
EMPLOYING FORMER ENEMIES: THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NAZI WAR CRIMINALS POST-WWII

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Introduction

On May 7, 1945, Colonel General Jodl of the German Army signed the terms for Germany's unconditional surrender to the Allied forces. Shortly after surrender, on October 19, 1945, indictments were issued against major war criminals that were to be tried at the Nuremberg Trials. The trial began on November 20th and the verdicts were announced on October 1, 1946. Eleven of the 21 defendants are sentenced to death.

Once the cameras stopped rolling in Nuremberg, and the American press began focusing on the continuing war with Japan and the increased tension with the USSR, the American government's attitude toward the 'former' Nazis and war criminals changed. The focus shifted from punishing individuals for their wartime activities and actions, to utilizing their skills to fight the perceived Communist threat in Eastern Europe.

The typical question to ask is: Why did the US government employ these notorious individuals? In this paper, I will discuss three main reasons. The first reason the government employed these men was that the Cold War became the immediate priority following WWII. The US government diverted its resources to the 'perceived' Communist threat. Another reason involved the chaos in Europe immediately after WWII. There were massive numbers of POWs and wanted war criminals after the war. Unfortunately, immediately following the war, there were no background lists or war criminal lists available in POW camps. These weren't available until late 1945, and by this point, directives were already passed to release as many POWs from the camps as possible. The last reason I will address relates to governmental bureaucracy. The main function of a governmental bureaucracy is to benefit the country, even if that means employing notorious individuals. This bureaucracy is shown by the "we did what was in the best interest of the country" mentality and comments, and the focus on the task at hand.¹

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¹ Note: There is no significant discussion between U.S. government officials regarding the war crimes committed by their employees. It can be assumed that the government was not concerned about the heinous acts committed by these individuals. However, there is no documented evidence of these attitudes, perhaps their silence says enough.

Organization

I have divided this paper into two sections. The first section will examine the US government's use of 'former' Nazis in Europe. The two cases I will focus on involve Klaus Barbie and Robert Jan Verbelen. The U.S. government, specifically the CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps), employed both individuals after World War II. I will use the Department of Justice Report, *Klaus Barbie and the United States Government*, and the exhibits from the case to examine Barbie's relationship with the government. The exhibits in this case provide primary sources. I will also use a Department of Justice report to examine Robert Verbelen's relationship with the US government. This report is entitled, *Robert Jan Verbelen and the United States Government*. Unfortunately, this report does not include the exhibits.

The second half of my paper will focus on 'former' Nazis and war criminals in the United States after World War II. I will examine 'Operation Paperclip,' which was:

a project run by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that brought sixteen hundred German and Austrian scientists and technicians, including war criminals, to the United States to work for the military and NASA.²

This section will also examine 'former' Nazi immigrants in the United States. Many 'former' Nazis were able to immigrate to the United States due to the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. There was such an influx of immigrants at this time, that 'former' Nazis were able to disguise their crimes and their pasts.

Europe after 1945

There were several Intelligence Agencies in Europe after 1945. The CIC was one of the better-known agencies. The CIC was an acronym for the 'Counter Intelligence Corps'. "Its basic mission was the protection of the US Zone against espionage, sabotage and subversion."³ The personnel who worked with the CIC during the postwar years were typically inexperienced and unfamiliar with intelligence services. This inexperience led to the need to rely on other sources of information. These other sources included members of defeated Nazi organizations. Organizations included "former members of the SD, the German State Police, and German military intelligence."⁴

² Bercuabaum, Michael. *The World Must Know* (New York, 1993), p. 201.

