

# The Unz Review • An Alternative Media Selection

A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media

## American Pravda: Waging Biological Warfare

RON UNZ • AUGUST 9, 2021 • 7,500 WORDS • 304 COMMENTS



I came of age during the late Cold War Era, and while the possibility of nuclear war was regarded as horrifying, it was hardly unthinkable, being the subject of countless films and stories and with the rival U.S. and Soviet arsenals regularly compared in newspapers and magazines.



However, biological warfare did indeed seem unthinkable. Back in 1969, President Richard Nixon had ordered the destruction of our entire biowarfare arsenal and soon signed an international treaty with his Soviet counterparts to outlaw those horrifying weapons. The release of deadly, self-replicating biological organisms that respected no national borders obviously raised uniquely dangerous risks, and I easily understood why such weapons could never possibly be used in combat, especially by our own government.

Preconceived notions sometimes crack and crumble a bit before they finally collapse. For years I'd begun to see claims about the past use of biological weapons floating around the Internet, but the collapse only began in early January when I read a remarkable 12,000 word cover story[1] in *New York* magazine. The author was Nicholson Baker, a prominent writer and liberal public intellectual, and he made a detailed and rather persuasive case that instead of being natural, the Covid virus devastating our country and the rest of the world was artificial, the product of some lab. As an intelligent layman rather than a scientist Baker's expertise on the topic came from the many years of research that he had undertaken for *Baseless*, his 2020 book documenting America's own extensive biological warfare program.

Nearly all of Baker's very long article concerned the Covid issue, but a few facts from that book were mentioned here and there, and these greatly surprised me. Apparently during the 1950s our biowarfare program had been assigned a priority and importance comparable to that of

nuclear weapons development, and the project had also resulted in numerous accidents, many of them fatal, which was hardly something I'd ever seen mentioned in my introductory textbooks. So the actual history of the topic was apparently far more complex than I'd realized.

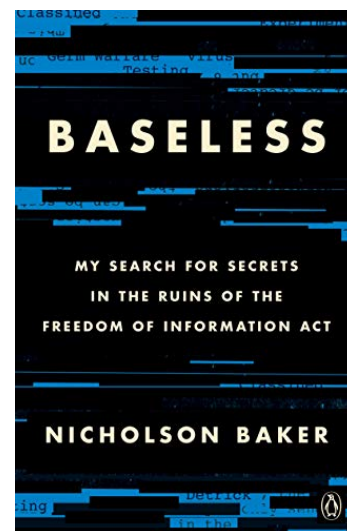
At the time, my focus was entirely on Covid matters and my analysis that our disastrous global epidemic was probably the result of an American biowarfare attack against China (and Iran). But after producing a long series of articles[2] on that topic, I decided to take a closer look at the history of American biowarfare programs, with Baker's own book being a natural starting point.

Baker opened his volume by explaining that in 2009 he had begun to wonder about certain disputed events from the Korean War, a conflict that ended in 1953, years before he was even born. At the time, the Communist world had loudly accused the Americans of engaging in illegal "germ warfare" and the Americans had hotly denied those charges. Although never fully resolved during the decades that followed, most mainstream historians seemed to have come down on the American side, but Baker wondered who had really been telling the truth.

His initial exploration of books and articles led him to available government documents, including those found at a couple of presidential libraries and the National Archives, and he also interviewed some of the knowledgeable individuals and researchers. But none of the material he found seemed conclusive, so in 2012 he began using the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in hopes of obtaining some restricted documents that might finally resolve the matter.

He continued filing such FOIA requests for seven more years, and the nature of that landmark 1966 law, now seemingly honored as much in the breach as the observance, is a central theme of his book, almost as important as the particular historical question that originally prompted his effort, leading him to subtitle his volume "My Search for Secrets in the Ruins of the Freedom of Information Act." Such criticism seems warranted given that the original statute required that agencies should respond with their documents within twenty working days, and if another agency needed to be consulted, they should do so "with all practicable speed." But in reality, years of delay are not uncommon, with one outstanding FOIA request now more than a quarter-century old. Furthermore, such documents when finally released are sometimes rendered almost unintelligible by the whited-out redactions of words, sentences, paragraphs, or multiple pages.

The alleged legal justification for holding back or heavily mutilating such documents is that their release would endanger our current national security, but we must ask ourselves how plausible this really seems. The events of interest to Baker took place during a war that ended almost seventy years ago, fought against a global Communist coalition that no longer exists, and it hardly seems likely that any of the operational plans or technologies from that era would have much relevance today, while surely even the grandchildren of the individuals mentioned are now quite elderly if they are even still alive.



After the fall of the USSR, the old Soviet archives were generally thrown open to the world, allowing Western historians to discover many important facts and resolve various longstanding controversies such as the Katyn Forest Massacre, but over the last couple of decades they have mostly been closed back up again. Can anyone seriously argue that keeping secret the minutes of Stalin's old Politburo meetings is vital for protecting current Russian national security rather than merely preventing Russian national embarrassment? And the same must surely be true with regard to almost all our own secret documents from the early 1950s.

