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A HIGHER FORM OF KILLING
The Secret Story of Chemical and Biological Warfare

- Robert Harris and Jeremy Paxman

"In no future war will the military be able to ignore poison gas. It is a higher form of killing." - Professor Fritz Haber, pioneer of gas warfare, on receiving the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1919. His wife committed suicide during the war.

Poison gas and germ warfare have been called "public health in reverse." Poison gas was used by both sides throughout most of World War I, despite the Hague Declaration of 1899, specifically outlawing it. "Gas attacks...became an everyday occurrence." Mortars, projectors, gas shells - phosgene, chlorine, mustard gas, tear gas. Described as "frightfulness." on Oct. 14, 1918, Corporal Adolph Hitler was temporarily blinded by British mustard gas. At least 1.3 million were wounded by gas; 91,000 died. Numerous prolonged and devastating effects. Dying is slow and agonizing. Criteria for granting disability pensions exceptionally harsh. U. S. pro-chemical warfare lobby resists its disarmament. Enormous numbers of willing and unwilling humans tested - chemists, soldiers, civil and military prisoners, fantastic numbers of various kinds of animals, mostly suffering horrible deaths, in minutes or days - some persons and animals undergoing vivisection, then being sewed up during testing. Britain, Italy, France, Japan, Germany and Russia carried on extensive research.

The Geneva Protocol of 1925 banned chemical and biological warfare. 38 powers signed. Some ratified, on condition that the enemy ratified, and kept the agreement. Research continued, offensive weapons often under the guise of defense. Japan used gas against China in 1937-8. Issued series of pamphlets, "Lessons From the China Incident." Italy used gas against Abyssinia in 1935-6. Both inflicted horrible suffering upon helpless unprotected civilians. British and French cooperated in research, but Germany had gases many times as powerful, which might have won Hitler's war if he had been aware of it in the beginning. A German scientist, Schrader, developed tabun, a nerve gas, colorless, almost odorless, while looking for an insecticide; then sarin, ten times as powerful. Tests were made on dissidents, and inmates of concentration camps. German use of nerve gas on D-Day would have cost allies their foothold. V-weapons with this gas might have brought peace with England; then with Russia, with no second front. Allies incorrectly assumed also to have nerve gas, for retaliation. British were reliably warned of German nerve gas, two years before. Refused to believe. "a weapon with a destructive power equivalent to the atomic bomb." (concentrated anthrax spores)

Wells, in the past, were poisoned with dead people and animals. Plague victims spread the plague. Smallpox-infected blankets used to wipe out American Indian tribes. Germans were accused of inoculating horses with glanders, cattle with anthrax, and spreading plague bacteria in Russia, in 1915. Japan accused Russian spies of bringing bacteria into China, in 1935, killing 6,000 Japanese soldiers of cholera, and 2,000 army horses of anthrax. Japan erected first major biological warfare installation, near Harbin and the South Manchurian Railroad; completely self-supporting, with 3,000 scientists, vegetables, livestock, school and hospital. In addition to offensive activities, with at least 15 diseases, it could produce 20 million doses of vaccine annually. The records were destroyed as the Russian army approached, but Russians estimated a capacity of 8 tons of bacteria a month. Japan poisoned over a thousand wells in Manchuria, with cholera, typhoid and dysentery. Plague-infested fleas were also used. A high degree of secrecy; each scientist refused access to fields other than his own. Emperor not informed. "Biological warfare is inhumane and advocating such a method of warfare would defile the virtue and benevolence of the Emperor." (Not of others)

"The Trail Of Tears" "Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee" "A Century Of Dishonor" (5)
Leading to The End of The Trail - genocide. Blackhawk: "An Indian who is as bad as a white man could not live in our nation; he would be cast to death and eaten by the wolves."