³ Annual Narrative Report, 66th CIC Detachment, 31 Dec 49. As cited in: Ryan, Allan. *Klaus Barbie and the United States Government: A Report to the Attorney General of the United States*. (Washington DC: US Department of Justice Criminal Division,) August 1983, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Individuals having knowledge of Soviet intelligence techniques and contacts in the Soviet intelligence organizations could provide information of obvious and crucial value to the United States' counterespionage activities.⁵

The CIC justified the employment of notorious individuals, because its mission was to protect American security. "It is realized that all types of characters must be used in order to obtain adequate coverage."⁶ Although the organization was willing to employ 'former' Nazis and war criminals, a May 7, 1947 directive instructed that "no one involved in ongoing illegal activities should be employed;

...neither should we acquire agents or informants whose past will inevitably be brought to the surface and compromise both them and the CIC. For example, a high-ranking SS officer might be able to provide valuable information, but if he is scheduled for the (German denazification court), his use might as well not be contemplated...⁷

Although the CIC issued this directive, membership in the SS or participation in questionable wartime activities did not disqualify an individual from being used as a CIC informant. One of Robert Verbelen's supervisors later stated:

...it was advantageous to use such persons, not only because of their knowledge and experience, but also because their dependence upon the United States for protection ensures their reliability.⁸

This was another benefit for the bureaucracy. Intelligence agencies could utilize the skills of 'former' Nazis, while these individuals were dependent on the intelligence agencies to ensure their protection.

The investigative techniques used to conduct background investigations were insufficient. The CIC required that complete personal details of their informants be available. However, in some cases, the only information available was a name. Although the CIC required complete personal details, they instructed personnel to obtain a "brief autobiography" from each of their informants, but 'only if it can be procured without difficulty.'⁹

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ US Army Investigative Records Repository (IRR), file XE 184719 I 8H027

⁷ *Ibid*. As cited in: Office of Special Investigations. *Robert Jan Verbelen and the United States Government: A Report to the Assistant Attorney General*, (Washington DC: US Department of Justice,) June 16, 1988, p. 16.

⁸ Interview with Frank Harris (15 November 1984). As cited in: *Ibid*, p. 19.

⁹ IRR, file XE 184719 I 8H027. As cited in: *Ibid*, p. 18.

Although the CIC attempted to discourage the use of notorious individuals, the agencies used insufficient investigative methods to review potential informants.¹⁰

The main registry used by the Allies to identify wanted war criminals and security suspects was CROWCASS. CROWCASS is an acronym, which stands for 'The Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects.' After WWII, the territory controlled by the Allied Nations was quite large, and establishing a list of war criminals aided coordinated efforts of Allied nations to apprehend wanted war criminals. The object of CROWCASS was to provide a collection of information regarding wanted and detained persons. "This information was set up as a Registry available to all Allied nations, and provided the subject matter for the publication of lists of Wanted and Detained persons."¹¹

Chaos is the best word to describe Europe immediately following WWII. The Allied forces were ill equipped to effectively handle the massive number of POWs and displaced persons. Although certain procedures were implemented to attempt to apprehend notorious individuals, many important Nazi figures were able to evade capture.

The US Army found itself in a very difficult situation. With over three million German POWs in custody, dwindling food supplies, and with a significant and growing displaced person population with its own needs and problems, the US needed to discharge German POWs as quickly as possible.¹²

The Allies had no files on their POWs, and "it is likely that no American authority was aware precisely who was in custody...until sometime in July 1945."¹³ The Allies did not consult wanted persons lists in their discharge process. But there was not a reliable wanted persons list to consult, because "copies of the July 1945 CROWCASS wanted lists, printing and distribution had still not been completed by October 1945."¹⁴ Even before the CROWCASS list was available, Disbandment Directive No. 5 sped up the discharge process. "Disbandment Directive No. 5, authorized a general discharge of German nation-

¹⁰ Note: There were several CIC branches located throughout Western Europe. I will discuss the 66th CIC and the 430th CIC in the remainder of my paper.

¹¹ Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects, Allied Control Authority, APO 742, US Army, December 1946. As cited in, *Klaus Barbie and the United States Government Exhibits*, (Washington DC: US Department of Justice Criminal Division,) August 1983, Tab 19, Doc 2.

¹² Office of Special Investigations Criminal Division. *In the Matter of Joseph Mengele: A Report to the Attorney General of the United States*. (Washington DC: US Department of Justice,) October 1992, p. 37.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Memorandum from Melvin G. Kidder to Colonel P.S. Lauben, Subject: CROWCASS, 12 October 1945. NARA: RG332, ETO, Records of the Secretary, General Staff Classified General correspondence 1944 to 1945 000.1- 000.5, Box 1. As cited in: *Ibid.*, p. 41.

als held as prisoners of war, except those in automatic arrest categories, SS men, and war criminals.”¹⁵

Policymakers justified the employment of ‘former’ Nazis after 1945 by using the Cold War rationale. The employment was justified because of “the possibility and imminence of the outbreak of a new war between the United States and the USSR.”¹⁶ They decided to use these individuals “in an attempt to penetrate the supposed Soviet threat.”¹⁷ It was believed that:

...by 1947, former Gestapo agents were no longer considered the ‘security threat’ that had made them targets for arrest immediately after the war...the Allied authorities had thoroughly obliterated any remnants of the Nazi regime.¹⁸

There are several references in both Klaus Barbie and Robert Jan Verbelen’s cases that demonstrate that government officials valued their informant skills so much that they were willing to overlook their past wartime activities. I will come back to this point during my analysis of Klaus Barbie and Robert Jan Verbelen.

One of the biggest concerns for the US following WWII was the increased tension with the Soviet Union. In 1946, Winston Churchill described the expanding Soviet Union as an Iron Curtain. During the Greek Civil War, President Truman issued the Truman Doctrine, which was a US policy that provided economic and military aid to European countries to defend themselves against Communist forces. Truman said:

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free people to work out their own destinies in their own way.¹⁹

In February 1948, Communists invaded Czechoslovakia, and Communism continued to spread through Eastern Europe. Berlin, Germany was located in the Soviet territory, but the city was divided among the Soviet Union, the United States, England and France. On

¹⁵ SHAEF G-1 Division, Subject: Disbandment Directive No. 5, NARA 387.4/12, June 14, 1945, pg. 293. As cited in: *Ibid*, p. 37.

¹⁶ Simpson, Christopher. *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War*. (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson,) 1988, p. 3.

¹⁷ Memorandum for the Officer in Charge: Subject: Operation FLOWERBOX, Re: Investigation of Supposed Russian Courier Center, 20 March 1947. As cited in: *Klaus Barbie exhibits*, Tab 9, Doc 4.

¹⁸ Ryan. *Klaus Barbie*, p. 49.

¹⁹ Acheson, Dean. *Present at the Creation*, (New York: Norton,) 1969, p. 222.

June 24, 1948, Soviet forces blockaded all land access to the city because the Soviet Union wanted to control all of Berlin. During the blockade, the US and British began the Berlin airlift, in order to provide food and supplies to the residents of West Berlin. The blockade lasted until May 12, 1949. Continued conflict followed these occurrences, and in June 1950, the Korean War began. The increased conflict with the Soviet Union provided the US government justification for employing 'former' Nazis and war criminals.

Klaus Barbie

Klaus Barbie was a German, who became involved with the Nazi party via the Hitler Youth in 1933. Barbie's career within the Nazi party progressed from here. He became a member of the SS and SD in 1935. The SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*) was a branch of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) that combated enemies of the German State. The SS "grew into a complex and powerful network of death camps, armed divisions, intelligence services and mobile slaughter commandos."²⁰

Barbie is best known for his time in Lyon, France, where he became known as *The Butcher of Lyon*. Barbie was the head of the Section IV, Gestapo, in Lyon between 1942 and 1943. Barbie was "responsible for crimes against humanity: the death and deportation (to concentration camps) of perhaps thousands of Jews and other innocent victims."²¹

Barbie's last name was included on the 1945 CROWCASS list, and a more thorough background was provided in the 1947 Registry. In 1947, CROWCASS lists the name Barbie/Barbier in their files. It gives his occupation as "a Gestapo official in Lyon, Strassburg, Rhone, Paris (Fr.)" It states that he is "wanted for murder, and he is wanted by France."²² Nevertheless, the CIC decided to hire Barbie in April 1947, and he remained employed until 1951.

