

Project mkultra essay



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When many Americans think about Germany, they automatically think of the Nazis and the experiments they did with the Jews. But what they don't know is that the U. S. gov. did the same thing. It all started in the 50s during the Korean War. Concerned about the rumors of Communist brainwashing of POWs, the CIA director Allen Dulles authorized the MKULTRA program in April 1953.

It would later become notoriously known for the many unusual and sometimes inhumane experiments that the CIA financed.

Though the CIA destroyed many of the documents related to MKULTRA in 1972, several records relating to the program have made it into the public domain, the work of historians, investigative reporters, and curious Congressional committees. Resulting in the release of enough information to make MKULTRA one of the most disturbing instances of intelligence community abuse on record.

MKULTRA was the principle program of the CIA. It involved the research and development of chemical and biological agents. It was concerned with the research and development of chemical, biological, and radiological materials, which were capable of employment in clandestine operations to control human behavior. Over the ten-year life that the program had, many additional avenues to the control of human behavior were designated as appropriate for investigation under MKULTRA charter. These included radiation, electroshock, various fields of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and anthropology, graphology, harassment substances, and paramilitary devices and materials.

The research and development of material to be used for altering human behavior consisted of three phases: in the first phase the search for materials suitable for study. In the second stage the laboratory testing on voluntary human subjects in various types of institutions. In the third phase the application of MKULTRA materials in normal settings. The search for suitable material was conducted through standing arrangements with specialists in universities, pharmaceutical houses, hospitals, state and federal institutions, and private organizations

The most notorious MKULTRA experiments were the CIAs pioneering studies of the drug which would later feed the heads of millions: Lysergic Acid Diethyl amide, more commonly known as LSD. The CIA was intrigued by it and harbored hopes that the acid or a similar drug could be used to clandestinely disorient and manipulate target foreign leaders. The Agency would then consider several such schemes in its pursuit of the leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro, who they wanted to send into a drug-induced stupor of tirade during a public or live radio speech. The Agency also views the drug as a way to loosen up tongues in CIA interrogations.

According to Evan Thomas the author of *The Very Best Men*, he describes Sidney Gottlieb, the Stranglovia scientist who ran the MKULTRA project. Born with a club foot and a stutter, he compensated by becoming an expert folk dancer and obtaining a Ph. D from Cal Tech. A pleasant man who lived on a farm with his wife, Gottlieb drunk only goats milk and grew Christmas trees which he sold at a roadside stand. When Dr. Gottlieb wasn't busy on the farm, he was dosing subjects with LSD-laced drinks, scrutinizing their

reactions, and searching for qualities of the drug that would benefit the agency's covert actions.

Like many of the other experiments conducted by the CIA, the LSD ones were conducted on many unwitting subjects, most often they were prisoners or patrons of brothels set up and run by the Agency. They had installed two-way mirrors in the establishments to allow for observation of the drug's effects. These studies were then referred to as Operation Midnight Climax.

For those people that were informed they faced even more inhumane treatments. During one of the experiments in Kentucky, seven volunteers were given LSD for 77 days straight. One of those experiments turned up fatal. On November 19, 1953, an Army scientist and germ specialist named Frank Olson, who had been slipped a solid dose of LSD in his drink. For eight days he was suffering from what observers described as a paranoid, depressed state. Olson soon jumped through his hotel window in New York and fell to his death. What was even more tragic was that the Agency covered up their role in Olson's demise, and twenty-two years passed before the Olson family learned of the events that led up to Frank's tragic death.

When the CIA's acid exploits were made public in the mid-1970s, the Agency found itself facing heavy criticism. One Senate committee put it this way in 1975: From its beginning in the early 1950s until its termination in 1963, the program of surreptitious administration of LSD to unwitting non-volunteer human subjects demonstrates a failure of the CIA's leadership to pay adequate attention to the rights of individuals and to provide effective

guidance to CIA employees. Though it was known that the testing was dangerous, the lives of subjects were placed in jeopardy and were ignored. Although it was clear that the laws of the United States were being violated, the testing continued.

Even though the most talked about aspect of MKULTRA was the CIA's LSD work there were also many other experiments conducted. The program included many other unusual investigations relating to the science of mind control. CIA researchers probed the potential of numerous para-psychological phenomena, such as hypnosis, telepathy, precognition, photo kinesis and remote viewing. These studies were conducted to merely satisfy the CIA's scientific curiosity. The CIA was looking for weapons that would give the United States the upper hand in the mind wars. Toward that objective, the CIA poured millions of dollars into studies probing literally dozens of methods of influencing and controlling the mind. One 1955 MKULTRA document gives an indication of the size and range of the effort; the memo refers to the study of an assortment of mind-altering substances which would:

promote illogical thinking and impulsiveness to the point where the recipient would be discredited in public

increase the efficiency of mentation and perception

prevent or counteract the intoxicating effect of alcohol

promote the intoxicating effect of alcohol

produce the signs and symptoms of recognized diseases in a reversible way so that they may be used for malingering, etc.

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render the indication of hypnosis easier or otherwise enhance its usefulness

enhance the ability of individuals to withstand privation, torture and coercion during interrogation and so-called brainwashing

produce amnesia for events preceding and during their use

produce shock and confusion over extended periods of time and capable of surreptitious use

produce physical diaclement such as paralysis of the legs, acute anemia, etc.

produce pure euphoria with no subsequent let-down

alter personality structure in such a way that the tendency of the recipient to become dependent upon another person is enhanced

cause mental confusion of such a type that the individual under its influence will find it difficult to maintain a fabrication under questioning

lower the ambition and general working efficiency of men when administered in undetectable amounts

promote weakness or distortion of the eyesight or hearing faculties.

Preferably without permanent effects

Few of the many objectives were realized, but the very conduct of these experiments caused many critics of the CIA to argue that successful or not, the CIA scientists shouldnt pry at the doors of perception.