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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

19 JUN 1964

Commission No. 1131

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy

SUBJECT: Soviet Brainwashing Techniques

1. Reference is made to your memorandum of 19 May 1964, requesting that materials relative to Soviet techniques in mind conditioning and brainwashing be made available to the Commission.

2. At my request, experts on these subjects within the CIA have prepared a brief survey of Soviet research in the direction and control of human behavior, a copy of which is attached. The Commission may retain this document. Please note that the use of certain sensitive materials requires that a sensitivity indicator be affixed.

3. In the immediate future, this Agency will make available to you a collection of overt and classified materials on these subjects, which the Commission may retain.

4. I hope that these documents will be responsive to the Commission's needs.

DECLASSIFIED
By C. I. A. 43,174
letter of 1/27/77
NNL by *mg* Date 7/3/77

Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Deputy Director for Plans

Attachment

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Research and Development in the Field of
Direction and Control of Human Behavior

1. There are two major methods of altering or controlling human behavior, and the Soviets are interested in both. The first is psychological; the second, pharmacological. The two may be used as individual methods or for mutual reinforcement. For long-term control of large numbers of people, the former method is more promising than the latter. In dealing with individuals, the U.S. experience suggests the pharmacological approach (assisted by psychological techniques) would be the only effective method. Neither method would be very effective for single individuals on a long-term basis.

2. Soviet research on the pharmacological agents producing behavioral effects has consistently lagged about five years behind Western research. They have been interested in such research, however, and are now pursuing research on such chemicals as LSD-25, amphetamines, tranquilizers, hypnotics, and similar materials. There is no present evidence that the Soviets have any singular, new, potent drugs, or that they are particularly expert in the use of such drugs to force a course of action on an individual. They are aware, however, of the tremendous drive produced by drug addiction, and perhaps could couple this with psychological direction to achieve control of an individual.

3. The psychological aspects of behavior control would include not only conditioning by repetition and training, but such things as hypnosis, deprivation, isolation, manipulation of guilt feelings, subtle or overt threats, social pressure, and so on. Some of the newer trends in the USSR are as follows:

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a. The adoption of a multidisciplinary approach integrating biological, social and physical-mathematical research in attempts better to understand, and eventually, to control human behavior in a manner consonant with national plans.

b. The outstanding feature, in addition to the interdisciplinary approach, is a new concern for mathematical approaches to an understanding of behavior. Particularly notable are attempts to use modern information theory, automata theory, and feedback concepts in interpreting the mechanisms by which the "second signal system," i.e., speech and associated phenomena, affect human behavior. Implied by this research was the hope for a technology for controlling behavior via the "second signal system," using information inputs as causative agents rather than chemical agents, electrodes or other more exotic techniques applicable, perhaps, to individuals rather than groups.

c. This new trend, observed in the early Post-Stalin Period, continues. By 1960 the word "cybernetics" was used by the Soviets to designate this new trend. This new science is considered by some as the key to understanding the human brain and the product of its functioning--psychic activity and personality--to the development of means for controlling it and to ways for molding the character of the "New Communist Man". As one Soviet author puts it: Cybernetics can be used in "molding of a child's character, the inculcation of knowledge and techniques, the amassing of experience, the establishment of social behavior patterns...all functions which can be summarized as 'control' of the growth process of the individual." 1/ Students of particular disciplines in the USSR, such as psychologists and social scientists, also support the general cybernetic trend. 2/

4. In summary, therefore, there is no evidence that the Soviets have any techniques or agents capable of producing particular behavioral patterns which are not available in the West. Current research indicates that the Soviets are attempting to develop a technology for controlling the development of behavioral patterns among the citizenry of the USSR in accordance with politically determined requirements of the system. Furthermore, the same technology can be applied to more sophisticated approaches to the "coding" of information for transmittal to population targets in the "battle for the minds of men." Some of the more esoteric techniques such as ESP or, as the Soviets call it, "biological radio-communication", and psychogenic agents such as LSD, are receiving

-2-

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some overt attention with, possibly, applications in mind for individual behavior control under clandestine conditions. However, we require more information than is currently available in order to establish or disprove planned or actual applications of various methodologies by Soviet scientists to the control of actions of particular individuals.

References

1. Itelson, Lev, "Pedagogy: An Exact Science?" USSR October 1963, p. 10.
2. Borzek, Josef, "Recent Developments in Soviet Psychology," Annual Review of Psychology, Vol. 15, 1964, p. 493-594.

DECLASSIFIED
By C. I. A. 23/1974
letter of 2/27/74
NNL by hcy Date 7/30/74

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