On approximately April 10, 1947, a CIC informant told his supervisor that he met an old friend, Klaus Barbie, "who had excellent connections to sources of CIC information."²³ The supervisor recognized Klaus Barbie's name "as being that of one of the chief personalities of Operation Selection Board."²⁴ The supervisor discussed Barbie with "Colonel Garvey, Commanding Officer of Region IV, and on 14-15 April 1947, the decision was made to use Barbie as an informant."²⁵ His employment was subject to some conditions. Barbie needed to "break off any connections he may have to illegal SS elements and Selection Board personalities."²⁶

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 3.

²¹ Ryan, *Barbie*, p.1.

²² Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects, Allied Control Authority, APO 742, US Army, December 1946. As cited in: *Klaus Barbie and the United States Government Exhibits*, Tab 19, Doc 1.

²³ Ryan, *Barbie*, p. 38.

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ Counter-Intelligence Corps Region-IV, File No. IV-K-942.5, 27 May 1947. As cited in: *Klaus Barbie exhibits*, Tab 14, Doc 3.

Colonel Garvey did not inform CIC Headquarters of his contact with Klaus Barbie. CIC headquarters did not discover that Barbie was an informant “until two months after it began.”²⁷ Garvey argued:

It is felt that (Barbie’s) value as an informant infinitely outweighs any use he may have in prison. It is emphasized that (Barbie’s) value as an informant cannot be overlooked.²⁸

This rationale coincides with the bureaucratic thought of the time. It was felt that Barbie’s skills as an informant were more important than his previous wartime activity. The CIC decided to overlook Barbie’s past in order to utilize him for their mission.

Although two other CIC regions were searching for Barbie, Region IV employed him. Region IV was in the southeastern section of Germany, and Barbie worked in a town called Memmingen. Barbie was responsible for reporting “on French intelligence operations in the US zone of Germany, on activities of Romanian ethnic Germans, and on Soviet (and Anti-Soviet activities) in the US zone.”²⁹ There was continued conflict between the 66th CIC, which employed Barbie and CIC headquarters over whether or not to arrest Barbie. He was apprehended once, in December 1947, in relation to his knowledge the post-war activities of ex-SS officers, but he was later released.

On May 14, 1949, a Paris newspaper’s headline read, “Arrest Barbie Our Torturer” The article “demanded the immediate arrest of Barbie and a trial before the (French) Military Tribunal of the 8th region.”³⁰ The French formally demanded Barbie’s surrender from the State Department on November 7, 1949.

After the CIC (formally) learned the charges against Barbie, they “desired that subject be dropped administratively as an informant but that relations with same be maintained as in the past until necessary action is dictated.”³¹ Then, on May 4, 1950, the 66th CIC decided, “that Barbie should not be placed in (the) hands of (the) French.”³² The CIC wanted to distance itself from Klaus Barbie, but was hesitant about approving his extradition. The CIC was worried that Barbie would:

cause a great deal of adverse publicity to (the) CIC,³³ expose the fact that this detachment failed to initially arrest him...failed to turn him

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Ryan, *Barbie*, p. 39.

²⁸ File No. IV-K0942.5. As cited in: *Klaus Barbie Exhibits*, Tab 14, Doc 3.

²⁹ Ryan, *Barbie*, p. 39.

³⁰ D-153204. As cited in: *Klaus Barbie exhibits*, Tab 38, Doc. 2.

³¹ File No: D-153204, 24 May 1949. As cited in: *Ibid*, Tab 38, Doc. 3.

³² Ryan, *Barbie*, p. 97.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 147.

over to the British who also wanted him,³⁴ and point out the names of several unsavory 'personalities' that have been protected and employed by CIC.³⁵

Although the CIC Headquarters knew that Barbie was on a wanted list, in January 1951 the decision was made to put Klaus Barbie and his family into the 'rat line.' The 'rat line' was an operation run by another branch of the CIC. It was used as an evacuation system to Central or South America. Klaus Barbie and his family left Genoa, Italy for Buenos Aires on March 23, 1951, and the 66th CIC officially closed its Klaus Barbie case on April 3.

