments on Dachau camp inmates who were deprived of food and given only chemically processed sea water to drink. Becker-Freysing had headed the Department for Aviation Medicine under the chief of the Luftwaffe Medical Service. Schaefer researched ways to make sea water potable at the Luftwaffe Research Institute for Aero Medicine. Their job at the Aero Center entailed writing reports based on their war research. Schaefer stated on his JIOA *Basic Personnel Record* that his study on thirst quenching in sea emergencies was for an AAF manual.

The tribunal found Becker-Freysing guilty and sentenced him to 20 years in prison for being "criminally connected" with the experiments. Although Konrad Schaefer had attended meetings where the experiments were planned, the tribunal acquitted him and said they had found no evidence that he had participated in the Dachau experiments.

In 1949, the Air Force brought Schaefer to Randolph Field, Texas under Paperclip. Schaefer admitted on his *Basic Personnel Record* he had been tried at Nuremberg. However, not one background investigation reported that fact. One investigation by European Command, dated December 28, 1949, of Army and other police records "failed to disclose any records of previous arrests." The report of his arrest on September 16, 1946 by the Army Counter Intelligence Corps that is part of Nuremberg trial records did not appear in any Paperclip investigation report.<sup>34</sup>

In 1951, Schaefer was repatriated to Germany. An officer at Randolph Field told Air Force Headquarters on March 27, 1951 that "his future worth to the U.S. Armed Forces is nil," and that Air Force efforts to find him a civilian job had failed. The fact that he had been a defendant in a major war crimes trial was not a consideration.<sup>35</sup>

The fourth Nuremberg defendant, Kurt Blome, was contracted by the Army despite charges by Nuremberg prosecutors of his participation in euthanasia, extermination of

tubercular Poles, biological warfare and other experiments. The Army Chemical Corps later wanted to use his biological warfare expertise. In a secret July 30, 1945 U.S. military interrogation report, Blome admitted that SS chief Heinrich Himmler had ordered him in 1943 to conduct plague vaccine experiments on concentration camp inmates. Blome suggested to Himmler that his new institute under construction in Poznan would be better suited for the experiments than a camp because it was isolated. Himmler then assigned an SS doctor to help with the work. The agent commented that during the interrogation Blome "had no hesitation in repeatedly referring to his intentions to use humans for his work on plague." At the time of the interrogation, Blome was under arrest in Army custody due to his major general rank in the SA.<sup>36</sup>



Konrad Schaefer before the U.S. military tribunal at Nuremberg, November 21, 1946. Although Schaefer was charged with human experimentation connected with sea water research, reports of his arrest and trial did not appear in any Paperclip investigations. (courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps, DAVA)

At Nuremberg, the military tribunal acquitted Blome of all charges and concerning the biological warfare charge stated: "It may well be that defendant Blome was preparing to experiment upon human beings in connection with bacteriological warfare, but the record fails to disclose that fact, or that he ever actually conducted experiments."

Two months after his acquittal, on November 10, 1947, four representatives from Camp Detrick, Maryland interviewed Blome about biological warfare. Dr. H.W. Batchelor set the tone for the meeting when he told

Blome, through an interpreter: "We have friends in Germany, scientific friends, and this is an opportunity for us to enjoy meeting him to discuss our various problems with him." During the lengthy interview, Blome identified biological warfare experts and their location and described different methods of conducting biological warfare. On August 21, 1951, Blome signed a contract to work for the Army Chemical Corps under "Project 63," a Paperclip-type program whose purpose was to deny the Soviet Union the German scientists' skills.<sup>37</sup>

As in Konrad Schaefer's case, not one background investigation reported Blome's Nuremberg trial or arrest, or his 1945 arrest for high SA rank. Blome left references to where he had been from 1945 to 1948 blank on his personnel forms. Three months after Blome signed the contract, the U.S. consul in Frankfurt ruled him inadmissible for immigration. Due to Blome's "clean" forms, there is no evidence that the consul even knew about Nuremberg but rejected him anyway due to the incriminating interrogation report.



