

PATRIOTIC *Prisoners*

By Thomas S. Szasz, M.D.

Continuing revelations about medical crimes by American physicians indistinguishable from those of the Nazi "doctors of infamy" hanged at Nuremberg raise troubling questions, not only about the precise nature of the deeds in question, but also about these physicians' legal and moral accountability for their acts. Whereas, decades after their deeds, the perpetrators of Nazi atrocities are hounded for their crimes and brought to justice, the perpetrators of analogous American medical atrocities reap nothing but rewards for their pioneering "research" in psychopharmacology.

Surely it is no accident that the major medical crimes in Nazi Germany were committed by psychiatrists. It is conservatively estimated that German psychiatrists murdered at least 30,000 German (non-Jewish) mental patients. I submit it is similarly no accident that most of the

physicians so far identified as having participated in what the American press calls the CIA-sponsored "drug tests" have been psychiatrists.¹

The Rockefeller Commission's report on CIA activities within the United States, released in June 1975, lifted the lid, albeit ever so slightly, from what may yet prove to be a veritable Pandora's box of psychiatric atrocities. Buried in that report — occupying less than three pages and naming no names — is a section on "The Testing of Behavior-Influencing Drugs on Unsuspecting Subjects Within the United States."² After an initial paragraph attributing the rationale of the program to the supposed use of psychochemicals by the Soviets, the report goes on to say: "The drug program was a part of a much larger CIA program to study possible means for controlling human behavior. Other studies explored the effects of radiation, electric-shock, psychology, psychiatry, sociology."³ The bracketing of the "mental health" disciplines with "harassment substances" is surely revealing of the uses to which these

supposed sciences are often put. [See "Making Millions from 'Madness,'" page 10.]

The report contains very little actual information about the clandestine CIA drug program because, the commission explains, "unfortunately, only limited records of the testing conducted in these drug programs are now available. All the records concerning the program were ordered destroyed in 1973, including a total of 152 separate files."⁴

The commission does state, however, that "commencing in 1955 under an informal arrangement with the Federal Bureau of Drug Abuse Control, tests were begun on unsuspecting subjects in normal social situations." And it reports one fatality. The victim was "an employee of the Department of the Army [who] was administered LSD without his knowledge while attending a meeting with CIA personnel working on the drug project [who] developed serious side effects and was sent to New York with a CIA escort for psychiatric treatment. Several days

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later, he jumped from a tenth-floor window in his room and died as a result." This last sentence is significantly footnoted as follows: "There are indications in the few remaining Agency records that this individual may have had a history of emotional instability."⁵ In other words, the commission is not satisfied with passing over in silence the fact that the CIA agents in charge of protecting the drugged victim's mental health placed him in a tenth-floor room, but it goes out of its way to defame the victim as mentally ill, implying that he killed himself not because he was poisoned but because he was psychotic.

The Rockefeller Commission's report was soon followed by a series of revelations about medical crimes whose details still continue to trickle in: the anonymous suicide mentioned in the report was identified as Frank Olson; and another victim, not mentioned in the report, was identified as Harold Blauer.

In 1953, Dr. Frank Olson was a forty-three-year-old biochemist employed at the Army's Fort Detrick, Maryland, germ warfare laboratories. That fall the CIA suddenly switched his role — by slipping LSD into his after-dinner Cointreau — from researcher into guinea pig. After downing his spiked liqueur, Olson became upset and depressed. His colleagues concluded that he was mentally ill and needed psychiatric attention. Two of them, Vincent Ruwet and Robert Lashbrook, took Olson under their wing and flew him to New York to see Dr. Harold A. Abramson, a former psychiatric consultant for the Army. Abramson diagnosed Olson's problems as "delusions and severe psychosis" and recommended that Olson enter a mental hospital. On November 28, 1953, while seemingly contemplating admitting himself to a mental hospital, Olson escaped from his "protectors" by jumping to his death from a tenth-story hotel room.⁶

The second fatality directly attributable to the secret CIA psychochemical program occurred on January 8, 1953, when Harold Blauer was killed at the New York Psychiatric Institute. In the fall of 1952, Mr. Blauer, a former Army colonel and a professional tennis player, was divorced by his wife. He became depressed, sought psychiatric help, and in December 1952 voluntarily entered the