At one point in his quest, Baker described sitting in a reading room of the National Archives building knowing that just on the other side of a thin wall were the 21 unavailable documents that would conclusively resolve his long investigation one way or the other. Instead, he was forced to make do with what he had been able to obtain, massive redactions and all.

By 2019 Baker had spent more than a decade on his project, punctuated by writing several unrelated but successful books and novels, and having reached his mid-sixties, he felt sure that the patient government bureaucrats would successfully outlast him. He had accumulated thousands of pages of notes and many boxes of reports and other materials, as well as a great deal of important personal knowledge that would not survive him, so he finally decided to write a book telling others what he had learned and allowing them to use the information for themselves.

Lacking access to the documents he had spent so many years fruitlessly seeking, he abandoned any effort to produce a polished chronological narrative. The author is best known as a novelist, so rather than writing in a dryly academic style, he instead chose to produce several months' worth of long diary-style entries, mostly discussing and analyzing the contents and implications of the various documents he had uncovered, but leavening his account by including brief descriptions of his personal life and activities. Although his style was unassuming and informal, the main text itself, running less than 150,000 words, was backed by more than fifty pages of detailed source notes. The credibility of his material is indicated by the glowing cover-blurbs from noted writers who had covered related subjects.

Given that the crucial secret documents still remain secret, Baker's analysis is necessarily based upon circumstantial evidence, including the unredacted portions of those documents that had been released, and he fully admits this difficulty, providing all his facts and conclusions in plain sight and drawing likelihoods and plausible inferences rather than expounding certitudes. Overall, I found him a very judicious analyst, and believe he made a strong even overwhelming case that America did indeed engage in biological warfare during the early stages of the Korean conflict, much as our Communist adversaries had charged at the time. The separate elements of this historical puzzle fit together to produce a reasonably persuasive whole.

First, over the decades it has been thoroughly documented that America did have a very substantial biowarfare program based at Ft. Detrick, originally established during World War II and then continuing into the postwar era, heavily augmented by the absorption of Japan's own very extensive biowarfare resources after the close of hostilities. The Japanese had developed the feather as an ideal means of widely disseminating all sorts of deadly biological agents from

the air, and our own military researchers soon built and tested a variety of “feather bombs” for that purpose, generally using the same physical containers that had been developed to distribute propaganda leaflets from planes.

In late 1950 American forces suffered a series of disastrous defeats in Korea at the hands of Chinese troops, and the report from a Pentagon committee in early December emphasized the importance of accelerating the development of bioweapons such as Q Fever, plague, and anthrax together with the necessary delivery mechanisms for covert use, while especially praising the CIA for its effectiveness in that regard. This secret report was eventually declassified by a FOIA request in 1996.

Around the same time that report was being written, a British sergeant retreating through a deserted North Korean village before advancing Chinese troops observed American military personnel, masked and gloved, carefully removing large quantities of feathers from special containers and flinging them into the empty houses before he was warned away by American MPs. He later stated that he had obviously witnessed “a clandestine operation” of some sort and mentioned that a few days afterward he was required to take an unspecified vaccine. This curious vignette appears in *Unit 731[3]*, a 1989 historical account of Japan’s biowarfare program written by two BBC journalists, but oddly enough the incident was removed from the American edition of that same book.

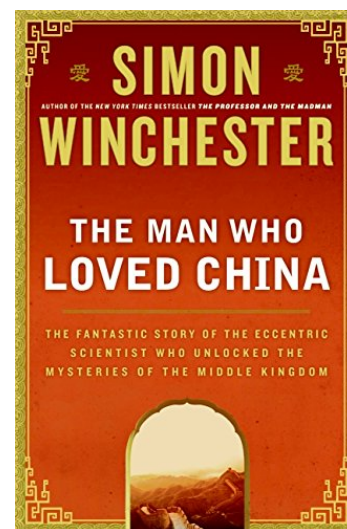
Months later, the North Korean foreign minister issued a formal complaint to the United Nations that America had used illegal biological warfare, attacking his own troops and those of China with smallpox. These mysterious outbreaks had occurred a few months earlier, but only in areas recently occupied by retreating American forces. The accusations briefly appeared in the Western media, but were ridiculed and hotly denied by American government spokesmen.

Around the same time that Communist troops were sickening and dying, around two hundred American soldiers in the same theater had also been suddenly stricken by a mysterious outbreak of Songo fever, never before seen in Korea but with symptoms quite similar to smallpox and a specialty of America’s Japanese biowarfare mentors. Strict censorship prevented these stories from reaching the American media until many months later, at which point our government claimed that the illnesses had been spread by Chinese troops. But the disease seemed entirely absent from the hundreds of miles of Korean territory the enemy forces had traversed, and only appeared in a narrow belt along the front lines, with our stricken servicemen believing that they seemed to be spread by infected field mice or voles. Voles had long been regarded by American researchers as an excellent vector for their bioweapons, and when interviewed years later for a history of the Korean War, one of the leaders of our local CIA efforts explained that his covert operations had created a defensive belt along the front lines.

