

Operation Nazification - U.S. Military Hired Sixteen Hundred Nazi Scientists and Doctors

Book Review: Annie Jacobsen - Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program That Brought Nazi Scientists to America

By [David Swanson](#)

Global Research, February 21, 2014

[War Is A Crime](#) 20 February 2014

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Annie Jacobsen's new book is called *Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program That Brought Nazi Scientists to America*. It isn't terribly secret anymore, of course, and it was never very intelligent. Jacobsen has added some details, and the U.S. government is still hiding many more. But the basic facts have been available; they're just left out of most U.S. history books, movies, and television programs.

After World War II, the U.S. military hired sixteen hundred former Nazi scientists and doctors, including some of Adolf Hitler's closest collaborators, including men responsible for murder, slavery, and human experimentation, including men convicted of war crimes, men acquitted of war crimes, and men who never stood trial. Some of the Nazis tried at Nuremberg had already been working for the U.S. in either Germany or the U.S. prior to the trials. Some were protected from their past by the U.S. government for years, as they lived and worked in Boston Harbor, Long Island, Maryland, Ohio, Texas, Alabama, and elsewhere, or were flown by the U.S. government to Argentina to protect them from prosecution. Some trial transcripts were classified in their entirety to avoid exposing the pasts of important U.S. scientists. Some of the Nazis brought over were frauds who had passed themselves off as scientists, some of whom subsequently learned their fields while working for the U.S. military.

The U.S. occupiers of Germany after World War II declared that all military research in Germany was to cease, as part of the process of denazification. Yet that research went on and expanded in secret, under U.S. authority, both in Germany and in the United States, as part of a process that it's possible to view as nazification. Not only scientists were hired. Former Nazi spies, most of them former S.S., were hired by the U.S. in post-war Germany to spy on — and torture — Soviets.



The U.S. military shifted in numerous ways when former Nazis were put into prominent positions. It was Nazi rocket scientists who proposed placing nuclear bombs on rockets and began developing the intercontinental ballistic missile. It was Nazi engineers who had designed Hitler's bunker beneath Berlin, who now designed underground fortresses for the U.S. government in the Catocin and Blue Ridge Mountains. Known Nazi liars were employed by the U.S. military to draft classified intelligence briefs falsely hyping the Soviet menace. Nazi scientists developed U.S. chemical and biological weapons programs, bringing over their knowledge of tabun and sarin, not to mention thalidomide — and their eagerness for human experimentation, which the U.S. military and the newly created CIA readily engaged in on a major scale. Every bizarre and gruesome notion of how a person might be assassinated or an army immobilized was of interest to their research. New weapons were developed, including VX and Agent Orange. A new drive to visit and weaponize outerspace was created, and former Nazis were put in charge of a new agency called NASA.

Permanent war thinking, limitless war thinking, and creative war thinking in which science and technology overshadowed death and suffering, all went mainstream. When a former Nazi spoke to a women's luncheon at the Rochester Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1953, the event's headline was "Buzz Bomb Mastermind to Address Jaycees Today." That doesn't sound terribly odd to us, but might have shocked anyone living in the United States anytime prior to World War II. Watch this Walt Disney [television program](#) featuring a former Nazi who worked slaves to death in a cave building rockets. Before long, President Dwight Eisenhower would be lamenting that "the total influence — economic, political, even spiritual — is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government." Eisenhower was not referring to Nazism but to the power of the military-industrial complex. Yet, when asked whom he had in mind in remarking in the same speech that "public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite," Eisenhower named two scientists, one of them the former Nazi in the Disney video linked above.