New York Psychiatric Institute. He had been scheduled to be released from the hospital the day after the fatal injection. According to *The New York Times*, "Documents explaining the experiment with Mr. Blauer indicate that he protested the injection and Miss Barrett [his daughter] says she believes he was forced to take the drug."⁷ An internal Army report made public on August 3, 1976, confirmed Miss Barrett's suspicions. It quotes a Department of Justice memo as saying that "neither the patient nor his family were advised of the proposed therapy [*sic*] or gave permission."⁸ Blauer died on January 8, 1953, less than two and a half hours after being injected with a "mescaline derivative."⁹

In addition to these two known fatalities, thousands of persons, Americans

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and foreigners, were drugged with hallucinogenic and related substances in "research programs" sponsored by the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The Department of Defense claims to have discontinued these programs in 1967. The Air Force has admitted that it continued them until 1972. The scope and the cost of these programs may be gleaned from press reports.

For example, on September 9, 1975, the *Times* reported that "the Army disclosed today that it had surreptitiously given LSD to soldiers in cocktails in much the same way the Central Intelligence Agency did in an experiment that led to the death of one of its subjects."¹⁰ Gradually, the categories from which subjects were selected for drugging by the CIA were expanded. On April 27, 1976, the *Times* reported: "For nine years, beginning in 1954, employees of the Central Intelligence Agency randomly picked

up unsuspecting patrons in bars in the United States and slipped LSD into their food and drink."¹¹ The next day we learned that "Army officers gave LSD to unsuspecting American soldiers, Europeans and Asians in the late 1950s and early 1960s."¹² This information was based on a report by the inspector general of the Army after an eight-month investigation of the service's more than 20 years of experimentation on humans with drugs." In its more than 250-page report, the inspector general's office said it had found numerous irregularities and violations of policies and regulations."¹³ This particular program alone was said to have cost \$110 million.

An earlier report in the *Times* (September 10, 1975) gave us this glimpse of the money psychiatrists made from the poisoning business: "Less than a year after a patient died in an Army-sponsored experiment with an hallucinogenic drug at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, the Army gave the Institute another contract for nearly \$143,000 to continue experimenting on humans for four more years."¹⁴

All this raises an obvious question. Who were the physicians responsible for these medical crimes? Who were the doctors who participated in, and profited from, these ostensibly patriotic and professional "research programs"? The Rockefeller report named not a single one. It must remain a matter of conjecture whether this is because one of the "principal investigators" in one of the largest of these projects was the commissioner of mental hygiene of New York state under Governor Rockefeller.

When in August 1975 the Army released some of the details of its LSD program, it identified Dr. Paul Hoch as one of the "principal investigators" of this project.¹⁵ Dr. Hoch, a refugee from Nazi Germany, was one of the most influential and respected psychiatrists in the United States. From 1952 until his death in 1964, he was the commissioner of mental hygiene of the state of New York. Before his appointment to that important position, he was principal research scientist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and clinical professor of psychiatry at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Another physician identified as responsible for these druggings is Dr. Sidney Malitz, who at the time of the Blauer-Olson experiments was doing "drug

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research" as a captain in the Army assigned to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.¹⁶ Dr. Malitz is now an accredited psychoanalyst, the acting director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute, and vice-chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Among his publications is a paper titled "The Role of Mescaline and D-Lysergic Acid in Psychiatric Treatment."

In August 1976 another "principal investigator," and the only one still alive who was associated with the project in which Blauer was killed, was named.¹⁷ He is Dr. James P. Cattell, who was then a senior research psychiatrist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. In 1959, Dr. Cattell co-authored a paper with Dr. Hoch on "pseudoneurotic schizophrenia." The patients at the institute were, I assume, in no position to counter with a paper on "pseudotherapeutic poisoning."