The diarist format used by Baker scatters these closely-connected facts across nearly 200 pages. So although I think any reader of Baker’s entire book will find his thesis quite convincing, any few pages read in isolation provide only a small portion of the crucial story, lacking the necessary juxtaposition to make the strongest case.

Although this round of events in 1951 and the accompanying Communist accusations received some world media coverage, a far greater volume of controversy came the following year, when Communist media organs issued widespread charges that America had begun a much larger round of biowarfare, claiming that American planes were dropping all sorts of diseased insects and voles in Korea and even parts of nearby China, once again trying to unleash an epidemic. Sensing the opportunity for a major propaganda coup, the Chinese organized an independent international fact-finding commission to investigate their accusations and interview local witnesses, managing to enlist as its head Dr. Joseph Needham, one of Britain's most celebrated scientists and China experts, and the 665 page report eventually published claimed to have confirmed the Chinese case. An especially important element were the public confessions of numerous captured American pilots who admitted that they had taken part in such illegal germ warfare attacks.

However, these new accusations were once again blasted as a hoax by the much more powerful Western media, and after repatriation, the captured Americans claimed their statements had been coerced. Many later historians have come to the same conclusion, especially after 1998 when previously secret documents of the Soviet KGB archives revealed that they had created fake areas of disease exposure for propaganda purposes. As an example of this historical consensus, Simon Winchester's widely-praised 2008 biography of Needham devoted almost 20 pages to this episode, which nearly wrecked his subject's career, and he firmly concluded that that the Communist charges were fallacious.



Baker, however, suggests a more nuanced reconstruction. The notion that American planes were dropping insects and rodents from the sky seems quite an extraordinary claim, less likely to be the sort of plausible-sounding story fabricated for a war propaganda plan, especially given the very large number of seemingly-credible eyewitnesses later interviewed by Needham and other investigators, and the author wonders whether thousands of individuals could have been enlisted into such a long-standing hoax. Moreover, in 2007 the CIA finally declassified and made available on its website a large cache of secret American documents, and these included numerous communication intercepts of Chinese and North Korean commanders reporting these events and urgently requesting vaccines or DDT to protect their troops from the expected disease outbreaks. So although the evidence for such actual epidemics seems minimal and possibly fabricated, the Communist forces certainly believed that they were under biological attack, suggesting that something very odd was happening.

Baker notes that psychological warfare was a central element of CIA operations, and memos from that period indicate that all sorts of possible strategies were being explored to demoralize enemy troops, including the unusual idea of using planes to spread "fake radioactive dust" and convince the Communist forces that they were in deadly peril. Absent a public and self-defeating American announcement, it is difficult to imagine that any such dust would have even been noticed let alone regarded as dangerous, but dropping large numbers of mysterious insects and rodents might have immediately persuaded the enemy they were suffering another round of American biological attacks, with the American pilots involved assuming the same

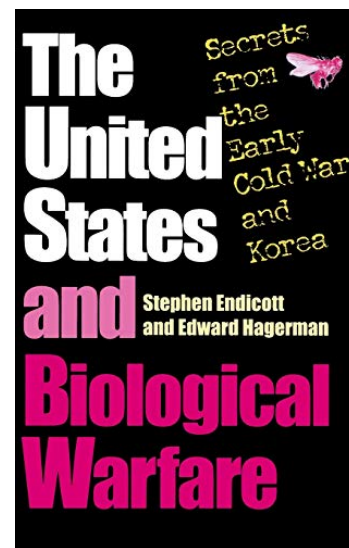


thing, and Baker believes this best fits the limited available evidence. To a considerable extent, this resembles another bizarre but solidly documented action called Operation Red Frog, in which the CIA caught a hundred Korean frogs, painted them red, then had them dropped from planes to unnerve the opposing military forces.

Moreover, top Pentagon officials believed that full-scale war against the Soviets and the Chinese might break out at any moment, and this operation allowed them to test their biological delivery systems, which would have become a crucial element of their military strategy in such a conflict. So Baker believes that a small-scale covert biological warfare operation beginning in late 1950 afterward became confused and conflated with a large-scale psychological warfare operation in 1952, leading many later historians to discount the reality of the former.

Aside from the numerous FOIA documents that he had personally obtained, one of Baker's most important sources was a short 1998 volume by Canadian historians Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman aptly entitled *The United States and Biological Warfare*[4]. He became personally friendly with the authors, whom he interviewed early in his project, and was later given twenty boxes of their accumulated research materials.

Published by a small American university press, the Endicott/Hagerman volume contains an enormous wealth of very detailed factual material, and was glowingly praised by Prof. Richard Falk of Princeton, an eminent scholar of international law, as well as mainstream historian Stephen Ambrose, who had built his career upon Eisenhower hagiography. But the text is written in a very dry and dull manner, so I found the Baker book, despite its lack of a chronological sequence, much more useful, although it was obviously built upon the research foundation provided by that earlier work.



The authors differ with Baker by firmly believing that the aerial drops of 1952 were also biological attacks, but their evidence seems overwhelmingly circumstantial and most of it could easily be explained within Baker's framework.

One crucial point they properly emphasize is the terrible scale of the American defeat at the hands of the intervening Chinese ground forces during late 1950. They quote from *Disaster in Korea*[5], the definitive military account of that conflict by Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman, who characterizes the situation in extreme terms: "...a series of disasters unequalled in our country's history...a massive retreat, without parallel in U.S. military history." As a consequence, both President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that atomic bombs should be used if necessary to avert total defeat. Under such circumstances, is it really plausible that our forces would have balked at the use of biological warfare, especially in a very limited capacity and deployed in a plausibly-deniable manner?

Unless and until our remaining secret documents from seven decades ago are finally made available, Baker's reconstruction strikes me as the most balanced and consistent with the

somewhat contradictory evidence, and Winchester apparently agrees, seeming to reverse the conclusions of his Needham biography of a dozen years earlier by providing a long and glowing blurb for Baker's book.

Preparation for the full use of offensive biowarfare against large enemy population centers obviously requires extensive field testing, and these efforts sometimes provoked great controversy when they eventually came to light. During September 1950, a mysterious fog with a strange odor enveloped the city of San Francisco for several days, and only decades later was this discovered to have been caused by a major biowarfare field test, as an offshore minesweeper blew a huge cloud of bacterial spores intended as a stand-in for anthrax towards the city. Although the spores were purportedly harmless, they actually produced a number of serious infections among the local residents, including at least one death. In 1975, the *New York Times* revealed[6] that a decade earlier the CIA had filled New York City's subways with "a harmless simulant of a disease-carrying gas" provoking further outrage.

There also seems reasonable evidence that far more permanent mistakes sometimes occurred. Lyme disease, transmitted by ticks, can produce itches, rashes, and sometimes more serious ailments and annually infects some 300,000 Americans and countless pets, plaguing the inhabitants of New England and much of the coastal North East. It was first diagnosed in 1975, a suspiciously recent date for the sudden appearance of an entirely natural disease, and based upon *Lab 257*[7], a heavily-researched 2005 book by Michael Carroll, Baker argues it was probably an inadvertent consequence of our biowarfare experiments. Apparently, nearby Plum Island had long been the center of CIA- and Army-funded research into tick-borne livestock diseases, and these could have accidentally infected local deer or birds, which then crossed the bay to Lyme, Connecticut, producing the endemic infestation.

Although hardly as controversial as those aimed at humans, such biological weapons targeting food supply had also constituted an important element of America's military plans from the earliest stages, though they seem to have almost entirely disappeared from the historical record.

By early 1945, Ft. Detrick researchers had developed and tested a variety of weapons aimed at destroying Japan's rice harvest, producing bombs to deliver mold, fungus, or bacteria for that purpose, while other military experts argued that spraying fuel oil would be the most effective means of destroying rice seedlings. Combined with America's complete blockade of Japan's home islands and the destruction of her fishing fleet, the strategy was intended to reduce the overcrowded Japanese population to total starvation.

Although the key documents regarding any actual implementation of these war plans remain classified or so heavily redacted as to be unreadable, we do know that the Joint Chiefs of Staff at some point officially authorized the full use of "plant BW[Biowarfare]." Baker notes that Japan's rice crop failed in 1945, producing the worst harvest since 1909, when the population had been one-third smaller, and Japan only survived because Gen. MacArthur's occupation government imported huge quantities of food. After the close of hostilities, leading biowarfare

figures intervened with the media to suppress or downplay any stories of the methods that had been used to destroy Japanese agriculture.

Given such apparent success against Japan, it was hardly surprising that such anti-crop techniques soon became an important component of our Cold War strategy, though the consequences may have sometimes been counter-productive.

Wheat was as important to the Soviet food supply as rice had been to Japan's, and our biowarfare experts investigated parasitic "wheat stem rust," which they believed might be effective at destroying Soviet agriculture. By 1949 they had developed powerful anti-wheat strains, and the project was put into full production. A huge stockpile of spores was required in order to be able to deal a crushing blow to the USSR food supply, far more than could be produced in the enclosed Ft. Detrick greenhouses that had been used for testing purposes, so our experts began cultivating the fungal parasite on large sections of open acreage.

The spores were extremely light, could be lofted up to 10,000 feet into the air by winds, and a single pustule might produce 350,000 new spores. Although our biowarriors surely tried to be careful, mistakes do sometimes happen, and while no attack upon Soviet agriculture ever took place, beginning in 1950 our own wheat crop was devastated by five years of mysterious wheat rust epidemics, which eventually encompassed twelve states and by 1954 had destroyed a quarter of our bread wheat and three-quarters of our pasta wheat. This timing may have been purely coincidental, but Baker notes that a declassified Air Force report reveals that the main spore cultivation efforts had occurred in generally the same states which then became the epicenters of the spreading blight.

