

The annexing of the Stanleyville samples, and the destruction of fossil evidence.

Background.

In July 2003 and February 2004, I posted essays on the Web which featured warnings that scientists associated with the Catholic University of Leuven (known as KUL in Belgium), and with Hilary Koprowski's aide-de-camp, Stanley Plotkin, had been attempting to annexe 1950s biopsy and autopsy samples found in the basement of the old *Laboratoire Medicale de Stanleyville*, in what is now Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo.[1]

On May 1st, 2004 I posted a further essay on this site which confirmed the worst. Entitled: "Why the Worobey/Hahn 'refutation' of OPV/AIDS theory is wrong, and a warning about dishonest tactics used by opponents of the theory", it ended with a section entitled: "Concern about possible faking of an ancient HIV-1 sample." [2] This section confirmed that the Plotkin crew had indeed managed to obtain some of the Stanleyville samples, and highlighted the concerns which this raised.

Some weeks ago, I received a package of documents from an anonymous source which revealed further worrying details about how these doctors went about obtaining these samples.

What the new documents reveal.

At this stage, I am not prepared to reveal all the significant details that emerge from these papers.

However, some of this information does need to be placed in the public domain.

- 1) The papers include details about a meeting that took place in Jan Desmyter's office at the Virology Department of KUL in April 2001, soon after the agronomist Hugo Gevaerts returned from his visit to Kisangani (formerly Stanleyville) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The meeting featured Desmyter, Gevaerts, Dirk Teuwen and Dudu Akaibe, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Kisangani. (Desmyter and Teuwen are two of the three members of Stanley Plotkin's defence team, while Gevaerts and Akaibe are their main collaborators in the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC. One of the documents describes Akaibe as follows: "Second to Gevaerts, he is our best man in Kisangani.")
- 2) In addition, Simon Wain-Hobson was invited to attend the meeting, but was unable to do so; instead, Desmyter raised the possibility of Wain-Hobson linking in to the meeting by phone. Clearly Wain-Hobson had been fully briefed about the Stanleyville samples, and was prepared to collaborate with the Plotkin/Desmyter team, presumably by helping to test the samples for the presence of HIV. This information is not entirely surprising, for it is increasingly apparent that Wain-Hobson (one of the co-organisers of the Royal Society meeting) had been in close contact with Plotkin even before that meeting took place, in September 2000. (Furthermore, Wain-Hobson

was an active participant in the process whereby that meeting was rescheduled, and rejigged, so that it became a vehicle for “lancing the boil” of the OPV theory, and exonerating Hilary Koprowski and Stanley Plotkin of any wrongdoing. Bill Hamilton, the third co-organiser of that meeting, died on March 7th, 2000. It seems that within the next month, Wain-Hobson became part and parcel of the cover-up that was being engineered by his far more powerful co-organiser, Robin Weiss. The first inkling I had that something was up came in late March 2000, when Wain-Hobson, who had previously been in contact by phone or e-mail at least three or four times a week, suddenly went incommunicado. The second came in early April, when Wain-Hobson told me categorically that he had not been involved with the decision to postpone the Royal Society meeting from May to September. Within 24 hours, I learnt from two impeccable sources that this was untrue.)