Barbie was able to benefit from the US bureaucracy. Barbie provided useful intelligence information to the CIC, and in return they protected him from the French. The CIC also justified their protection of Barbie, by saying that they didn't want Barbie to 'leak' any intelligence to other governments. Therefore, they protected Barbie for the sake of the American bureaucracy.

Robert Jan Verbelen

Robert Jan Verbelen was a Belgian, who volunteered with the SS, in 1940, after the Nazis occupied Belgium. Verbelen was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to death *in absentia* on October 14, 1947 in Belgium. Belgian courts found Verbelen responsible for the deaths of 101 persons, in that he:

Instigated and organized acts of blind terrorism which were carried out as reprisals for the actions of the Belgian resistance movement and in which victims were arbitrarily selected to be arrested, beaten, tortured, imprisoned, deported, or murdered.³⁶

Although Verbelen was convicted and sentenced to death, Belgian authorities did not register him with CROWCASS or the United Nations War Crimes Commission. Authorities also never requested US aid in apprehending Verbelen. Only one CROWCASS list included Verbelen, and this entry listed him as a security suspect.

Robert Verbelen became an informant for the 430th CIC in Vienna, Austria in 1946. While working for the CIC, Verbelen participated in Project Newton. Project Newton "had the mission of penetrating and spying on the Austrian Communist Party (KPOe)." One agent also used Verbelen "to obtain information about Soviet troop and equipment move-

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Office of Special Investigations, *Verbelen*, p. 11.

ments into and out of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.”³⁸ He eventually transferred from the 430th to the 66th CIC, because the 430th CIC ceased operations in the summer of 1955.

Verbelen’s report lists several stories about Verbelen’s CIC recruitment, so it’s difficult to determine whether the government knew he was a war criminal. Verbelen also used several aliases while employed with the CIC, and never admitted to any war crimes. A variety of different CIC agents attempt to uncover information about Verbelen, but this was a challenge, since he used aliases.

It wasn’t until early July 1956 that “the CIA first revealed to the CIC that Verbelen was a convicted war criminal.”³⁹ At this point, Verbelen was only working sporadically with the CIC, but:

Region IV warned that ignoring Verbelen altogether could force him into the hands of the Austrian security police, thereby creating ‘considerable operational difficulty’ for the CIC, since Verbelen had knowledge of its agents and activities in Austria.⁴⁰

The bureaucracy impacted the CIC’s dealings with Verbelen. This situation is similar to Barbie, because the CIC realized that they were employing notorious individuals as informants. However, by the time the CIC realized this, their notorious informants were already accessing useful intelligence, and their informants could easily disclose intelligence to other governments.

The 66th CIC initially contemplated severing contact with Verbelen since he was a wanted war criminal. Instead of severing ties, “the 66th CIC Headquarters instructed Region IV to encourage Verbelen to accept employment with the Western European intelligence agency that was recruiting him.”⁴¹ A final memorandum was issued to 66th CIC Headquarters on March 15, 1957. The memorandum states:

Verbelen was ‘dismissed without prejudice’ from the CIC’s employment in order that he might work for the Western European intelligence agency and classifies him as ‘considered suitable for intelligence re-employment.’⁴²

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁹ Region IV, 66th CIC Group, “Summary of Information: VERBELEN, Robert Jean” (11 July 1956), IRR, H8198901. As cited in: *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁴⁰ CO, Region IV, to CO, 66th CIC (30 November 1956), H8198901. As cited in: *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴¹ Office of Special Investigations, *Verbelen*, p. 69.

⁴² Region IV to CO, 66th CIC (14 March 1957), H8198901. As cited in: *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Special Agent, William Wood “insist(ed) that the CIC would never have rehired Verbelen because he had lied to it for ten years about his identity and background.”⁴³

Conclusion

This section discusses the three key reasons why the US government was willing to employ notorious individuals. The conflict with the Soviet Union was a difficult situation to encounter immediately following WWII. This immediate conflict was considered a priority for the US government, and was used to justify the employment of ‘former’ Nazis. ‘Former’ Nazis and war criminals were “no longer considered the ‘security threat,’”⁴⁴ and intelligence agencies decided to use these individuals to “penetrate the supposed Soviet threat.”⁴⁵ These individuals were considered crucial to the intelligence espionage activities.

