

3/13/85

Mr. Hedrick Smith
New York Times
1000 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Smith,

The Times' story reporting that intelligence officials hid the Nazi pasts of more than 100 scientists triggers recollections of my own days in intelligence that may interest the Times or Ms. Linda Hunt or the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, for neither of whom I have an address.

In fairness, however, I am certain that a law was passed to permit the immigration of up to 100 persons a year without regard to the provisions of any laws. While this is not the same as hiding pasts of those with much to hide, it does mean that bringing those people in was not illegal.

The reported deception of the State Department is only part of that deception. What were called "outpost" records passed through my hands and I then had knowledge of where captured records had been hidden, were stored, etc. When State was interested in some of these captured records the military merely lied about them, claiming they did not exist. I have a clear recollection of being called back from leave to tell the then State intelligence director whose name, I think, was Sam Clouse, where records of interest were hidden after he had been told they did not exist.

I am also clear that the military did destroy some records to keep them from falling into Soviet hands and I am pretty certain that this included some Gestapo membership records. (We then were supposedly allies, with some common interests.)

If anyone is interested the old OSS records which CIA has and State intelligence files should be available under FOIA, without any legitimate "national security" claim to withhold.

The military had its own reasons for memory-holing and I could only conjecture why. For example, when the partisans captured Mussolini they captured records with him. The number 25 sticks in my mind and I'm not certain whether he had 25 suitcases or other packages of whether the copies were forwarded as 25 reels of microfilm. I believe the records included stock holdings and things like that. They were also of interest to one whose name I recall as Jean Pajus, an economist with a war agency and I believe French, with an accent. He and I both traced these records to the Pentagon and the trail ended there with the denial of their existence.

Some German and Italian foreign office records were captured and forwarded. I am not aware of any disclosures or uses of them. Relating to the then pope, I recall the forwarding of some of the records relating to the German ambassador, Baron von Weiszaker (approx.) I recall also the letter to Mussolini from the Italian ambassador to Nicaragua forwarding the request of the founding Samoza for word from Musso on how he did it so that Samoza could copy him.

If anyone has any interest in tracing any of those records I am pretty certain that some German foreign office records were found hidden in a salt mine at Harburg.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg

U.S. officials concealed Nazi records

New York Times News Service

NEW YORK — American intelligence officials concealed the Nazi records of more than 100 former enemy scientists to try to get them into the United States after World War II, contrary to a presidential order and against the objections of the State Department, according to declassified government documents.

The documents, disclosed in a magazine article, reveal that American authorities knew that many of the specialists were "ardent Nazis" implicated in atrocities, and doctored their dossiers to hide this.

How many got into the United States because of dossier changes is not clear. Not all of the dossiers were declassified.

It is also unclear if the State Department was able to prevent any of the Nazis from entering. Dossiers were changed to get around anticipated State Department objections.

The documents also show that among those hired for American research were several specialists who were later charged with war crimes at Nuremberg and one who was convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison for medical experiments on prisoners at the Dachau concentration camp. At least one of these men got into the United States.

Also among those whose files were upgraded, the records show, was Werner von Braun, a major in the Nazi SS who developed the V-2 rocket in wartime Germany and later headed the American space program. Von Braun, who died in 1977, was initially labeled "a potential security threat" but the assessment was later revised on the request of American military officials.

Between 1945 and 1955, some 800 former enemy rocket experts and other specialists — and almost 2,000 of their dependents — were brought into the country under an American intelligence program first called Overcast and then Project Paperclip. By order of President Harry Truman, the program was barred to active Nazi Party members or supporters of Nazism.



WERNER VON BRAUN
Saved from "security threat" label

However, documents disclosed in an article to appear in the April issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* show that officials of the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency under the Joint Chiefs of Staff had a practice of requesting changes in negative dossiers on specialists they wanted to recruit. The practice led to clashes with State Department officials who objected to it, the documents show.

The *Bulletin* is a nonprofit monthly magazine published by the Educational Foundation of Ni-

clear Science in Chicago.

The article, by Linda Hunt, a reporter and documentary producer who has spent several years researching Nazi war criminals in the United States, quotes from hundreds of declassified documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. Some of the key documents were made available to *The New York Times* and verified independently.

Although a number of the officials named have since died or cannot be located, some of the events described were corroborated by a former State Department intelligence official cited in the documents.

"We got into several rounds, because it looked like they were trying to dump" the Germans into the United States, recalled Herbert J. Cummings, a former assistant chief of the State Department's Bureau of Foreign Activity Correlation.

Now retired in Washington, Mr. Cummings confirmed that he was the unnamed State Department official cited in the *Bulletin* article as having "hit the ceiling" after finding discrepancies in the records of the Paperclip scientists.

Among those listed in the documents as working for the Army Air Force in Heidelberg in 1946 and recommended for transfer to Wright Field in Ohio was Dr. Herman Becker-Freytag, former director of aeromedical research for the German air force. Shortly afterward he was convicted at Nuremberg and sentenced to 20 years in prison for a role in experiments on Dachau prisoners who died after drinking sea water to test its potability.

Also listed as Paperclip recruits were three other defendants charged but later acquitted on varying grounds in the so-called Medical Case at Nuremberg from 1946 to 1947. Washington arranged for a fourth Paperclip scientist, Walter Schreiber, to be flown from the United States to Argentina in 1952 after disclosure of documents linking him to the Nazi euthanasia program.

In all, Miss Hunt reported finding revisions eliminating the security-risk classification for more than 130 Paperclip scientists.