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József Cardinal Mindszenty during his 1949 trial for treason in Budapest

THE CIA

Mind-Bending Disclosures

The agency's search for the secret of brainwashing

The apartments in New York City and San Francisco were tarted up with red draperies, dressing tables trimmed in black velveteen and Toulouse-Lautrec posters. At night, women lured men to the hideaways and fed them LSD or marijuana, while other men watched the action through two-way mirrors and tape-recorded the sounds.

Scenes from seamy bordellos? Havens for desperate voyeurs? No, these were taxpayer-financed operations of the CIA, which was experimenting with drugs during the 1950s and '60s in a project with the sophomoric code name Midnight Climax. The women, apparently moonlighting prostitutes, were paid \$100 for each assignment by the CIA. The operation, conducted by CIA alchemists from 1954 until 1963, was part of a quarter-century hunt for a psychogenic philosophers' stone. The purpose was to discover the secret of brainwashing, to protect U.S. agents and gain control over enemy spies.

Operation Midnight Climax was disclosed last week at a Senate hearing, adding bizarre details to the story of CIA drug research exposed in 1975 and 1976 by government investigations. Further revelations were provided by a cache of 8,000

heavily censored documents s zenty's vacant stare and mechanical voice at his 1949 treason trial in Budapest. Drugs and mind-control techniques had long been used by intelligence services, but the CIA feared that the Communists had made some breakthrough. By 1953, the CIA concluded that its worries were unfounded; still the research continued, despite some official misgivings.

Drugs were sought to incapacitate entire buildings full of people, poison food to create "confusion-anxiety-fear," cause headaches and earaches, and produce amnesia in foreign spies after interrogations or CIA agents who were about to retire. To administer the drugs surreptitiously, CIA experimenters developed pencil-like injectors and small spray guns.

Much of the research was devoted to LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs, which the CIA wrongly thought could be used to squeeze information from enemy agents and discredit them by disturbing their memories or changing their sex drives, making them either extremely over- or undersexed.

CIA-paid researchers conducted LSD experiments on prisoners at the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington,

alcohol on mental patients and staff members at the Butler Memorial Hospital in Providence. Other scientists tried out brainwashing techniques—including isolation and sensory deprivation—on patients at McGill University's Allan Memorial Institute of Psychiatry in Montreal.

In the early 1950s, the CIA tried to put some of its new findings to use, sending special interrogation teams to Europe and Asia. One team gave intravenous injections of an unidentified drug to three European agents of dubious loyalty and questioned them for eleven days before deciding that they were not turncoats.

The CIA began winding down the experiments in 1964 and ended them altogether in 1973. At a Senate hearing last week, CIA Director Stansfield Turner gave a final accounting: 149 projects for an undisclosed amount of money at 80 U.S. and Canadian universities, research foundations, hospitals and prisons. At least 39 projects involved human subjects, often without their knowledge. No one knows where they are now or what effects they may have suffered. Said Turner: "It is abhorrent to me to think of using humans as guinea pigs. I assure you that the CIA is in no way engaged in either witting or unwitting testing of drugs today."

Turner had more on his mind last week than those mind-bending experiments. Soon after he became CIA director, he began lobbying to consolidate all Government intelligence agencies under his aegis. The Pentagon, threatened with loss of control over the National Security Agency and the individual service agencies, objected strenuously. President Carter has resolved the dispute with a compromise rejecting the notion of an overall intelligence czar. He gave Turner authority over all intelligence budgets (estimated total: \$7 billion). But he gave individual agency chiefs the right to appeal Turner's decisions and left them operationally independent.