The absolute confusion immediately following the war contributed to the employment. In Klaus Barbie’s case, we saw that he was wanted by two CIC agencies, while a third employed him. This confusion was apparent in Verbelen’s case as well. He was able to use several aliases, while being employed by the CIC, without being investigated. Barbie’s case also highlights the bureaucracy. The 66th CIC employed Barbie because they thought his skills as an informant surpassed any use he would have in prison. The way in which the CIC dealt with Barbie and Verbelen after discovering their history also benefited the bureaucracy. The CIC would not surrender either individual, because each possessed intelligence vital to the CIC and to the US government. In order to protect the bureaucracy and its secrets, the CIC decided to protect Barbie and Verbelen.

United States

The situation in the United States was different from the European arena. The US did not experience the chaos and confusion of immediate post-war Europe. However, the concerns of a Communist threat were similar. The government was concerned about protecting the US from the Communist threat, and utilized ‘former’ Nazis to achieve these ends. William Donovan, the chief of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), supported a plan that smuggled scientists and technicians into the United States. This program was code named *Operation Paperclip*. The FBI also considered Communism its priority. The FBI was aware that ‘former’ Nazis and war criminals were entering the country; however, they continued to focus solely on Communist activity.

⁴³ Interview with William Wood (30 May 1984). As cited in: *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁴ Ryan, *Klaus Barbie*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Memorandum for the Officer in Charge: Subject: Operation FLOWERBOX, Re: Investigation of Supposed Russian Courier Center, 20 March 1947. As cited in: *Klaus Barbie exhibits*, Tab 9, Doc 4.

Another common theme relates to the bureaucracy. During this period, like in Europe, the US government employed questionable individuals, because they thought it was for the good of the country. The government viewed, or at least claimed that, these programs were benefiting the nation's interests and national security.

Operation Paperclip

Operation Paperclip was a program run by the US government that brought hundreds of German and Austrian scientists to the United States after the war to work with NASA and the military. The program originally had several goals and objectives. The main goal was to utilize Nazi intelligence to win the continuing war with Japan. Another objective included advancing the U.S. military's technological capabilities. The military also wanted to strip Germany of any technological capabilities, so the country could not rearm like it had after WWI. On December 1, 1944, OSS chief William Donovan approached the president with his idea of allowing (Nazi) recruits to enter the United States. Donovan also requested that the United States offer special privileges to Germans working for US Intelligence Agencies. President Roosevelt refused this request. He stated:

Any guarantees would be difficult and probably be widely misunderstood both in this country and abroad... Among them may be some who should properly be tried for war crimes or at least arrested for active participation in Nazi activities.⁴⁶

Roosevelt vehemently opposed the proposal, because he could not imagine the program benefiting the bureaucracy. But another request was sent to President Truman. The policy was considered "vital to the 'interest of national security.'"⁴⁷ President Truman was assured by the Acting Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, that "the Germans were merely scientists whose skills would benefit America's technology and that the War Department would exclude 'persons with Nazi or militaristic records.'"⁴⁸ President Truman approved Operation Paperclip on September 3, 1948.

Did the government know that their recruits collaborated with the Nazi party? The answer to this question is yes. The government wanted to exclude war criminals, and even banned individuals who were active members of Nazism and militarism. But "JIOA officers

⁴⁶ President Franklin Roosevelt, "Memorandum for General Donovan," undated but stamped as received by Donovan's office on 18 December 1944, RG 266, NARS. As cited in: Hunt, Linda, *Secret Agenda: The United States Government, Nazi Scientists, and Operation Paperclip*, (New York: St. Martin's Press,) 1991, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Hunt, *Secret Agenda*, p. 39.