A few other physicians directing "drug-testing" programs in other states and at other institutions have also been named. One of them is Dr. Amadeo Marrazzi, presently the chairman of the Division of Neuropharmacology at the University of Missouri Institute of Psychiatry.¹⁸ In November 1975 Dr. Marrazzi was accused at a Senate subcommittee hearing of having "devastated" a young psychiatric patient with LSD in an Air Force-funded experiment in 1965. His accuser, Mrs. Mary Ray, then a psychometrist at the University of Minnesota Hospital, said that "the patient, an eighteen-year-old girl being treated for a 'personality disorder,' definitely did not want to be part of the experiment. I saw her and they were taking her in, and she said she won't go, and they said, 'Yes, you will!' . . . When [Mrs. Ray] next saw the patient, about an hour or two later, 'she was totally disintegrated; she was absolutely psychotic.'"¹⁹

All of the above-named physicians participated in these programs of their own free will; and all were, or are, psychiatrists. Indeed, they all were, or are, highly respected and prominent members of the American Psychiatric Association. The pundits of that organization have steadfastly maintained for these past twenty years that a person who takes

LSD because he wants to is a "drug abuser," is "mentally ill," and is a fit subject for coerced psychiatric treatment, and that a person who sells LSD to a willing buyer is a fit subject for some of the harshest punishments permitted under our system of criminal law.²¹ At the same time, the officials of this organization have not only failed to object to these grave abuses of the physician's role, but have implicitly condoned them. On August 11, 1975, confronted with the sorts of revelations I have reviewed here, Dr. Judd Marmor, then the president of the American Psychiatric Association, offered this comment: "One might argue as to whether [the Army] has obtained

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informed consent, but if you tell the subject everything you might well invalidate the experiment."²¹

But the German doctors who killed unsuspecting persons did not practice euthanasia; they murdered people. Similarly, the American doctors who drugged unsuspecting persons did not perform "experiments"; they poisoned people. The facts are clear enough: prominent American psychiatrists are implicated in the most serious and systematic violations, not only of medical ethics, but also of the criminal law, that have ever been brought to light in the United States. The question is: What are we going to do about it?

Notes:

1. J.B. Treaster, "Report on Army's Drug Tests Tells of Efforts at Concealment," *The New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1976, pp. 1 and 21; and Treaster, "Army Discloses Man Died in Drug Test It Sponsored," *The New York*

Times, Aug. 13, 1975, pp. 1 and 13.

2. Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States, *Report to the President, June 1975*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1975), pp. 226-28.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

6. See S.M. Hersch, "Family Plans to Sue CIA Over Suicide in Drug Test," *The New York Times*, July 10, 1975, pp. 1 and 18; J.B. Treaster, "Detective Said Scientist Had 'Severe Psychosis,'" *The New York Times*, July 11, 1975, p. 34; and "The Casualty," *Newsweek*, July 21, 1975, pp. 17-19.

7. Quoted in J.B. Treaster, "Efforts at Concealment."

8. *Ibid.*

9. See also Treaster, "\$8.5 Million Sought from Army in 1953 Drug Death," *The New York Times*, Sept. 4, 1975, p. 22; and "Drug Death Data Omits Army Link," *The New York Times*, Aug. 14, 1975, p. 37.

10. Treaster, "Army Tricked GIs into Drug Testing," *The New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1975, p. 1.

11. Treaster, "Report Says CIA Agents Picked up Bar Patrons for LSD Experiments," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1976, p. 25.

12. "GIs, Foreigners Used in LSD Tests," *The New York Times*, Apr. 28, 1976, p. 9.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Treaster, "Drug Death Brought No Halt to Tests," *The New York Times*, Sept. 10, 1975, p. 12.

15. See Treaster, "Army Discloses Man Died."

16. See Treaster, "Drug Death Brought No Halt to Tests."

17. See Treaster, "Efforts at Concealment."

18. See Treaster, "LSD Researcher Is Under Inquiry," *The New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1975, p. 23.

19. "Latest LSD Charge: Forceful Air Force Experiments," *Medical World News*, Nov. 3, 1975, p. 22.

20. See, generally, T.S. Szasz, *Ceremonial Chemistry: The Ritual Persecution of Drugs, Addicts, and Pushers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974).

21. Quoted in Treaster, "Mind-Drug Tests a Federal Project for Almost 25 Years," *The New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1975, p. 42.

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