JIOA and European Command officials feared that if Blome's contract was cancelled, other Germans might refuse Paperclip contracts. He was given a position as camp doctor at European Command Intelligence Center in Oberusul.<sup>38</sup>

**T**HERE IS NO DOUBT that the U.S. military saw nothing wrong with employing war criminals. In 1949, the Air Force asked the JIOA to reinstate on hiring lists four men who had been convicted at Nuremberg. On August 30, 1949, JIOA Director Daniel Ellis asked the Army and Navy directors of intelligence for their views and attached brief resumes that focused on the chemical and poison gas expertise of I.G. Farben officials Otto Ambros, Heinrich Bütefisch, Carl Krauch, and Georg von Schnitzler.<sup>39</sup> These men were put back on hiring lists, but it cannot be determined from available records whether they were actually employed under Paperclip.

On September 1, 1949, Col. Frederick Sharp responded to JIOA's inquiry that Army "concur[s] in the Air Force proposal." Sharp said he assumed the men would not be brought to the United States "as such entry would undoubtedly be opposed by the Justice Department (FBI) on policy grounds." The names were added to the JIOA "denial" list which meant that their services should be denied to the Soviet Union and other countries. That gave U.S. military or industry a green light to hire them in Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Records in the Nuremberg Trial Case VI, *U.S. v. Carl Krauch et al.*, document that the I.G. Farben plant managed by Otto Ambros was part of the Auschwitz concentration camp complex in Poland where an estimated four million prisoners died. The plant used camp prisoners as slave labor; they were starved, beaten, hanged, and forced to work amidst the stench of burning flesh that poured from the crematoria at the Birkenau extermination center at Auschwitz. Those inmates judged unfit to work were shipped to Birkenau and gassed.

**T**HE FORMERLY classified Paperclip documents show that the War Department was intent on using Nazi specialists and was not about to let other governmental agencies or even a policy signed by President Truman get in its way. Specialists who entered the United States after 1952 were not even investigated for past Nazi connections. From the

program's inception in 1945 to August 1955, 765 specialists were contracted under Paperclip. It is ironic that this program, whose original purpose was to assure that Nazi Germany could not rearm, officially ended in 1957 due to protests by West Germany that the United States had stripped that country of scientific skills.<sup>41</sup>

Since that time, many specialists have received the highest honors bestowed by the military on civilians and have risen to top positions at NASA and other governmental agencies and in private industry. It is true that the Paperclip specialists' skills built rockets that took Americans to the moon and made immense contributions toward the achievements in space exploration taken for granted today. But this scientific victory was accomplished at great moral cost. Dora survivor Jean Michel expressed the darker side: "English,

French, Americans and Russians have shared the scientists and technicians who were our masters. And I could not watch the Apollo mission without remembering that that triumphant walk was made possible by our initiation to inconceivable horror."<sup>42</sup>

For decades, government agencies cared little that alleged Nazi war criminals lived free in the United States. Finally, in 1977 and 1978, a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee held hearings to determine whether there was a conspiracy to obstruct probes of alleged Nazi war criminals. In

Subcommittee Chairman Joshua Eilberg's opinion, the Immigration and Naturalization Service "was more concerned about possible Communist propaganda and political alliance with postwar Germany than it was [about] the bringing to justice [of] criminals who participated in genocide on a scale unknown to mankind throughout history."<sup>43</sup>

The General Accounting Office conducted an investigation and judged in 1978 that a conspiracy was "not supported by available evidence." But later, it was discovered that some government agencies had withheld information and the GAO was asked to conduct another study that is scheduled for release this spring. The fact that top U.S. officials who ran Paperclip covered up incriminating information about alleged war criminals was not discussed in either the hearings or the first GAO report.<sup>44</sup>

As a result of the subcommittee's investigations, the Office of Special Investigations was established in the criminal division of the Justice Department to handle cases that had lain dormant for years, and to launch new investigations.



Kurt Blome makes his final statement at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, July 19, 1947. Charged with human experimentation in the Medical Case, Blome was later contracted by the U.S. military. (courtesy U.S. Army Signal Corps, DAVA)

Nearly 40 years ago, when the search into the past lives of the Paperclip specialists uncovered criminal wartime activities, those who ran Paperclip closed their eyes in what they said was the interest of U.S. national security. To emphasize "picayune details" such as Nazi records, said JIOA Director Bosquet Wev, meant that "the best interests of the United States have been subjugated to the efforts expended in beating a dead Nazi horse."<sup>45</sup>

Today, it is left up to the Justice Department's OSI to pick up the pieces of those "picayune details" in the interest of salvaging justice and the United States' morality. □

1. *U.S. Army v. Kurt Andrae et al.*, Aug. 7 to Dec. 30, 1947, National Archives, microfilm MI079.