- 3) The key paper in the report is marked as being confidential to Desmyter, Gevaerts, Teuwen, Wain-Hobson – and Stanley Plotkin. This reveals that those present at the meeting were reporting directly to Plotkin.
- 4) The papers reveal that Professor Dudu Akaibe’s attempts to obtain the Stanleyville samples were to be funded by *Aventis Pasteur*, as was a return visit to Belgium that was planned for Akaibe later in the year. *Aventis Pasteur* is the name for the Pasteur Institute’s vaccine-related business, which was previously known as *Pasteur Merieux Connaught Vaccines*. Stanley Plotkin was Medical and Scientific Director of *Pasteur Merieux Connaught Vaccines* until that organisation changed its name in 2001. At that stage, it seems, he stepped down from the directorship to assume the more honorary title of “medical and scientific advisor”.
- 5) In the years since 2001, Plotkin has continued to describe himself as a member of *Aventis Pasteur* when he attends conferences on such issues as the bioterrorist threat. Intriguingly, however, in matters to do with the origins of AIDS (such as the Royal Society proceedings, published in July 2001), he tends to describe himself only as a member of the Wistar Institute and the University of Pennsylvania. The timing of Plotkin’s standing down from the directorship of *Pasteur Merieux/ Aventis Pasteur* is interesting, in that it seems to tie in rather well with his decision to coordinate the attempts to disprove and/or discredit the OPV/AIDS hypothesis. To date, these attempts have been based on distortion, misinformation and untruth. Put in crude terms, by distancing himself from *Pasteur Merieux/ Aventis Pasteur*, Plotkin freed himself up to “fight dirty”. What these latest documents reveal, therefore, is that *Aventis Pasteur* has played a clandestine role in funding the battle to “disprove” the OPV hypothesis by any means, fair or foul.
- 6) The papers make clear just what a remarkable find the Dean of Medicine of the University of Kisangani, Dr Kayembe, had made in the basement of the old *Laboratoire Medicale de Stanleyville* [LMS] building. The discovery apparently featured (a) glass slides of human biopsies dating from 1 to 30,000, and covering the years from 1939 to 1960; (b) a chest three metres long and two metres high, containing paraffin blocks taken at biopsy (and presumably autopsy); apparently labels featuring year and biopsy number were “partially preserved”; (c) three large registers from 1955 and 1956, cross-referencing all biopsy samples taken in Stanleyville during that period. No other registers could be found.

- 7) The papers make it clear that Hugo Gevaerts selected 200 of the slides and an unknown number of the paraffin blocks to bring with him from Kisangani to Belgium, and that only later was he ordered by the Rector of the University “to empty his bags [of] Laboratoire Medicale items”. This is exactly what I heard when I visited Kisangani in April 2001 (arriving a few days after Gevaerts). Yet in a phone interview with me in 2003, Gevaerts insisted that he had *never* had any of the blocks and slides in his possession. Similarly, Gevaerts told a researcher from MFP in 2001 that he was not directly involved with the attempt to obtain blocks and slides, but had only been trying to help out other scientists. These papers make it clear that he is, in fact, an active collaborator with the other scientists in the Plotkin/Desmyter group. They therefore confirm that Professor Gevaerts does not always tell the truth. A further example of this might be his indignant denial that he had ever visited the site of Lindi camp, to interview some of those who took part in the experimental polio work on chimpanzees – a denial that is contradicted by several other witnesses.
- 8) Jan Desmyter is not unaware of the importance of these samples. The key document lists the subject of the April 2001 meeting as follows: “Archives of ‘Origins of AIDS’ interest at the Laboratoire Medicale, Kisangani.”

Why Plotkin, Desmyter and Wain-Hobson should not have been involved with testing the Stanleyville samples.

The Stanleyville samples, covering the period from 1939-1960, represent a potential gold mine, but they should undoubtedly have been tested for the presence of HIV and other viruses by *neutral* scientists.

Should any early isolates of HIV-1 be found among the samples pre-dating, or post-dating, the start of the Stanleyville OPV trials, it could throw significant light on the origins of the AIDS pandemic.

If genuine HIV-1 isolates were found from before 1955, this might well indicate that HIV and AIDS existed before the OPV trials. Conversely, if genuine HIV samples were found only from the period beginning in 1955 (but not before), this would strongly suggest that HIV had been introduced by the Koprowski vaccines.

Unfortunately, the very last people that should have been testing these samples are doctors Plotkin, Desmyter and Wain-Hobson, all of whom have been revealed (on this site, and elsewhere) as being active collaborators in the attempt to suppress the OPV/AIDS theory through fair means or foul. The fact that they have obtained these samples in a furtive and clandestine manner only raises further concerns about their intentions.

In the past, several of these scientists have grievously misrepresented the truth in their attempts to prove that their activities of Koprowski and Plotkin in Africa in the 1950s were not linked to the birth of AIDS.