Sometimes such mistakes must be repeated before they are fully admitted. By the early 1960s, Ft. Detrick researchers were once again cultivating wheat rust in several acres of an experimental crop-station in Kansas, and their reports boasted of their success in reducing crop yields by 70%. This effort continued until 1965 when a huge wheat rust epidemic severely damaged the farmlands of much of Kansas and Nebraska, after which the project was halted.

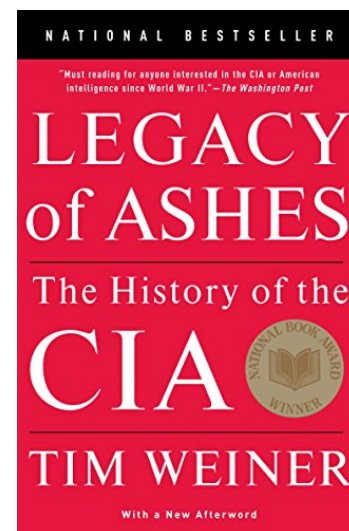
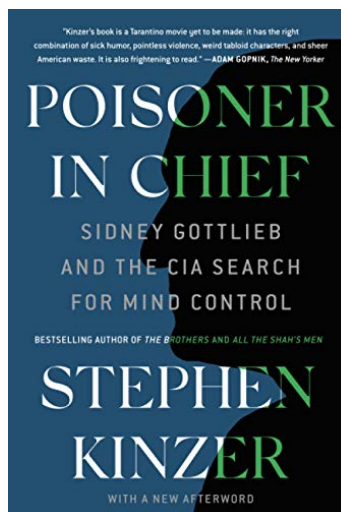
Other anti-food projects were aimed at livestock, and Baker strongly suspects that hog cholera was used against East Germany's swine herds, with the epidemic beginning soon after the CIA-abetted Berlin riots of 1953 and forcing the destruction of many tens of thousands of pigs. Such methods became part of the CIA's standard toolkit, and according to *Newsday*[8] their operatives in 1971 successfully infected Cuba's herds with the African swine flu virus, forcing the slaughter of 500,000 pigs and completely eliminating the availability of pork, a staple of the Cuban diet, although similar efforts[9] to destroy Cuba's poultry industry failed. These historical events seem eerily reminiscent of the mysterious viral epidemics[10] that began devastating China's poultry and pork industries in 2018 and 2019, soon after the Trump Administration had brought on board one of America's leading biowarfare advocates.

Although most of these historical facts have been known to academic specialists for decades, or could be discovered by those who actively searched them out, they have been much less likely to appear in more



general works. For example, one of the glowing blurbs provided to Baker's book is by Pulitzer Prize winner Tim Weiner, who had spent decades covering intelligence issues at the *New York Times* and elsewhere. His 2007 work *Legacy of Ashes*[11] runs 700 pages, and is considered an authoritative history of the CIA, but when I read it a year or two ago, I saw virtually no mention anywhere of biological weapons let alone their actual use, and rechecking the index just now confirmed my recollection.

However, this climate of media avoidance has recently begun changing. Another strong endorsement of Baker's book came from Stephen Kinzer, who just a year earlier had published *Poisoner in Chief*[12], primarily focused upon the notorious MK-ULTRA mind-control projects of Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, the CIA researcher described in the title. Kinzer's book attracted glowing accolades from Pulitzer Prize winners Seymour Hersh and Kai Bird, both writers with great experience on intelligence matters, and received quite favorable reviews[13] in the elite mainstream media.



At first glance, mind-control and biological warfare might seem entirely dissimilar topics, but they actually share considerable areas of overlap. Both required the creation and use of dangerous biological or biochemical agents, which for maximal effectiveness must then be tested upon unwilling human subjects, often in dangerous or lethal ways. Since in this regard they obviously operate outside the boundaries of normal legality, especially in peacetime, their use must be kept entirely secret, naturally matching them with the proclivities of an intelligence agency such as the CIA. Throughout his book Kinzer emphasized the considerable overlapping personnel and resources between these two domains. Indeed, as the CIA's "chief poisoner," Gottlieb developed a wide range of deadly biological compounds which he deployed in a number of mostly unsuccessful attempts to assassinate foreign leaders such as Prime Ministers Zhou Enlai of China and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, as well as Cuba's Fidel Castro.

But Gottlieb's great personal quest was to create an effective system of mind-control, the use of chemical compounds or physical techniques to gain mental control over an unwilling subject, which he persuaded CIA leaders represented the Holy Grail of their espionage efforts.

There is an additional and rather ironic connection between the Ft. Detrick biowarfare programs and the unsuccessful CIA efforts at mind-control. As discussed above, there seems to be overwhelming evidence that the severe military setbacks of the early Korean War had prompted America to surreptitiously employ biological warfare, though the military impact was hardly enormous. Then in 1952, a much larger aerial effort dropped insects, rodents, and other obvious potential disease carriers on Communist-held territory, including parts of China. Baker

believes that these later attacks were mostly elements of psychological warfare, with no effort made to infect the potential carriers with diseases, but obviously both the enemy governments and the pilots involved would have assumed that actual biological attacks were once again taking place. So when some of the American pilots were shot down and captured, they confessed to these apparent germ-warfare attacks, signing statements and admitting the facts to foreign visitors, thereby serving as the centerpiece of a major Communist propaganda campaign.

Since such actions would have been considered war-crimes, their widespread recognition might have produced a huge public relations disaster for America, and they were heatedly denied in the strongest possible terms as ridiculous Communist propaganda, with these determined public efforts to suppress the facts largely succeeding within the Western bloc.

Upon their return, these captured flyers were threatened with court-martials, causing them to repudiate their statements as having been made under duress. But the records show that any such coercion was almost entirely psychological, with virtually no claims of harsh physical treatment or torture.

This naturally raised the problem of explaining away the detailed and seemingly credible public statements of those captured American officers and why they had confessed to supposedly non-existent war crimes. The response was the creation of a widespread myth that the Chinese Communists had pioneered “brainwashing” as a powerful technique of mind-control. This suggested that our Cold War adversaries had made a major breakthrough in a potentially important military technology, and prompted CIA efforts to match their techniques and close the “brainwashing-gap.”

These ideas also soon entered the popular culture, with the classic example being *The Manchurian Candidate*, a 1959 bestseller that became an even more influential 1962 film. The fictional work tells the story of a captured American soldier transformed by Chinese brainwashing into a programmed assassin used to remove any human obstacles to a Communist seizure of our political system, and for decades afterward brainwashing remained a staple of fictional suspense plots. Yet Kinzer notes that right around the time the film appeared, the CIA finally abandoned the project as a failure despite the heavy resources expended, hardly surprising since the underlying premise had been entirely fallacious.



One major element of these failed CIA efforts had been the widespread utilization of LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs, often tested upon unwitting civilian subjects, and the use of these drugs eventually leaked out into our wider society, with serious negative consequences. So to some extent, our official refusal to acknowledge that we had illegally waged biological warfare in the early 1950s may have indirectly helped promote the creation of the drug culture that so greatly transformed our society by the late 1960s.

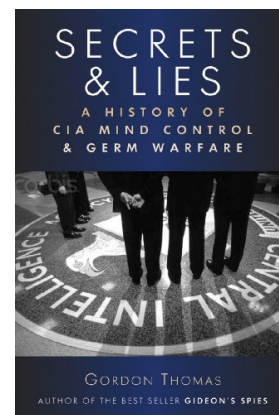
Although Gottlieb's mind-control efforts had gone into high gear in the aftermath of the Korean War, they had actually begun during the early stages of that conflict, as Kinzer quotes in this grisly excerpt:

“In 1951 a team of CIA scientists led by Dr. Gottlieb flew to Tokyo,” according to one study. “Four Japanese suspected of working for the Russians were secretly brought to a location where the CIA doctors injected them with a variety of depressants and stimulants...Under relentless questioning, they confessed to working for the Russians. They were taken out into Tokyo Bay, shot and dumped overboard. The CIA team flew to Seoul in South Korea and repeated the experiment on twenty-five North Korean prisoners-of-war. They were asked to denounce Communism. They refused and were executed...In 1952 Dulles brought Dr. Gottlieb and his team to post-war Munich in southern Germany. They set up a base in a safe house...Throughout the winter of 1952-3 scores of ‘expendables’ were brought to the safe house. They were given massive amounts of drugs, some of which Frank Olson had prepared back at Detrick, to see if their minds could be altered. Others were given electro-convulsive shocks. Each experiment failed. The ‘expendables’ were killed and their bodies burned.”

This remarkable passage came from one of Kinzer's major sources, *Secrets and Lies*[14] by Gordon Thomas, which was published by a small American press in 2007 and bore the provocative subtitle “A History of CIA Mind Control and Germ Warfare.” Intrigued by this material, I decided to order a copy for myself, which proved a less trivial undertaking than I had assumed.

At one point in Baker's account, he related the anecdote[15] that when one of the earliest books revealing CIA activities appeared in 1964, representatives of the agency threatened to buy up all the copies and thereby remove it from circulation. This plan was immediately frustrated when the editor at Random House said he would simply order another print run, but such a strategy would obviously be much more effective if directed against books produced by small presses and that were no longer being printed. When I checked Amazon for the Thomas book, the cheapest hard copy available was listed at over \$500, a price I had never previously encountered for a mainstream hardcover less than 15 years old and the only copy listed at AbeBooks.com turned out to be missing. But fortunately I was able to locate a more reasonably priced copy elsewhere.

The extreme rarity of that particular book is certainly quite different from the dozens of others in Thomas's huge oeuvre, which accumulated an astonishing 45 million in total sales. Although produced by an extremely successful author and BBC broadcaster on historical and intelligence matters, this volume lacks any source notes and is also replete with the sort of detailed private conversations likely to have been invented by Thomas, who probably hoped the work would be made into a film, as had been the case with seven of his previous books. These factors naturally



gave me some pause compared with the carefully-documented Baker, Endicott/Hagerman, and Kinzer volumes.

