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ON PAGE B 14THE WASHINGTON POST  
22 October 1979

# 'Paperclip': Some Nazis' Ticket to U.S.

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In the nightmare that was Nazi Germany, the most unforgivable criminals were the men of science who put their skills and knowledge at the service of Adolf Hitler and his insane genocidal theories.

Trained to serve humanity, they should have had a better grasp of right and wrong than the homicidal, morose thugs of the SS who did the actual butchering. Yet it was German scientists who developed the mass-murder techniques the SS used, and who performed unspeakable "experiments" on Jews, Russian prisoners-of-war and other helpless victims.

Ironically, the politics of the Cold War gave these scientists the best chance of any Nazi criminals to escape punishment for their actions. Their expertise was a salable commodity in the East-West competition that sprang up before the ashes of defeated Germany were even cool.

Suppressed government documents detail an outrageous program, code-named "Paperclip," under which hundreds of Nazis—including alleged war criminals—were welcomed into the United States with no regard for their past service to Hitler. The still-secret documents were turned up by Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), whose Judiciary subcommittee is looking into "Paperclip" and related programs.

The intent of the "Paperclip" program was to recruit German scientists and technicians before the Soviets snared them. Ostensibly, strict background checks were to be run on the recruits and their families to make sure no war criminals were given sanctuary in this country.

In fact, however, the secret documents indicate—and other sources have confirmed—that in many cases no security checks were made. This laxity by federal authorities enabled Nazi criminals to settle in the United States, secure from prosecution for their atrocities. A few of these scientists have been accused of performing experiments on Jews, sources told our associates Gary Cohn and Jack Mitchell.

In some cases, derogatory information on a particular scientist-recruit was simply overlooked because the government considered him too valuable to risk going to the Russians—or to a de-Nazification court.

"Paperclip" was a calculated, cumulative effort by the U.S. government to bring some of the worst kinds of Nazis into the United States regardless of their backgrounds," a congressional investigator told us after examining the suppressed documents.

A less extreme view was given by another knowledgeable source, who said the intent of the operation was benign—to expedite the clearance of needed scientific talent—but the way it was carried out was a disaster. "It was an error of judgment," he said.

Whether "Paperclip" was deliberately used to smuggle known Nazi criminals into this country, or was merely bungled, the fact remains that federal authorities violated immigration laws in their zeal to recruit the German scientists.

One restricted document, for example, states: "Frankly, we reached the conclusion that, as a matter of fact, they are being brought here as civil-

ians without regard to the immigration laws."

When one government official suggested that the German scientists should be permitted to come here only on regular visas, he was quickly overruled on grounds of "expedience," the documents show. Hundreds of scientists and their families, some with neither passports nor visas—and some with well-documented ties to Nazi activities—were ferried to the United States on troop ships carrying American GIs home for discharge. Others were brought to Canada and Mexico and sneaked into the United States.

In one instance cited in the documents, an American escorting officer pulled a gun and threatened a government official who questioned the propriety of allowing a group of German scientists into the United States.

Once in this country, the German scientists were given lucrative jobs in American industry. Some even received security clearances to work on sensitive defense projects.

The suppressed "Paperclip" files raise disturbing questions about a report last year by the General Accounting Office, which concluded that there was no widespread conspiracy to obstruct investigation and prosecution of Nazi war criminals.

The GAO report did acknowledge that the CIA, the FBI and the Defense and State department had arranged for suspected Nazis to gain refuge here, and then used them as sources of information. But the GAO report played down this use of war-crimes suspects by U.S. agencies.