The decision to inject 1,600 of Hitler's scientific-technological elite into the U.S. military was driven by fears of the USSR, both reasonable and the result of fraudulent fear mongering. The decision evolved over time and was the product of many misguided minds. But the buck stopped with President Harry S Truman. Henry Wallace, Truman's predecessor as vice-president who we like to imagine would have guided the world in a better direction than Truman did as president, actually pushed Truman to hire the Nazis as a jobs program. It

would be good for American industry, said our progressive hero. Truman's subordinates debated, but Truman decided. As bits of Operation Paperclip became known, the American Federation of Scientists, Albert Einstein, and others urged Truman to end it. Nuclear physicist Hans Bethe and his colleague Henri Sack asked Truman:

“Did the fact that the Germans might save the nation millions of dollars imply that permanent residence and citizenship could be bought? Could the United States count on [the German scientists] to work for peace when their indoctrinated hatred against the Russians might contribute to increase the divergence between the great powers? Had the war been fought to allow Nazi ideology to creep into our educational and scientific institutions by the back door? Do we want science at any price?”

In 1947 Operation Paperclip, still rather small, was in danger of being terminated. Instead, Truman transformed the U.S. military with the National Security Act, and created the best ally that Operation Paperclip could want: the CIA. Now the program took off, intentionally and willfully, with the full knowledge and understanding of the same U.S. President who had declared as a senator that if the Russians were winning the U.S. should help the Germans, and vice versa, to ensure that the most people possible died, the same president who viciously and pointlessly dropped two nuclear bombs on Japanese cities, the same president who brought us the war on Korea, the war without declaration, the secret wars, the permanent expanded empire of bases, the military secrecy in all matters, the imperial presidency, and the military-industrial complex. The U.S. Chemical Warfare Service took up the study of German chemical weapons at the end of the war as a means to continue in existence. George Merck both diagnosed biological weapons threats for the military and sold the military vaccines to handle them. War was business and business was going to be good for a long time to come.

But how big a change did the United States go through after World War II, and how much of it can be credited to Operation Paperclip? Isn't a government that would give immunity to both Nazi and Japanese war criminals in order to learn their criminal ways already in a bad place? As one of the defendants argued in trial at Nuremberg, the U.S. had already engaged in its own experiments on humans using almost identical justifications to those offered by the Nazis. If that defendant had been aware, he could have pointed out that the U.S. was in that very moment engaged in such experiments in Guatemala. The Nazis had learned some of their eugenics and other nasty inclinations from Americans. Some of the Paperclip scientists had worked in the U.S. before the war, as many Americans had worked in Germany. These were not isolated worlds.

Looking beyond the secondary, scandalous, and sadistic crimes of war, what about the crime of war itself? We picture the United States as less guilty because it maneuvered the Japanese into the first attack, and because it did prosecute some of the war's losers. But an impartial trial would have prosecuted Americans too. Bombs dropped on civilians killed and injured and destroyed more than any concentration camps — camps that in Germany had been modeled in part after U.S. camps for native Americans. Is it possible that Nazi scientists blended into the U.S. military so well because an institution that had already done what it had done to the Philippines was not in all that much need of nazification?

Yet, somehow, we think of the firebombing of Japanese cities and the complete leveling of German cities as less offensive than the hiring of Nazi scientists. But what is it that offends us about Nazi scientists? I don't think it should be that they engaged in mass-murder for

the wrong side, an error balanced out in some minds but their later work for mass-murder by the right side. And I don't think it should be entirely that they engaged in sick human experimentation and forced labor. I do think those actions should offend us. But so should the construction of rockets that take thousands of lives. And it should offend us whomever it's done for.

It's curious to imagine a civilized society somewhere on earth some years from now. Would an immigrant with a past in the U.S. military be able to find a job? Would a review be needed? Had they tortured prisoners? Had they drone-struck children? Had they leveled houses or shot up civilians in any number of countries? Had they used cluster bombs? Depleted uranium? White phosphorous? Had they ever worked in the U.S. prison system? Immigrant detention system? Death row? How thorough a review would be needed? Would there be some level of just-following-orders behavior that would be deemed acceptable? Would it matter, not just what the person had done, but how they thought about the world?

The original source of this article is [War Is A Crime](#)
Copyright © [David Swanson](#), [War Is A Crime](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [David Swanson](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca