SECRET AGENDA
The United States Government, Nazi Scientists, and Project Paperclip, 1945 to 1990

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To My Parents
examined up to now or that take on new significance in light of Paperclip’s true history include:

• the expansion of JIOA’s intelligence operation in 1948 to include Project National Interest, which brought a convicted Nazi war criminal, an ex-Nazi spy, and other ardent Nazis to the United States to work for universities and defense contractors;

• how the CIA used National Interest as a cover to slip covert CIA operatives overseas into the United States;

• how another JIOA project, called “63,” signed up Nuremberg defendant Kurt Blome, convicted Nazi war criminal Eduard Houdremont, and other notorious individuals while the JIOA ran the operation out of a New York hotel;

• details of a scheme by U.S. Air Force General Robert L. Walsh, Director of Intelligence, European Command, to intervene in court decisions involving ex-Nazi intelligence officers working for postwar U.S. intelligence in Germany;

• details of another scheme by Walsh, who, as head of the Inter-American Defense Board, relocated notorious German General Walter Schreiber from the United States to Argentina;

• how Whalen’s Paperclip recruits in 1959 included a former Wehrmacht soldier who was working as a dishwasher in Canada;

• how an alliance formed in 1985 between political extremist Lyndon LaRouche and former Paperclip scientists tried to shut down the Justice Department’s Nazi-hunting unit;

• details of another scheme in 1986 to squelch the Justice Department’s investigations of former Paperclip specialists Guenther Haukohl and Dieter Grau;

• how NASA publicly honored those same men in a 1987 ceremony commemorating Wernher von Braun;

• how Rudolph’s friends tried to bring him back in 1990 to attend a NASA moon walk celebration, despite laws barring his entry into the United States.

In essence this book deals with a hauntingly familiar and contemporary subject: a small group of men in the Pentagon who decided that they alone knew what was best for the country. “And that, I think, is the real danger here,” said former U.S. congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman, who authored the 1978 immigration law that bars Nazis from our shores. “We have agencies that think that they are a law unto themselves, that regardless of what the law of the land is, regardless of what the president of the United States says, they’ll do whatever they think is best for themselves. And that’s very dangerous.”
Friedwardt Winterberg was one German scientist who was named as a candidate for JIOA’s denial Project 63 in 1959. As the reader will learn later, in 1985 Winterberg positioned himself as media spokesman for Arthur Rudolph when Rudolph left the country rather than face war crimes charges. In January 1959 the thirty-year-old physicist was demanding a salary of over $1,000 a month. ACSI Director of Plans Brigadier General Richard Collins told the Special Projects Team that Winterberg might be considered for JIOA’s project if he discontinued that demand. “Age and lack of experience would cause prospective employers to be reluctant to offer such a salary,” Collins wrote. It was suggested that Winterberg be sent to the Alamac Hotel for job interviews. Winterberg accepted a position at Ohio’s Case University in 1959 and currently is with the Desert Research Institute in Reno, Nevada.26

The 1959 group also included older scientists who had established their careers under Hitler. One was forty-seven-year-old Hans Dolezalek, a German meteorologist who had worked for the Wehrmacht Weather Service during World War II and had been an early member of the SA, the brown-shirted storm-troopers. The JIOA was not supposed to actively recruit scientists after 1948. Yet the team’s recruiter, Knut Lossbom, had approached Dolezalek as early as 1953, sending him forms to apply for work in America. Dolezalek visited America in 1958 to attend a conference of meteorological experts. He accepted a position under Pappedic at AVCO in Wilmington, Massachusetts, for $13,000 a year, twice the salary offered by Fort Monmouth.27

Another 1959 recruit was working as a dishwasher in Canada when he asked Wernher von Braun for a job. Sixty-one-year-old Friedrich Wigand was first touted as a top German rocket scientist, but after he arrived in Huntsville he admitted that he had never even seen a rocket. He had been a lieutenant in the Wehrmacht stationed for a time at Kummersdorf, where some of Germany’s rocket work was being done. After the war, Wigand immigrated to Canada and worked on a farm picking sugar beets. In 1956, he got a job washing dishes at a hospital in Calgary. “Every night after my work in the kitchen, I studied my chemistry and my physics,” said the self-taught chemist. He arrived in Huntsville in May 1959 and obtained a position as a lab technician at Brown Engineering Company.28

One physicist was returned to Germany when he could not find permanent employment in America. Fritz Rossmann, a former SS member, had worked for the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in Huntsville and the Patrick Air Force Base in Florida. Despite a more lenient immigration law, Rossmann had problems obtaining permanent residency because of his SS and Nazi party memberships and the fact that he had been arrested twice by Army CIC agents and convicted by a denazification court. During the war he had been chief of the atmospheric electricity section of the German Glider Research Institute in Braunschweig. Rossmann returned to Germany in 1959 and joined the faculty at the University of Munich.29

Whalen’s position as JIOA director in charge of the German scientist program gives rise to disturbing questions about further services he might have provided his Soviet handlers.