However, Thomas claimed that much of his information came from CDs containing 22,000 secret CIA documents that a whistleblower had sent him in 2001, and he republished some of these in his book, while his material had been treated as fully authentic by later writers such as Kinzer. The author also drew heavily upon extensive personal interviews, with his most important source being William Buckley, a thirty-year CIA veteran at the heart of the events, who had been close to both Allen Dulles and William Casey, two leading directors of the agency. So on balance, I regarded Thomas's material as uniquely valuable and reasonably credible, though perhaps not quite as solid as the explicitly document-based works by Baker and Kinzer.

Thomas's material strongly supported Baker's account of American biowarfare attacks during the Korean War, and he even expanded the story in important ways. For example, he suggested that during 1951 Gottlieb and our other biowarfare experts may have tested their lab-cultured diseases upon 20,000 North Korean POWs, of whom nearly 1,800 died, with the full CIA records of this damaging incident possibly having been destroyed during 1972-1973. According to Thomas, Buckley also investigated the records of the confessions of our captured pilots, and noted that their detailed descriptions so perfectly matched our actual biowarfare technologies as to seem very persuasive.

And if Thomas and his personal sources can be credited, his account may have resolved one of the most puzzling and notorious incidents of the 1950s, widely discussed in other works.

In 1953 one of our leading biowarfare experts, Dr. Frank Olson, began behaving very oddly and after being taken to New York City for treatment by a psychiatrist was found dead on the pavement beneath the broken windows of his fifth floor hotel room, with the official verdict being suicide due to sudden mental illness. Decades later it came out that he had secretly been given a heavy dose of LSD as part of the CIA's mind-control research project, and the incident was regarded as a notorious example of the potentially deadly effects of that hallucinogenic drug, which had been introduced into our society and tested upon unsuspecting Americans by CIA researchers. As compensation, the Olson family received a large financial settlement. But according to Thomas, the truth may have actually been far darker than even this story.

The development of deadly toxins and other biological weapons obviously requires considerable human testing to be effective, and during World War II Japan's extremely large biowarfare program apparently consumed thousands of human subjects—euphemistically labeled “logs” in their reports—mostly hapless Chinese but also including some American and other Western POWs. The claims that similar lethal human experiments had been performed upon the inmates of some Nazi concentration camps figured quite prominently at the Nuremberg Tribunals. But practical needs transcend ideologies, and America's own growing biowarfare program of the postwar years seems to have adopted entirely similar methods of testing, much of it taking place at a large secluded compound in the Black Forest region of occupied Germany, with the victims—various suspicious characters or other such “expendables”—afterwards eliminated if they somehow managed to survive the weapon tests themselves.

In 1953 Olson took his first trip to that field establishment and apparently was deeply horrified at personally witnessing the actual use of the deadly technologies he had spent the last dozen years developing in his laboratory. Returning home via Britain, his distraught state was apparent to one of his British biowarfare colleagues, who reported the facts to his superiors and the information was immediately passed along to their opposite numbers in America. It appears that Gottlieb, the head of the American program, became fearful that Olson might eventually reveal the sordid facts to the media, so he arranged to have him quickly killed, first administering a massive dose of LSD to produce the sudden behavioral changes that would support a verdict of suicide.

Apparently CIA Director Allen Dulles was very suspicious of the official suicide story, telling his close aide Buckley that Olson had seemed almost the last person in the world to commit suicide, and he tasked that officer with getting to the bottom of what had really happened. Buckley believed he had done so, even determining the identity of the assassin employed, and decades later the exhumation and autopsy of Olson's corpse seemed to strongly support that reconstruction, so that a New York public prosecutor was preparing a homicide indictment against Gottlieb in 1999 shortly before the latter's death. But the sordid incident was completely hushed up at the time, and after the fall of Communism, the files of the KGB and the East German Stasi revealed that they used the example of Olson's demise as a case study of "the perfect murder by suicide."

Kinzer seems to support this same reconstruction, though lacking access to Thomas's documents or the benefit of his personal interviews with Buckley, he is much more circumspect in his conclusion.

Reading these books also helped to fully resolve an additional biowarfare question that had remained in the back of my mind for the last couple of years.

David Irving quite possibly ranks as Britain's most internationally successful historian of the last one hundred years, and some of his archival research produced remarkable revelations. As I wrote[16] in 2018:

Along with the laws prohibiting the bombing of cities, all nations had similarly agreed to ban the first use of poison gas, while stockpiling quantities for necessary retaliation. Since Germany was the world-leader in chemistry, the Nazis had produced the most lethal forms of new nerve gases, such as Tabun and Sarin, whose use might have easily resulted in major military victories on both the Eastern and Western fronts, but Hitler had scrupulously obeyed the international protocols that his nation had signed. However, late in the war during 1944 the relentless Allied bombardment of German cities led to the devastating retaliatory attacks of the V-1 flying bombs against London, and an outraged Churchill became adamant that German cities should be attacked with poison gas in counter-retaliation. If Churchill had gotten his way, many millions of British might soon have perished from German nerve gas counter-strikes. Around the same time,

Churchill was also blocked in his proposal to bombard Germany with hundreds of thousands of deadly anthrax bombs, an operation that might have rendered much of Central and Western Europe uninhabitable for generations.

