

## Foreword

Now [2019] seventy-eight years after treating the first experimental human cancer patient in 1941, the orgone energy accumulator is a medical device that has never been taken seriously by mainstream clinicians, and whose efficacy has never been properly tested by the research community. This is surely at least partly because of the legal case against the accumulator and its inventor, Wilhelm Reich, MD, brought by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1954. In one of the most heinous acts of censorship in American history, the FDA obtained a Federal Court Injunction calling for the destruction of Reich's scientific literature. When a student of Reich's, Michael Silvert, violated the Injunction without Reich's knowledge or permission, both men were arrested, tried and jailed for contempt of court. Reich's books and scientific journals were burned under FDA supervision—bookburning in the USA, federally commanded—in 1956 and again in 1960. Accumulators were destroyed as well. And Reich died of heart failure in November 1957 after a little more than seven months in prison. The FDA created a false narrative of Reich as pseudoscientist aiming to cure cancer, a narrative that has circulated widely ever since. The same false narrative said Reich claimed the accumulator could give patients orgasmic potency—again, something Reich never said. From this has arisen an unquenchably recycled tale of the accumulator as a “sex box.”<sup>1</sup>

The FDA hired scientists, supposedly to test the validity of Reich's theories and his work with the accumulator. The agency stated these experiments proved orgone energy was nonexistent. However, critical inspection of the FDA-commissioned “control experiments” shows them to have been extremely shoddy—little more than a sham. FDA conveyed this to researchers such as physicist Kurt Lion at MIT, who was asked to test the physical properties of the accumulator. A detailed scientific critique has shown these flawed experiments cannot be considered legitimately to have replicated Reich's experiments.<sup>2</sup> Lion “was called upon to prove that the box was just a box and that Dr. Reich was a fraud,” as Lion's son recalled in a later letter. Lion thus neglected to include crucial controls for relative humidity and other

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<sup>1</sup> This false narrative is meticulously critiqued in a new documentary film, “Love, Work and Knowledge: The Life and Trials of Wilhelm Reich” <http://loveworkknowledge.com> (2017), rent at <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/wr1897>. A detailed study of some of Reich's early laboratory experiments, including those that led Reich to believe he had discovered a new form of energy (he named it “orgone”) is James Strick, *Wilhelm Reich, Biologist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> See C. Frederick Rosenblum [Courtney Baker], “An Analysis of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Scientific Evidence against Wilhelm Reich: Part 2: The Physical Evidence,” in Jerome Greenfield, *Wilhelm Reich vs the USA* (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 358–367.

meteorological conditions that Reich's experiments had shown could at times lead to negative results.<sup>3</sup> Another critical analysis showed similar methodological errors in the FDA's attempts to test the biological effects of the orgone energy accumulator, errors which reflected bias and lack of detailed knowledge of Reich's published experiments.<sup>4</sup> This, then, is the much-vaunted basis for the scientific community's refusal to give the accumulator a serious examination. This—and fear of ridicule for taking up a topic “everyone knows is just pseudoscience.”<sup>5</sup>

## Afterword

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At a conference in 1991 at the Wilhelm Reich Museum in Rangeley, Maine, Dr. Chester M. Raphael, a practicing orgone therapist and student of Reich, gave a lecture on the medical use of the orgone energy accumulator.<sup>6</sup> He pointed out that the device, while still ridiculed by mainstream medicine, remains unique in that it treats the whole organism. Reich's concept was that some diseases—he called them “biopathies,” including cancer—are caused by a disturbance of pulsation of the autonomic nervous system and so are systemic disruptions of the entire organism. Medically, to treat the tumor as if it is the cancer disease was a major mistake, according to Reich. It amounts to treating only one very late stage and localized manifestation of a system-wide dysfunction that has gone on for decades in most cases. Raphael then spoke of the accumulator in that light:

“I know of nothing in mechanistic medicine that attempts to treat the totality of the living system, so that when the accumulator is used, the person is seated in the orgone accumulator entirely enclosed by it. This requires a statement that considers the cancer biopathy, for example, as a systemic disease...a viewpoint that is critical of the variety of local treatments that are prescribed with claims of cure....”

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<sup>3</sup> John R. Lion, MD, to James DeMeo, PhD, 18 Jan. 1982: “I recall quite well that my father [MIT physicist Kurt Lion] was called upon to prove that the box was just a box and that Dr. Reich was a fraud.” This pretty clearly implies bias, going into the experiments. DeMeo's reply of 22 Jan. 1982 points out that Lion's test of the temperature differential between an orgone accumulator and a control box “did not control for very important parameters of the local meteorology [relative humidity most of all], which influence the accumulator's functioning. Hence, without such controls. . . , his study loses meaning.” My thanks to Dr. DeMeo for sharing his correspondence with Lion.

<sup>4</sup> See Richard Blasband, “An Analysis of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Scientific Evidence against Wilhelm Reich: Part 1: The Biomedical Evidence,” pp. 343–357 in Greenfield, *Wilhelm Reich vs the USA*, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> See Strick, *Wilhelm Reich, Biologist*, *op. cit.* pp. 315-316.

<sup>6</sup> For the full talk, see *Annals of the Institute for Orgonomic Science* v. 15 (Dec. 2019, in press).

Based on this orgonomic view of cancer, Dr. Raphael suggested that the use of the accumulator was a necessary adjunct to help relieve the underlying shrinking of the tissues, even if the tumor is surgically removed. Also:

“Psychiatric orgone therapy would be a desirable contribution to deal with the underlying biopathy. No matter what, the only real cure, which would be rare, would be the restoration of the full energy metabolism of the organism—its *orgastic potency*. To quote Reich: ‘It would be far easier to prevent cancer than to cure a fully developed cancer.’”

Much emphasis was placed on this *central* basis of Reich’s understanding: that sexual stasis is the core of disease, and that this may be the single most important ‘take home lesson’ from Reich’s work, so that the use of the accumulator alone must not be looked upon as a panacea either. Raphael warned that such a simple looking device

“often invites mystical expectations in its use: it will make you orgasmically potent or it will help you to live forever. I feel this has to be said to dispel some of the nutty notions about it.”

This keeping of the accumulator in perspective, especially in systemic disease, was emphasized by a case Dr. Raphael had seen, a man who had been diagnosed with lung cancer and who did not have surgery. In retrospect it is clear that, while he spoke of the patient anonymously, it was the case you have just read in this book.

“They gave him a few cobalt treatments. They sent him away and told his wife that things didn’t look very good. That was in 1962. He’s dead now, but I have a letter from him in 1970. He died a little over two years later, when he was 73. He used a 20-layer accumulator *conscientiously* while he was in this area [the Northeast US], then took it out to Arizona. He used it for a half-hour, four times a day. The tumor disappeared. He traveled around a lot and was at the Mayo Clinic. He wrote me [reading]: ‘In reality, in all the thousands of patients they have ever examined, they have never found one before who was still alive 8 years after having lung cancer.’ Now he had a few cobalt treatments at the beginning, and the question is, is that what did it? But anyway, that case was remarkable.

“I’m mentioning it because we don’t get cases like that, so we have no way of knowing. ..I answered his letter and said [reading his own letter back to the patient]: ‘You know what has kept you alive? It’s not the accumulator. It is your ability to become angry, annoyed, cynical, sarcastic. It’s a mysterious something, and the accumulator has functioned as a useful adjunct. When you tell others that it is the orgone energy accumulator that is responsible, they may well react negatively; perhaps out of a basic

distrust or prejudice, but they wouldn't be wrong.' The use of the accumulator should be put into perspective. In *The Cancer Biopathy*, Reich warned in his preface that they would say he claimed to cure cancer. All the patients he described in the book died, yet they continued to say he claimed he could cure it. We must be humble in talking about what we can or cannot do with regard to the living process. You are alive because you are *you*. That is fundamental. The therapeutic process of biopsychiatric and physical orgone therapy are adjuncts. We may concede that the latter are important, but not fundamental. With such a viewpoint, we do not have to worry so much about the skepticism, or to try to convince them. We know where we stand. The accumulator [cannot work miracles]. Reich counselled patients: 'I'm afraid we will have to be patient.' ...[To us, his students,] he used to say to us: 'Keep your mouth shut! You don't know what you're talking about.' He made us *shut up* because, he said, 'You don't know what you're talking about.'"

On the other hand, Raphael warned against an opposite problem as well:

"I also regret that the use of the orgone accumulator is not being encouraged. It is not because of neglect or indifference, but because of a seemingly misguided idea that it might be harmful. The statement is made that since the days when the atomic bombs were dropped and atomic tests were instituted, the orgone atmosphere has been altered and the therapeutic efficacy of the orgone energy devices has become complicated. 'No therapeutic claims are being made for these devices. Their use is strictly in the investigative experimental stage.' This is being said after 45 years or more of use.

"Dr. Reich never restricted its use, despite all the atomic blasts and other nuclear contamination. The only time that he ever recommended that it not be used was in connection with the F.D.A. action against the accumulator. The accumulator—to give the excuse that it should not be used because the air is polluted is equivalent to saying that we should stop *breathing* because the air is polluted. I have heard nothing in the way of investigation or experimentation in over four and a half decades to justify, by implication or otherwise, that the accumulator should not be used. The reasoning seems specious."

Surely, more than sixty years after Reich's death, it is time for the orgone energy accumulator to receive serious examination by the scientific and medical communities.

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