- Did he bring in a spy or saboteur? Whalen could have inserted a specialist hand-picked by the Soviets into a crucial area of American defense-related research, where the scientist-agent could then either sabotage our efforts or report on them to his spy masters.
- Did he use blackmail to recruit a spy or saboteur from among the approximately sixteen hundred Pappedic specialists and hundreds of other JIOA recruits brought to this country since 1945? It certainly is clear from the evidence that many of them had a lot to hide.
- Did he give the Soviets information on research being done by JIOA specialists all across the country? These specialists worked on guided missiles for the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. They worked in the NASA space program, in aeromedical research, in atomic, biological, and chemical warfare research, and on the latest designs in jet aircraft and
that day were under active OSI investigation for Nazi war crimes.  

Standing in the third row—the one wearing impenetrably dark glasses, the other wearing an open-necked shirt—were Guenther Haukohl and Dieter Grau. During World War II, Haukohl was Rudolph's subordinate at Mittelwerk as chief manager of installation and supervision of the manufacture of V-2s. Up to seven hundred prisoners worked as slaves in Haukohl's unit, under the supervision of a brutal capo named Georg Finkenzeller, who was convicted after the war of viciously beating prisoners. The question of whether Haukohl had anything to do with prisoners being mistreated remains unanswered.

Grau, an engineer at Peenemünde, was sent by Wernher von Braun to Mittelwerk to find out why rockets produced at the underground factory were malfunctioning. During an inspection Grau found that prisoners who he said did not have a "positive attitude" had sabotaged the rockets. "They knew where they could tighten or loosen a screw, and this way try to interfere with the proper function of the missile," Grau said. Grau even told Atlanta Weekly in 1985 he had turned in a sabotage report on the prisoners. But the question of whether Grau's report led to the prisoners being hanged also remains unanswered.

And those disturbing questions may never be answered. Patrick Richardson, a Huntsville attorney representing Haukohl and Grau, claimed that the Justice Department was on a Nazi "witch-hunt" and twice turned down OSI's request to interview the two men, in November 1985 and March 1986. A Cable News Network cameraman and I went to see Haukohl and Grau at their Huntsville homes for my CNN series broadcast in 1986. Haukohl refused to talk, and all Grau would say was, "I promised my lawyer I wouldn't make any further statements."

From the morning shadows that lent an air of ambiguity to the ASRC's photographic session, the reunion moved to an indoor auditorium, where the near-darkness signaled a change of mood—a gathering of sinister forces, some from the distant past, some from the present. There in the auditorium, along with the old Germans themselves, were representatives of the forces that had helped create and perpetuate the lies that surrounded Paperclip and its spinoffs since 1945: the U.S. Army, NASA, and—a more recent addition—the empire built on zealotry and fraud by political extremist Lyndon LaRouche.

After an hour-long slide show and briefing on the Army's latest weaponry, an ASRC public relations official set the ground rules for the press: there were to be no questions about Arthur Rudolph. But the questions were asked despite the gag attempt, and soon the air was filled with hostility and bitter comments about the OSI's handling of Rudolph's case. Retired Army Colonel Paul Towry, a former chief executive officer at Redstone Arsenal, lambasted the OSI, saying their investigations are "beginning to get out of hand."

Then the press conference turned into a podium for the twisted paranoia and conspiracy theories of LaRouche. Marsha Freeman, Washington editor of Fusion magazine, a LaRouche mouthpiece, was introduced by the public relations officer and allowed to launch into a fifteen-minute attack on the OSI. "The witch-hunt against the leading space scientists of the United States is nothing less than a Soviet plot to destroy the military-scientific accomplishments of the U.S.,” she said. Freeman concluded her tirade by asking for a congressional investigation and urging that the OSI be shut down. At that point the Germans in the audience cheered.

The Huntsville gathering, with its bizarre mixture of adulation and paranoia, was a symptom of a gathering storm. For over forty years Paperclip had survived threats from within and without, kept on course by the firm determination that the ends justified the means, even if that meant breaking the law. Paperclip's dark secrets lay safely hidden in coverups, lies, and deceit. Now the Rudolph case had put a crack in the project's protective shell and threatened to expose all of those secrets.

An alliance quickly formed to close the gap and continue the coverup. It also resulted in the kind of Holocaust revisionism and whitewash that OSI Director Neal Sher had warned was taking place.

One figure in that alliance was Frederick Ordway, a former
NASA public relations official who was a close friend of Rudolph, Wernher von Braun, and other Paperclip scientists. Ordway publicly defended Rudolph, claiming that the Dora slaves had been “well fed.” As evidence Ordway cited a letter by Milton Hochmuth, a former Army intelligence officer who had rounded up V-2s at Mittelwerk in 1945, in which Hochmuth says he remembers “being surprised at how well-fed... and in good health” he found the prisoners assigned to V-2 production.9

Ordway did not mention that Hochmuth also must have seen the dead bodies of six thousand Dora slaves lying on the ground, as former New York governor Hugh Carey and other American liberators did when they arrived on the same day as Hochmuth. “Everyone saw it,” said Carey, who was then an eighteen-year-old Army sergeant. “We saw everything within a few minutes when we arrived at the site. It was horrible.”10

Ordway also suppressed the most damaging evidence against his false claim—evidence he has had in hand for more than ten years: a taped interview with Dieter Grau conducted in 1971 for Ordway’s book The Rocket Team (coauthored by Mitchell Sharpe). In describing the prisoners he saw during his wartime visit to Mittelwerk, Grau said, “the way they looked, they were not well fed at all and as far as I could see, had a tough time.” Ordway conveniently left Grau’s comments out of his book, which whitewashes Rudolph’s activities at Mittelwerk.11

The LaRouche organization is another part of the alliance forged in response to the Rudolph case. The perennial presidential candidate’s shadowy network has been described by the CIA as a “violence oriented” cult. The inner workings of a myriad of illegal money-funneling fronts and publications generally went unreported in the establishment press until hundreds of police raided LaRouche’s Leesburg, Virginia, estate in 1986. In November 1988 LaRouche was convicted in a federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, of conspiracy to obstruct justice, mail fraud, and income tax evasion. According to the fifty-two-page indictment in that case, LaRouche personally instructed members to “use ‘any means short of thievery and thuggery’ to meet fund-raising quotas.” But even his conviction for these crimes has not stopped LaRouche: in September 1990 he decided to run for Congress while still serving time in a federal penitentiary.12

The LaRouche group’s virulent Nazi-style anti-Semitism also has been well documented. As the Anti-Defamation League’s Irwin Suall put it, LaRouche is a “small time Hitler.” The LaRouche group’s idolatry of defense-related research, along with its smoke screen of wild allegations of anti-LaRouche conspiracies involving the Queen of England, the KGB, and even President Bush, make them a logical vessel for paranoia about the OSI’s Nazi-hunting activities.13

LaRouche has long-standing ties with the Nazi scientists brought to the United States under Paperclip. One was Krafft Ehricke, a longtime member of the Fusion Energy Foundation and author of articles for Fusion magazine. Ehricke, who died in 1984, had been a tank commander in the Wehrmacht and an engineer at Peenemünde before working for the U.S. Army under Paperclip. Later Ehricke went to Bell Aircraft, where his old Peenemünde chief Walter Dornberger was vice president, and then joined the Convair division of General Dynamics, which built the Atlas missile. Another scientist with LaRouche ties was Konrad Dannenberg, who had been a rocket propulsion section chief at Peenemünde and was part of the original German rocket team brought to the United States in 1945. There is also rocket pioneer Hermann Oberth, who was brought to Huntsville under Paperclip in 1955. Oberth, it will be remembered, also smuggled his art treasures out of West Germany when he came here.14

Both Dannenberg and Oberth contributed to an anti-OSI rally held at LaRouche’s heavily guarded estate in July 1985. The rally was held under the guise of being a tribute to Ehricke, with 450 military officers and scientists from West Germany and other countries in attendance. In his keynote address LaRouche claimed that the OSI was carrying out a “KGB-run
witch-hunt" against German scientists and accused the Justice Department unit of committing "treason." That rhetoric was followed by Dannenberg's speech on the "lessons" of Peenemünde and the reading of a message from Oberth that evoked the mystique of Nazi science.15

Dannenberg said he was "borne into this LaRouche affair" when he was asked to honor Ehricke at the rally. "I have since that time had only very very loose contacts with them," he said. "I do not agree and go along with his [LaRouche's] basic concept" or the aspects of LaRouche's operations that have been in the news lately. "So in a way I have dissociated myself from the group. On the other hand, of course, I certainly appreciate that the group . . . supports Rudolph quite a bit. I think they are doing a good job in that area."16

One highlight of the anti-OSI rally was a taped speech by retired Major General John B. Medaris, Rudolph's old commander at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville. In his speech, Medaris accused the OSI of waging an unconstitutional campaign of "guilt by association" against German scientists. The old Germans just "sit there now not knowing when somebody's going to put them on the pillory for things of no consequence," Medaris said.17

Another featured speaker was the man who—apart from LaRouche himself—cuts perhaps the oddest figure in the whole spectrum of Rudolph's defenders. Friedwardt Winterberg, mentioned earlier as a high-priced candidate for Paperclip in 1959, is a German-born nuclear physicist at Nevada's Desert Research Institute in Reno. In his speech at the LaRouche rally Winterberg touched on a facet of LaRouche's KGB-East German conspiracy theories by claiming that the OSI's evidence against Rudolph had come from Communist East Germany.18

Winterberg's ties to LaRouche go back to at least 1980, when Fusion magazine published a controversial article by Winterberg that explained how a hydrogen bomb is detonated. A year later the Fusion Energy Foundation published Winterberg's book The Physical Principles of Thermonuclear Explosive Devices. Winterberg also writes for yet another LaRouche outlet, the International Journal of Fusion Energy, which bills itself as welcoming scientists whose articles are banned in established scientific journals "because of the ideological prejudice of journal referees."19

With Rudolph living in exile in Hamburg, Winterberg positioned himself with the press as Rudolph's public spokesman and defender. A great part of Winterberg's defense campaign consisted of sending reporters and congressmen reams of printed materials, much of it taken from some of the most virulently anti-Semitic publications in the country. One of those, Spotlight, is a weekly tabloid published by Liberty Lobby, an extreme right-wing group run by anti-Semite Willis Carto. Carto's notorious front group, Institute for Holocaust Review, was established for the sole purpose of denying the reality of the Holocaust.20

A lengthy pro-Rudolph article by Winterberg was featured in Spotlight on August 31, 1987. Medaris also chose to defend Rudolph in Spotlight by making the outrageous assertion that "even if you accept what the allegations have been, I cannot find any justice in bringing those kinds of charges against a man after 30-odd years—and certainly not when you consider he gave 30 years of very fine, dedicated service to this nation."21 In other words, it is all right to use a mass murderer so long as he can help us get to the moon.

Winterberg sent reporters and congressmen Spotlight and other anti-Semitic materials with a cover letter written on letterhead stationery of the Office of the President of the state-funded Desert Research Institute, part of the University of Nevada system. Winterberg's letters reflected Holocaust revisionism at its worst, including false claims that Jews did not work at the V-2 rocket factory and slanderous assertions against famed Nazi hunter and concentration camp survivor Simon Wiesenthal. In a note to the World Jewish Congress, Winterberg suggested that Jews too can be Nazis. In a letter to Nevada senator Paul Laxalt, Winterberg claimed that Jews did not work at Mittelwerk and even cited as evidence an
enclosed article from the Holocaust-denying magazine *Instaurat*ion. Then he repeated an anti-Semitic slur against OSI Director Sher that he had read in *Instaurat*ion.22

Winterberg also approached witnesses in an effort to get them to change their testimony about Rudolph. For example, he admitted in a letter to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* that he had questioned Hannelore Bannasch, a witness at the Andræ trial, after her OSI interrogation. Bannasch had testified under oath at the 1947 Army trial that if anyone had signed sabotage reports it would have been Rudolph. She confirmed that testimony in a 1983 sworn statement to the OSI. Suddenly, after a visit from Winterberg, Bannasch changed her entire story, claiming that Rudolph was innocent and that her original testimony had been “mis-translated.”23

The line taken by Rudolph’s defenders resulted in press coverage that reeked with Holocaust revisionism, perpetuating what Dora survivor Jean Michel described as the “monstrous distortion of history” that has “given birth to false, foul, and suspect myths.” The U.S. Army’s figure of at least twenty thousand prisoner deaths suddenly became five thousand, then four thousand, and in one United Press International story was reduced to four thousand slave laborers who “allegedly died.” Rudolph’s public statements were tinged with amnesia as he claimed that he “did not know the prisoners were dying.” And since most reporters did not bother to interview Dora survivors, they were portrayed as being “well fed,” while Rudolph was viewed as the real victim.24

Then NASA got into the act when the Marshall Space Flight Center held a “Wernher von Braun birthday reception” on March 25, 1987, honoring eighty-three former Paperclip specialists. Two of those honored—Grau and Haukohi—still were under active investigation by the Justice Department’s Nazi-hunting unit. NASA’s director, James Thompson, vowed to make the von Braun celebration an annual event and urged NASA employees to “rub elbows with these old guys—maybe some of their experience will rub off on us.” NASA spokesman Bob Lessels said that Rudolph had not been invited to the party. Nevertheless, NASA’s actions certainly raise questions as to the propriety of a federal agency holding public gatherings to honor men under investigation by the Criminal Division of the Justice Department.25

All of the activities tied to the Paperclip story in the 1980s—the Rudolph case and his defenders, the Alabama Space and Rocket Center and Marshall Center meetings, the OSI’s investigations of other former Paperclip scientists—were carried out in an atmosphere in which the Reagan White House was sending out mixed signals about the OSI, Nazis, and even the Holocaust itself.

Former White House communications director Patrick Buchanan’s views were the most unequivocal within the Reagan administration. Buchanan is well known for his attacks on OSI’s prosecution of Nazi war criminals, and he has defended Nazis repeatedly and called for OSI’s abolition in his syndicated columns and on television. Therefore it was logical that when Rudolph’s colleagues sought an advocate within the administration, they went to Buchanan. In June 1985 former Paperclip scientist Eberhard Rees met with Buchanan to discuss the defenders’ efforts to restore Rudolph’s American citizenship. After the meeting Rees said that Buchanan had indicated he would support their cause.26

Others in the Reagan administration put out conflicting signals about the Holocaust and their commitment to the OSI. On the one hand, the administration claimed it supported OSI’s mission to deport Nazi war criminals. On the other hand, in 1985 President Reagan laid a wreath at a war cemetery in Bitburg, West Germany, where Waffen SS troops were buried. And in October 1988 a nationwide school Holocaust history program was denied federal funding for the third straight year because of complaints by extreme right-wing factions in the U.S. Department of Education. Among the complaints was the claim by Dr. Christina Price, then from Troy State University in Alabama, that the Holocaust program was not “balanced” because “the Nazi point of view, however unpopular, is still a point of view and is not presented, nor is that of the Ku Klux Klan.”27

Another controversy ensued over President Reagan’s ap-
4. Rudolph discusses Grau's visit to Mittelwerk in OSI interrogation of Rudolph; Grau quotes are from a 17 June 1971 taped interview with Dieter Grau by Frederick Ordway and David Christensen (obtained by the author under the FOIA from OSI); and Atlanta Weekly, 26 May 1985.

5. UPI, "Lawyer Refuses ‘Witchhunt’ Interviews," 7 March 1986; and Hunt, "Nazi Coverup."


7. Author's notes of meetings. This gag attempt was brazen. After Birmingham News reporter Michael Jennings and I began asking questions about Rudolph, we were ordered to the front of the auditorium. The West German TV crew videotaped the event from the back of the room. The crew's photographer, who was born in Israel, told the author that a representative of the space museum said he was glad to see them because the American press was "a pain in the neck when it came to the Nazi issue." The West German crew was not amused.


10. Author interview with former New York governor Hugh Carey.

11. Ordway and Sharpe, Rocket Team; and Grau tape interview.


Plaintiffs [LaRouche group] have linked prominent Jews and Jewish organizations both in this country and abroad with the rise of Hitler, Nazis and Fascism, the international drug trade, and a myriad of purported conspiracies that have bedeviled the United States and the world at large, including a conspiracy to assassinate the U.S.L.P. leader, Lyndon LaRouche. At a minimum, under the fair comment doctrine, the facts of this case reasonably give rise to an inference upon which the A.D.L. can form an honest opinion that the plaintiffs are anti-Semitic. (p. A-13)

14. Kraft Ehricke bio is in his ACSI dossier, ACSI post-1952 Paperclip files, RG 319, WNRC. For Ehricke and Fusion Energy Foundation connections see Fusion, March–April 1985; Konrad Dannenberg authored a lengthy article, "From the First Large Guided Missile to the Space Shuttle: A Pictorial History," also in Fusion, March–April 1986.


20. For information on Spotlight and Willis Carto see Extremism on the Right. As example of the notorious anti-Semitism of Spotlight and Carto see Mermelstein v. Institute for Historical Review, CIV 356-542 (Calif. Sup. Ct.),