According to Irving, only the stubborn resistance of Churchill's appalled military and political subordinates prevented the drunken wartime leader from carrying out his plan to annihilate the heart of Europe with biological warfare. The great historian gives the details in one of his riveting public lectures, once easily available on YouTube, but now confined to Bitchute:

Under normal circumstances, I would consider such astonishing claims almost impossible to believe. However, during the notorious 2000 libel trial that wrecked Irving's career and bankrupted him, his Jewish tormenters drew upon their almost unlimited funding to hire an army of researchers who spent a year or more subjecting Irving's vast corpus of writings to line-by-line and footnote-by-footnote scrutiny, a degree of hostile fact-checking surely unprecedented in the annals of historiography. And since they never challenged any of these striking statements, I felt confident in accepting that the claims were correct. But I was still gratified to see these facts seemingly confirmed by the Kinzer, Endicott/Hagerman, and Thomas books, which each reported Churchill's urgent 1944 order for the mass-production of anthrax bombs by his domestic industry and also his successful demand that the Americans ship him another 500,000 from our own stockpile.

One of the odd aspects of America's informational landscape is that so many of the most controversial historical facts seem to be hidden in very plain sight. Both Nicholson Baker and Stephen Kinzer are fully mainstream and well-regarded authors, with their books heavily praised by prominent reviewers and easily available for purchase on Amazon.com, and the same is true for the much earlier history by Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman. The volume by Gordon Thomas is somewhat more difficult to obtain in hard copy, but the Kindle version is priced at just \$9.99, and his other books had racked up many tens of millions in sales while being made into seven films. No one could possibly describe these writers as marginalized figures, purged for their controversial historical claims. And the stories they told of America's extensive use of biological warfare and the lethal experiments conducted upon large numbers of human victims seem quite explosive. We are obviously not living in a totalitarian state that imposes a wall of secrecy upon these sordid facts. Anyone can click a button on Amazon and begin reading the material a day or two later, or buy the Kindle version and open the book within seconds.

Yet sales of such books have probably been limited to the thousands or low tens of thousands of copies, and none of this history is promoted in the mainstream media or incorporated into our standard textbooks, which would allow it to reach many millions of readers. Most importantly, it is entirely ignored by our electronic media, which is the primary source of information for the vast majority of our population. As a consequence, I had been completely ignorant of this material, and when I contacted several knowledgeable and well-read individuals, some of whom are primarily focused upon national security issues, the same was



true for them as well. Merely by failing to sufficiently emphasize certain facts, the media is hiding them almost as effectively as if they had been declared official state secrets.

One might easily argue that although quite distasteful these past events had little effect upon the world and are merely details of history, unimportant to our present-day lives. Our biowarfare attacks during the Korean War killed or injured merely the tiniest sliver of the casualties that were inflicted by our massive strategic bombing campaign or the rest of the conventional fighting on the ground. And except for Midwestern farmers whose wheat crops were devastated during the early 1950s or Northeasterners who still suffer the pangs of Lyme disease, the number of Americans impacted by these policies or their unintentional blowback, has been absolutely negligible.

But biological weapons do create enormous potential dangers, as President Nixon had emphasized when he decided to ban them, and playing Russian Roulette may seem absolutely safe until one time when it suddenly isn't.

Consider the reality of today's global Covid epidemic. Although still just partway through its second year, the outbreak has already killed perhaps 14 million people worldwide[17], and together with the efforts at control has heavily affected the lives of nearly all the world's eight billion people, touching every continent and city. Many hundreds of thousands of Americans have been among the dead, and our own society has been enormously disrupted. By any reasonable measure, the Covid outbreak has already had an impact upon the world many times greater than that of the 9/11 attacks and the two decades of major wars and population displacements that followed, certainly making it one of the three or four most momentous events of the last one hundred years.

From April 2020 onward I have been presenting the strong perhaps even overwhelming evidence that the disease outbreak was unleashed by an exceptionally reckless American biowarfare attack against China (and Iran). The numerous articles in my series have now been viewed more than 350,000 times, a total perhaps as much as an order-of-magnitude greater than the combined sales of the various major books discussed in this article. Yet for exactly the same reasons—the studious avoidance of the mainstream and electronic media—only the tiniest fraction of those impacted by these disastrous events have become aware of the likely cause of their plight.

Perhaps if the unfortunate historical facts of America's past decades of biowarfare development and use had become better known over the last couple of generations, our current calamity might have been avoided.

- [American Pravda: “The Truth” and “The Whole Truth” About the Origins of Covid-19](#)[18]  
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