⁴⁸ Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "Memorandum for the President," memo to Harry S. Truman, 30 August 1946; and SWNCC 257/22. As cited in: *Ibid*, p. 40.

simply changed the records of those scientists they wanted, expunging evidence of war crimes and ardent Nazism.”⁴⁹

The United States soon stopped ‘beating a dead Nazi horse,’ as Bosquet Wev, executive officer of the Pentagon’s intelligence coordinating office, put it, and began importing German chemical warfare experts, submarine specialists, and the scientists who had once built Germany’s rockets using slave labor from Nazi concentration camps.⁵⁰

Intelligence officials were occasionally aware that they were recruiting ‘former’ Nazis, but the “officers believed that these Germans could be put to work in the continuing war with Japan and the emerging conflict with the USSR.”⁵¹ The officers were also “determined to use any means necessary to keep Nazi scientists out of Russian hands, even if that meant violating US laws and foreign policy.”⁵²

Several notorious individuals were brought to the United States under Operation Paperclip, including Arthur Rudolph who used slave labor at the Dora Concentration Camp to manufacture rockets. He directed the Saturn V moon rocket project for the Nazis. Rudolph was interrogated upon his arrival to the United States, which was a standard policy. Most individuals escaped close examination, but the officer who interviewed Rudolph was suspicious. He commented:

‘100% & NAZI, dangerous type, security threat...!! *Suggest internment.*’ His remarks were put in Rudolph’s file, discussed occasionally during security clearance investigations through the years, and generally ignored.⁵³

Immigrants

After WWII, there was an influx of immigrants to the United States, largely due to the 1948 Displaced Persons Act. The Displaced Persons Act authorized the entry of 200,000 displaced persons into the United States. However, victims, survivors, and *collaborators*

⁴⁹ Hunt, *Secret Agenda*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ JIOA Director Bosquet Wev to General S.J. Chamberlin, director of intelligence for War Department General Staff (G-2), July 2, 1947. Simpson, *Blowback*, p. 6.

⁵¹ Simpson, *Blowback*, p. 6.

⁵² Hunt, *Secret Agenda*, p. 3.

⁵³ Qualification sheet noting “100% NAZI” in the Arthur Rudolph INSCOM dossier. As cited in: *Ibid.*, p. 30.

were welcomed into the United States. Many have placed blame for this error with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. However, the FBI was also privy to the war criminal status(es) of many émigrés, but the FBI never acted on what it knew.

In retrospect, it's easy to judge these attitudes and behaviors. But the FBI and other agencies' indifference should be understood within the context of the 1950s. "In the 1950s it was widely held that the threat to American security came not from Nazis or their collaborators, but from the Soviets and theirs."⁵⁴ Communism was the main focus of the FBI since 1917 and this remained the case through WWII and beyond.

War crimes generated considerably less FBI interest. The past crimes of Nazi collaborators were difficult to prove, and collaborators committed no new Nazi-related crimes after having settled in the United States.⁵⁵

The case of Andrija Artukovic illustrates the United States' skepticism of Communist intelligence, even when the intelligence provided evidence of an individual's misconduct. Andrija Artukovic entered the United States illegally in 1948. He came to visit his brother in California, but INS became suspicious of Artukovic once he overstayed his temporary visa. The INS discovered that Artukovic was not a refugee, but was the former:

Interior Minister of the Independent State of Croatia during the war. He authorized anti-Serb and anti-Jewish legislation as well as mass shootings, deportations, and the creation of Croatia's concentration camps.⁵⁶

Yugoslavia made attempts to have Artukovic extradited in 1950, and filed an extradition request in August 1951. The Yugoslav Information Agency distributed an 85-page booklet highlighting Artukovic's criminal activities. The booklet contained "graphic photographs of corpses...and excerpts from Artukovic's own speeches."⁵⁷ The "FBI (and Army Intelligence) viewed the booklet as simple Communist propaganda,"⁵⁸ and by 1959, "after much legal maneuvering, (Artukovic) was allowed to remain in the country."⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Breitman, Richard (ed). *US Intelligence and the Nazis* (New York: Cambridge University Press,) 2005, p. 227

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 230.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

⁵⁸ Hoover to (excised), 9 July 1951, NA, RG 65, 100-361810-EBF 123, box 75. As cited in: *Ibid*.