Over 1,000 prisoners experimented on - mostly Chinese - for all kinds of infections. Plague bacteria was dropped in several provinces. Britain began biological weapon research in Sept. 1941, fearing enemy research, although German research began in July, 1943. Records kept secret. Made West's first biological weapon. 5 million anthrax-filled cattle cakes produced. Handling contaminated animals causes skin ulcers, possibly septicaemia; eating meat, 80% fatalities. Botulism, 60% fatal, turned into a weapon. Polish and Russian partisans used biological weapons against Germans in Poland, and in parcels to Germany. The grenade which killed Heydrich apparently contaminated, as wounds were not serious. Britain, U.S. pooled biological resources in 1942. U.S. accused of infesting German potato crop with Colorado beetles; the Japanese crops with rice blight. Biological weapons "more speedy than a blockade and less repugnant than the atomic bomb." British used anti-crop weapons in Malaya.

Anthrax-filled bombs leave a fine dust lasting for years, leaving the area uninhabitable. A contingency plan to bomb six major German cities with anthrax, killing 50% by inhalation; enough others by contact to force evacuation. No satisfactory decontamination; no preventive inoculation. Terrain contaminated for years. At war's end, 300,000 times as toxic as phosgene. Germ warfare predicted to be 100 times as efficient in another ten years. Conquerors to inherit a poisoned desert. Brucellosis, like mustard gas, has a low mortality rate (around 2%), but inflicts great mental and physical disability, possibly lasting a year; highly infectious, but with the area infected only for days. Biological warfare now considered with atomic bombs; germs perhaps for minor wars where atom bombs are barred; considered comparatively humane.

All agreed, in 1939, not to use chemical and biological weapons, but all feared them. Britain would have used them, if invaded. Japan used gas 876 times against China, through June 1941, but had only 7,500 tons of poison gas at end of war, while U.S. had 135,000 tons. U. S. and Britain had poison gas dumps close to fighting fronts. Only certain retaliation prevented use of gas by major powers against each other. Large amounts dumped at end of war, but some saved. Russia experimented with plague, anthrax and glanders, on political prisoners - and possibly Japanese - in Mongolia; causing a plague epidemic, costing 3,000 to 5,000 lives. Experiments with harmless bacteria showed that it is very easy to poison a U.S. city through subway tunnels, or by having a submarine release a cloud of bacteria in a harbor. Navy shipped three kinds of poisons, contaminating ten wooden boxes, from Pennsylvania to Norfolk, to test spread of disease to handlers. For weeks, thousands of animals on rafts ten miles off the Scottish coast were poisoned to death by airborne bacteria. 25,000 animals a year consumed in English tests. U. S. tested yellow fever-carrying mosquitos in Korea. These killed a French army in Haiti, in 1801; and in 1878, caused the evacuation of Memphis, Tenn., bankrupting the city.

Pentagon propaganda: "Man is now confronted by the possibility that he can eliminate death from war." Former commander of the Chemical Corps: "There is no question in my mind that for the first time in history there is the promise - even the possibility - that war will not necessarily mean death." Such outlandish advertisements multiplied in the U. S. and Britain. (Heading of magazine article in Jan., 1942: YOUR BOY WILL NOT SUFFER-either killed when hit, or in shock until medical care arrives. Obviously no crippling or pain after that.) U. S. destroyed jungle and crops in Indochina in an area the size of Israel. Aviators boasted "we are the most hated outfit in Vietnam." DOD: the chemicals "are not harmful to people, animals, soil or water." Still-births, birth defects, many illnesses suffered by Vietnamese, by the American military, their wives and children. Instruction to medics, caring for Vietnamese: "Keep the wounded covered...the gas will burn them." (Destroyed crops to feed a million. Half the children didn't live till age 5) Russian-supported troops used gas in Yemen and Afghanistan, as had England against the latter rebellious tribesmen. France and Spain have used gas in Morocco.

No limit to research of all kinds, for armies, group or individual terrorism. Genetic research may lead to a war's being decided with the birth of a mutant next generation. (Time, money, material, humans and animals in horrendous waste and suffering, to see, as Napoleon put it; "who is going to milk the cows." It can end only when every form of monopoly-creating favoritism, robbing the many, for the few, is ended, removing its purpose.) "Inferior (the weak) have no rights which their superiors are bound to respect." - Roosevelt

"There is precious little difference between a conscript and a convict." Champ Clark