

## A SELECTION OF GOVERNMENT HARMS AGAINST THE PEOPLE

By no means an exhaustive list, below is a collection of some instances where government and associated officials and entities delivered egregious harms on unwitting groups of people. The decision-makers either had foreknowledge, or progressive awareness of harms. In all cases, harms continued regardless of this knowledge.

While the majority of the list below cites events in USA, just as with the COVID-19 response, at least a percentage of these historic abuses were mirrored or extended elsewhere. The only conclusion has nothing to be with borders, but with the required shock and alarm that supposedly civilised elected officials have an astonishing track record of abuse of human rights.

Please note from examples below the remarkable similarities to the COVID response mentality, divisiveness, and discrimination.

### 1. 1920—1933

#### National Prohibition<sup>1</sup>

- alcohol consumption was made illegal: on the promise of reducing crime, poverty, violence, marital abuse, industrial injuries, sickness and premature death
- instead, mob violence grew; murder increased sharply, including innocent bystanders
- death by poisoning **due to government adding toxins** to the alcoholic source used by bootlegger distilleries
- 1926: 400 deaths by this poisoning
- By 1933: 10,000 such deaths
- Side effects for 100,000+ who did not die included: excessive vomiting, hallucinations, paralysis, blindness, ...
  - Since a large percentage of the population were teetotalers, many felt such deaths were deserved, and that the drinker brought the consequences on themselves
  - Tribalism and prejudice emerged as people identified as either 'wet' (in support of drinking) or 'dry' (prohibitionists)
  - Wayne B. Wheeler, an advocate for prohibition, spoke in favour of such deaths:
    - *The person who drinks this industrial alcohol is a deliberate suicide.*
  - Medical examiner Charles Norris, statement to the press:
    - ***The government knows it is not stopping drinking by putting poison in the alcohol. Yet it continues its poisoning processes, heedless of the fact that people determined to drink are daily absorbing that poison. Knowing it is true, the government must be charged with the moral responsibility for the deaths that poisoned liquor causes, although it cannot be held legally responsible.***
  - Vanity Fair, Feb 1927, Sherwood Anderson wrote:<sup>2</sup>
    - *There is a certain ruthlessness in life, characteristic of many reformers and industrial millionaires that is, to my way of seeing life, the very height of vulgarity. How ruthless to pass a prohibition law. Surely those who brought prohibition upon us were not themselves drinkers. What right had they to decide?*
  - Senator James A Reed criticised the government:
    - *Only one possessing the instincts of a wild beast would desire to kill or make blind the man who takes a drink of liquor, even if he purchased it from one violating the Prohibition statutes.*

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1 All That Is Interesting, 2017; [10,000 People Died](#)  
Alcohol Problems and Solutions; [Deaths ... Government Poisoned Alcohol](#)

2 Vanity Fair, 1927; [Prohibition](#)

- Senator Edward I Edwards called it “*legitimised murder*”
- Adding to the duplicity of these conditions, The Volstead Act (National Prohibition Act) contained two exceptions to the ban of alcohol<sup>3</sup>:
  - priests, rabbis and ministers continued to use (usually) wine in their sacraments
  - pharmacists could dispense ‘medicinal liquor’
  - doctors could dispense (usually hard) liquor as prescription medicine (including to children); even if they could not physically examine the patient
  - the result was that alcohol became the treatment for 30+ ailments, with doctors and pharmacists profiting from the exception
  - it is noteworthy that this exception went against the prevailing view of the medical profession at the time as to the appropriate use of alcohol as medicinal treatment

2. 1915—1940s

The Pellagra Incident<sup>4</sup>

- Pellagra is a dietary deficiency disease
- most noted in US south after the Civil War (1861—65)
- early 1900s, thought to be infectious, but studies found it related to poor diet, particularly lack of Niacin
- 1915, the US Public Health Office (PHO) induced Pellagra in twelve Mississippi prisoners, who volunteered. They were treated and cured with a proper diet, and released from prison
- 1935, over the interim two decades, millions of individuals died from Pellagra. The Director of the PHO admitted they had known the cause and cure but failed to act since most of the afflicted were in the poverty-stricken black population
- 1928-29, in the South, Pellagra at its peak was the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death<sup>5</sup>

3. 1947

Radioactive experiments on humans<sup>6</sup>

- Jan 8, 1947, Colonel E.E. Kirkpatrick of US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) issued a secret document stating the AEC will begin administering intravenous doses of radioactive substances to human subjects. On April 17, an AEC document states:
  - *It is desired that no document be released which refers to experiments with humans that might have an adverse reaction on public opinion or result in legal suits.* (The Washington Post, Dec 16, 1994)
  - Demonstrating that the US government was aware of the health risks its nuclear tests posed to military personnel or nearby victims
- Sydney, Australia is only 3100 miles from ground zero of the Marshall Islands; ground zero for 1947 US atomic testing
  - 66 more detonations occurred over the next 12 years
  - insidious and multiple harms to people and place were regularly obscured or denied; these included:
    - radiation poisoning
    - birth defects
    - leukaemia
    - thyroid and other cancers
    - at least four islands were partially or completely vaporised
    - the exposed Marshallese became atomic refugees and medical research subjects

3 The Mob Museum; [Alcohol as Medicine and Poison](#)

4 US Slave, 2012; [Slave Diet Low in Niacin Causes Pellagra](#)

5 Georgia Encyclopedia, 2017; [Pellagra](#)

6 AHRP; US Atomic Energy Commission, [radioactive experiments on humans](#)  
The Conversation, ... [the fallout continues to wreak havoc](#)