2. Clarence Lasby, *Project Paperclip* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), prefatory note, vi-ix.

3. Research for this article was conducted largely at the Modern Military Branch of the National Archives and Records Service, Modern Military Field Branch, and primarily through Freedom of Information Act requests by the author to the Archives and to various government agencies, including military intelligence and the FBI.

4. Confidential OMGUS "Final Report of FIAT," to Chief of Staff, OMGUS, Army, from Col. Ralph M. Osborn, Chief FIAT, July 1, 1947.

5. SWNCC (State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee) 257/5 March 4, 1946; SWNCC 257/23 Sept. 6, 1946; working policy SWNCC 257/24 Oct. 10, 1946.

6. SWNCC 257/24, Oct. 10, 1946.

7. Secret memo to Maj. Gen. S.J. Chamberlin, Director Intelligence WDGs from JIOA Director Bosquet N. Wev, July 2, 1947.

8. Secret memo, "State Dept. Requirements for Security in Immigration to U.S. of German Scientists," from Brig. Gen. N.B. Harbold to Commanding General attention Air Intelligence, July 9, 1946.

9. Memo, "Report on Conference with State," to Director JIOA from Cmdr. C.R. Welte, May 26, 1947.

10. Secret memo to Maj. Gen. S.J. Chamberlin, Director Intelligence WDGs from JIOA Director Bosquet N. Wev, July 2, 1947.

11. Restricted memo to Intelligence Division GSUSA from JIOA Deputy Director Walter J. Rozamus, Nov. 18, 1947.

12. Restricted memo to Cpt. Francis R. Duborg, Head Technical Intelligence Center, Office of Naval Intelligence from JIOA Deputy Director Walter J. Rozamus, Nov. 28, 1947.

13. Secret memo to the attention of Director Intelligence, Commander-in-Chief, European Command, from JIOA Director Bosquet N. Wev, Dec. 4, 1947.

14. *OMGUS Revised Security Report*, signed by Col. C.F. Fritzsche, Sept. 18, 1947.

15. *OMGUS Revised Security Report*, signed by Col. C.F. Fritzsche, Feb. 26, 1948.

16. *OMGUS Revised Security Report*, signed by Col. C.F. Fritzsche, Sept. 18, 1947.

17. OMGUS Public Safety Branch Investigation Section, Investigators Report, "The Axster Couple," March 25, 1948; OMGUS Public Safety Branch Investigation Section, Sworn Statements, especially Konrad Mommson Dec. 18, 1946 and Feb. 5, 1948, and Gerhard Weise undated but certified by Capt. James H. Stewart.

18. *Secret OMGUS Revised Security Report*, signed by Col. W.L. Fagg, May 12, 1948.

19. For 1945 appraisal, "Qualification Sheet for German Scientific Personnel" (June 13, 1945). JIOA Security Certificate, signed by Col. R.D. Wentworth for JIOA Director Bosquet Wev, Dec. 8, 1948; *OMGUS Security Report*, signed by Col. C.F. Fritzsche, March 4, 1947; *OMGUS Revised Security Report*, signed by Col. W.L. Fagg, Sept. 27, 1948; Rudolph's Army Intelligence file XEO24572 contains a badly xeroxed copy of the March 4, 1947 report that appears to say that he "was an ardent Nazi," while the copy in his JIOA personnel file states that he "was not an ardent Nazi." The author sent Army Intelligence a copy of the personnel file version to compare these reports. They determined the word "not" had been cut off their copy when it was xeroxed. Letter to author from FOIA Chief Thomas F. Conley, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Jan. 24, 1985.

20. Jean Michel, *Dora* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1979), p. 98.

21. Wernher von Braun, "Reminiscences of German Rocketry," *Journal of the British Interplanetary Society*, 15, no. 3 (1956); Walter Dornberger, V-2 (New York: Viking Press, 1954); Dieter Huzel, *From Peenemünde to Canaveral* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962).

22. Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: MacMillan, 1970), pp. 474-75.

23. *U.S. Army v. Andrae*, op. cit.

24. Memo to Director Intelligence WDGs from Air Intelligence Col. Millard Lewis, Dec. 19, 1946; Nehlson letter part of trial pre-investigation records.

25. Interrogation of Arthur Rudolph, by Maj. Eugene Smith and Lt. R.B. Payne, sworn June 2, 1947.

26. Report, "Investigation Regarding Activities of Dr. Georg Rickhey," from Maj. Eugene Smith to Air Provost Marshal, June 10, 1947.

27. *Certificate from Sponsoring Department*, signed by Maj. Gen. H.B. Saylor, Nov. 16, 1948.

28. Nuremberg War Crimes Trial Case I, *U.S. v. Karl Brandt et al.*, Nov. 21, 1946-Aug. 20, 1947. On Schreiber's POW status: Secret Investigation Report, Region III 66 Army Counterintelligence Corps, Dec. 15, 1949. Memorandum, "The Case of Walter Schreiber," by Alexander Hardy, Feb. 17, 1952.

29. Memo from Benjamin Heckemeyer to Milton Harrall, Department of State, Feb. 29, 1952.

30. Secret message to Intelligence Center, European Command, from Department of Army G-2, June 2, 1952.

31. Restricted memo to Director Intelligence WDGs from Lt. Col. M.C. Taylor, Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 Headquarters U.S. Forces European Theater, March 8, 1947.

32. Memo to Director Intelligence WDGs from Brig. Gen. N.B. Harbold, Army Air Forces Headquarters, June 2, 1946; Secret memo to Director Intelligence WDGs from Brig. Gen. N.B. Harbold, AAF Headquarters, June 14, 1946.

33. Army Air Forces Aero Medical Center, "Monthly Status Report," March 31, 1946; *U.S. v. Karl Brandt et al.*

34. Investigation form, Headquarters European Command, signed by Capt. Dale L. Barrick for Col. Charles M. Adams, Jr., Dec. 28, 1949; Army CIC Arrest Report part of National Archives Nuremberg records.

35. Restricted memo to Director Intelligence, U.S. Air Force Headquarters, from Cpt. Seymour Schwartz, U.S. Air Force School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph Air Force Base, March 27, 1951.

36. Secret Alsos Report B-C/250, "Interrogation of Blome," July 30, 1945.

37. "Report of Interview of German Scientist," Dr. Kurt Blome in the Office of Chief of Chemical Corps, Headquarters European Command, Nov. 10, 1947; Defense Department Contract DA-91-501-EUC-38 signed by Blome Aug. 21, 1951, effective Dec. 3, 1951.

38. Army CIC Arrest Report in National Archives Nuremberg records; confidential message to Department of the Army for G-2 from Intelligence Center, European Command, Oct. 24, 1951; memo to Intelligence Division, from Charles M. McPherson, European Command, Nov. 27, 1951.

39. Secret memo to Head Navy Technical Intelligence Center and Chief Intelligence Division GSUSA from JIOA Director Daniel E. Ellis, Aug. 30, 1949.

40. Memo to Director JIOA from Col. Frederick Sharp, Intelligence Division GSUSA, Sept. 1, 1949.

41. Secret Activities Report of the JIOA for Aug. 1955, signed by JIOA Director Lloyd L. Hanes, Sept. 9, 1955; "Top Secret" Joint Chiefs of Staff policy 1363/75 Feb. 15, 1957. News reports in recent months stating that over 1,500 specialists came into the United States are in error because that figure, from 1952, includes dependents.

42. Jean Michel, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

43. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, 95th Cong., Part I, Aug. 3, 1977, Part II, July 19-21, 1978.

44. Report by the Comptroller General of the United States: "Widespread Conspiracy to Obstruct Probes of Alleged Nazi War Criminals Not Supported by Available Evidence—Controversy May Continue," U.S. General Accounting Office, May 15, 1978.

45. Secret memo to Maj. Gen. S.J. Chamberlin, Director Intelligence WDGs, from JIOA Director Bosquet N. Wev, July 2, 1947.