These are men with few scruples, but many vested interests in the origins-of-AIDS debate, and there is no way that they can be considered as independent or

neutral investigators. Their obtaining the Stanleyville samples can only be viewed within the context of an attempted cover-up.

Given this background, if one of them did discover an early HIV-1 among the Stanleyville samples that post-date the OPV trials, would we expect that individual to report the discovery? Or suppress it?

Indeed, there is an even more worrying scenario. Might not one of these scientists be prepared to insert an HIV-positive sample from Stanleyville from (say) 1957 into a series that pre-dated the OPV trials (for instance, by presenting it as one of the Stanleyville samples, or indeed, as a Brazzaville sample, dating from 1939, or 1946, or 1952)?

A series containing such a mislabelled sample could then be tested (in good faith) by an entirely independent scientist, and used in an attempt to prove that AIDS predated the Koprowski vaccine trials.

Given that the stakes are so very high, and might involve not just the ruination of reputations but also billion-dollar law-suits, the latter possibility may be less far-fetched than it might at first seem.

What honest scientists would have done.

Since it first became clear to me (in April 2001) that the Plotkin/Desmyter group was trying to obtain these samples, and since it also became clear that they had collaborators acting for them among the senior hierarchy at the University of Kisanagani, I have regarded it as almost inevitable that they would eventually succeed in obtaining at least some of the samples.

The fact that they have done so was confirmed to me a Belgian professor, Paul Gigase, earlier this year [2004], and he made it clear that the Plotkin/Desmyter group had already had the samples for some time. Indeed, Professor Gigase expressed surprise and concern that they had not yet announced anything about them publicly. The manner of his speaking made it clear that he too suspected foul play. My personal guess is that the Plotkin/Desmyter group has been holding these samples since 2002 at latest – in other words, for at least two years. During that time, they must have had substantial opportunity to test the samples for HIV.

If they had had an interest in conducting (and being seen to conduct) these tests in an independent and impartial fashion, then *immediately* after obtaining the samples (or even before), one of their number could have contacted either Brian Martin or myself, and invited us to nominate another scientist to test aliquots of the samples in tandem with Desmyter and/or Wain-Hobson. If this had happened, and if (in broad terms) both pro-OPV and anti-OPV scientists had been involved in the testing, then the testing process would then have stood a good chance of being widely viewed as “free and fair”.

Instead of this, these scientists obtained their samples in clandestine fashion, and since then have announced nothing. Under the circumstances, the samples are

now all but ruined from the point-of-view of the historical record. Any amount of tampering or relabelling could have taken place, and we would be none the wiser.

Conclusion.

I now have evidence (which will be published in due course) that Hilary Koprowski was testing his polio vaccines in Stanleyville from (at the latest) 1955 onwards, not 1957 as previously assumed.

It is a matter of public record that there were many *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Candida albicans* infections occurring in Stanleyville in the second half of the 1950s. Both of these are among the small group of infections that are typical opportunistic infections of AIDS.

I personally believe that some of the samples obtained at the LMS from 1955 onwards (some of which are now in the possession of the Desmyter/Plotkin/Wain-Hobson group) may represent examples of the earliest HIV-1 cases in the world – namely of viruses that have been transferred to humans via vaccines grown in chimpanzee cells.

But thanks to doctors Plotkin, Desmyter, Wain-Hobson, Teuwen, Gevaerts and Akaibe, it now seems possible that we will now never know for sure. It may be that these scientists have effectively destroyed – or compromised – the only true fossil evidence available.

Edward Hooper. November 26th, 2004

Footnotes:

[1](a) “Dephlogistication”, completed on January 1st, 2003; published by the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* and posted on Brian Martin’s site in July 2003; see page 124 of the Web version of the essay; and (b) “Could an ancient sample of HIV-1 be faked?”, posted on Brian Martin’s site in February 2004.]

[2] E. Hooper, “Why the Worobey/Hahn ‘refutation’ of OPV/AIDS theory is wrong, and a warning about dishonest tactics used by opponents of the theory.” posted on <www.aidsorigins.com> on May 1st, 2004. The final section, entitled “Concern about possible faking of an ancient HIV-1 sample”, is relevant.