- 1969, after US govt falsely claimed radiation levels were safe, locals had to be extracted again
- reports of far-reaching radio-active clouds and shocking health effects
- Australia developed economic interests through uranium sales to UK and US
- 1954 hydrogen bomb test exposed Marshall islanders and Japanese fishermen to catastrophic radiation levels, resulting in suffering and death
- UN resolved to halt the testing, but Australia's UN vote favoured continuing
- radio-active fish began to arrive in Australian waters
- 1958, world wide protests brought the testing on Marshall Islands to a close
- Even when Marshallese pleaded for the tests to be stopped, Australia's government was complicit in the harms:
  - supported the US testing
  - assisted with data collection
  - voted in UN for its continuation

#### 4. 1932—72

##### The Tuskegee Experiment<sup>7</sup>

- Doctors studying syphilis recruited African American male subjects between the ages of 25—60, who were told they would receive six months of free medical treatment for 'bad blood'
- 1933, the doctors chose to continue the study, and recruited a total of 600 men; 399 had latent syphilis; 201 did *not* have the disease
  - doctors gave placebo medicines; did x-rays, tests, and (in case of death) autopsies
- 1947, penicillin became the recommended cure for syphilis
  - researchers provided no treatment or effective care
  - men died, went blind, went insane, or suffered severe health problems due to lack of treatments
- mid-1960s, research investigator Peter Buxton found out about the Tuskegee study and raised concerns
- a review committee opted to continue the study, with the goal of tracking the participants until all had died
- 1972, a whistle-blower leaked the story to the press – raising public outrage and forcing the study to shut down
  - 28 participants had perished from syphilis
  - 100 more had died from related complications
  - at least 40 spouses were diagnosed with the disease
  - 19 children were born with it
- 1946—48, concurrently in Guatemala, nearly 700 men and women (prisoners, soldiers, mental patients) were intentionally infected with syphilis
  - hundreds more people were exposed to other STDs as part of the experiment

#### 5. 1956—1961

##### Thalidomide<sup>8</sup>

- Developed in Germany, this drug was widely used to treat nausea in pregnant women
- It caused severe birth defects of thousands of babies across the world
- promoted as 'safe and effective'
- never tested on pregnant animals before it was given to pregnant humans
- the tests were 'nowhere near stringent enough'

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<sup>7</sup> History, 2017; [The Infamous 40 Year Tuskegee Study](#)  
McGill, 2019; [40 Years of Human Experimentation](#)

<sup>8</sup> Understanding Animal Research, 2021; [The History of the Thalidomide Tragedy](#)  
Thalidomide Tragedy; [The History](#)

- when it was finally (too late) tested on pregnant animals over a ten-year period (subsequent to being pulled from the market), thalidomide was shown to damage the fetus and offspring in rats and rabbits, and in seven other species of small mammal and eight species of monkey
- other testing discrepancies include:
  - no placebo group
  - no indication of how long treatment was carried out
  - no double-blind studies
  - no testing to determine how much of the drug was in blood or tissue
  - a doctor reviewing the 1956 papers said there was ‘so little scientific value that ... they should not have been accepted for print’
- despite a radical increase in birth defects, doctors did not identify thalidomide as the problem
  - later tests revealed it consistently caused defects in the fetus, but only when exposed a particular stage of pregnancy; so mothers who took it outside those times did not produce deformed/impacted babies
  - however, thalidomide was also a component in a flu treatment called Grippex; mothers who had not received thalidomide with knowledge, even in its UK branding as Distaval – *had unwittingly* been exposed to it in the flu treatment, and thus their babies were harmed:
    - miscarriage
    - re-absorption of the fetus into the womb
    - damage to the eyes, heart, brain
    - distinctive limb malformations

6. 1966

Germ Warfare Testing in New York Subway<sup>9</sup>

- a gastro-intestinal pathogen (*bacillus subtilis*) which can cause food poisoning and can be fatal (rare) was released into the New York subway, at peak hour
- aerosol clouds of bacteria dispersed from light bulbs thrown onto the tracks, landing on people’s hair and clothes, and were further distributed by the air vortices around the moving trains
- it took between 4—13 minutes for passengers to be exposed
- five minutes after the bacteria were released, it could be detected at every station between 14<sup>th</sup> St and 59<sup>th</sup>
- between June 6—10, an estimated one million people were exposed – without their knowledge or consent
- the tests were conducted without informing the New York police or the New York Transit Authority
- those in charge of the experiment believed it was justified to determine vulnerability from such an attack format
- this was one of 239 experiments<sup>10</sup> conducted on unwitting people by the military in a 20-year period, from 1949—69

7. 1996

Measles Vaccine: the undisclosed risk<sup>11</sup>

- ~1500 minority infants were injected with two measles vaccines on trial, one unlicensed
- without alerting parents
- according to an inquiry, there was no ‘ill intent’ in not telling the parents

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9 Business Insider, 2015; [The Army tested ‘germ warfare’ on NYC subway](#)

10 Business Insider, 2015; [Dangerous biowarfare experiments conducted on Americans](#)  
AHRP; aggregate of articles; [Unethical US experiments WWII through Cold War](#)

11 Washington Post, 1996; [US Measles Experiment Failed to Disclose Risk](#)

- due to a particularly intense season of measles, researchers were trying to determine if prevention was possible
  - injecting infants under 12 months old
  - comparing the two vaccines
- similar clinical trials were conducted in Africa and Haiti, and concerns were raised over an increased death rate among female infants who received the more potent of the two doses