⁵⁹ Breitman, *US Intelligence*, p. 230. Note: Artukovic was granted a stay of deportation on the argument that the crimes of which Yugoslavia had accused him were 'political' in nature and that he would suffer political persecution if he were to return.

Conclusion

This section highlights two reasons the United States government employed disreputable individuals. The government considered the fight against Communism its priority. That is why the government was so persistent about the need to utilize German and Austrian scientists and technicians. Agencies supported bringing these individuals to the US so that they wouldn't fall into the hands of the USSR and so these scientists could improve US military capabilities. The Communist priority was also depicted with immigration. The FBI's priority was dealing with Communists, and war criminal charges were hard to prove; therefore, many of the charges were not investigated.

Epilogue

The Office of Special Investigations (OSI) was founded in 1979, and its task was to investigate 'former' Nazis and war criminals in the United States. Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman from New York persuaded the Carter administration to create the Office of Special Investigations "to investigate and prosecute cases involving Nazi war criminals."⁶⁰ The creation of OSI occurred after the passage of the "Holtzman Amendment" in 1978. "The amendment provided a statutory basis to deport Nazi war criminals and to prevent their entry into the country as either immigrants or visitors."⁶¹

The creation of the OSI signified a shift in the government's attitude toward these individuals. This shift occurred for several reasons. Jewish educators and community leaders were doing more to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, which became more important to American Jews as they began building a stronger relationship with Israel. The Holocaust was also becoming a symbol of Jewish identity. Also, through the 1960s, more books were being published about the Third Reich, which increased discussion about the Holocaust. One of the most important novels to spark interest in the Holocaust was Hannah Arendt's novel, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: The Banality of Evil*. This novel discussed the capture of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and his trial in Israel. Eichmann was a member of the SS, and from 1941 to 1945, he was head of the Department for Jewish Affairs in the Gestapo, and was responsible for the deportation of three million Jews to extermination camps.

The most important thing about the Eichmann trial was that it was the first time that what we now call the Holocaust was presented to the American public as an entity in its own right, distinct from Nazi barba-

⁶⁰ Hunt, *Operation Paperclip*, p. 231.

⁶¹ *Ibid*

rism in general...the word 'Holocaust' first became firmly attached to the murder of European Jewry as a result of the trial.⁶²

The government previously employed 'former' Nazi and war criminals, but was now active in apprehending these individuals. The Office of Special Investigations was the major organization that investigated these matters; however, the Department of Justice also conducted several investigations on the government's aid to war criminals in Europe. These cases included, *Klaus Barbie and the United States Government*, *Robert Jan Verbelen and the United States Government*, and *In the Matter of Josef Mengele*.

The *Klaus Barbie and Robert Jan Verbelen* investigations determined the aid the US gave each individual. In Barbie's case, this included the aid to escape Europe. The *Josef Mengele* investigation was conducted for different reasons, which depict the major shift in government attitudes. The investigation was conducted in response to charges that "Mengele had been in U.S. custody and might have had a relationship with the U.S. government."⁶³ The investigation had two major goals: first, to:

determine Mengele's whereabouts, activities and affiliations from 1945-1949, and second, to determine his whereabouts in 1985, so that authorities in Germany or Israel could put him on trial.⁶⁴

This technique is different from Barbie and 'Verbelen's cases, because it was conducted for the purpose of verifying that the US government did not have a relationship with Josef Mengele. It also emphasizes the international support systems. The United States even allowed U.S. Marshals to participate in the search. However, the Marshals did not participate to apprehend Mengele for the United States.

Because Dr. Mengele is not thought to be in this country and is not wanted on any United States charge... 'the marshals can get into this only by way of helping law enforcement agencies in other countries.'⁶⁵

These changes demonstrate the significant shift in the government's attitude toward 'former' Nazis and war criminals.

⁶² Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust in American Life*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company,) 1999, p. 133.

⁶³ Office of Special Investigations, *Mengele*, p. 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ Werner, Leslie Maitland. 'The Mengele File: US Marshals Join the Hunt.' *The New York Times*. May, 28, 1985.