

SECOND LOOK
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Has the CIA Mastered Mind Control?

by Victor Marchetti

THE SEARCH FOR THE "MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE"

by John Marks

Times Books, New York, 1979. 242 pps., \$9.95.

A fascinating tale in which truth is as strange as fiction—and sometimes stranger—this entertaining and informative book by John Marks, a former Department of State intelligence officer, is rich in fact and detail about the CIA's secret efforts during the Cold War (the 1950's and early 1960's) to discover and devise unique methods of controlling the human mind, especially the minds of covert agents, operators, and assorted other individuals involved in the clandestine struggle between the CIA and the Soviet KGB. Anyone interested in drugs, hypnosis, and brainwashing—particularly with regard to their potential application to spy warfare—will find this slim volume worth reading . . . and will be surprised by its conclusions.

Try as they might, and they certainly did try, the CIA's spooks and scientists never were able to learn how to control the human mind.

Reporting the observations of an anonymous retired high-ranking CIA counterintelligence officer, the author tells that Americans tend to look for quick answers to complex human problems, often resorting to the latest technology. "We are gimmick-prone," says the mysterious old cold warrior. But, he continues, "Gimmicks—machines, drugs, and technical tricks—comprise only the third method of behavior control, after torture and tradecraft." Crude? Perhaps. But this is the thinking of many of the old CIA professionals.

Later in the book the author comments that "the CIA's brainwashing program had come full circle" by the 1960's—and that it was a complete failure. He cites the case of Yuri Nosenko, who defected from the KGB in early 1964 to tell the CIA that Lee Harvey Oswald was in no way connected with Soviet intelligence. But the CIA did not believe Nosenko, so they tried to find out why he was really dispatched by the KGB. "After 10 years of research, with some rather gruesome results, CIA officials had come up with no [mind-control] techniques on which they felt they could rely. Thus, when the operational crunch came, they fell back on the basic brutality of the Soviet system."

In a large sense, therefore, The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate" is a book that reports the new revelations or disclosures about the CIA's infamous drug pro-

gram MKULTRA or any of its related research and development in hypnosis, induced amnesia, or brainwashing. And the cutoff date for most of the information is the mid-1960's. But the author does pull together all the available data on these programs and puts it into the perspective of the time, i.e., that period of national paranoia known as the Cold War. It is a good historical document, but it falls short of the provocative book it could have been.

First of all, the Nosenko case is not fully explained. The former KGB officer was put in solitary confinement in a windowless cell—so that after awhile he did not know if it was day or night, or what day of the week or month it was. In this specially-built jail the CIA made for him—and in which he spent three years—he was constantly subjected to hostile interrogation. But according to official CIA sources, the Soviet never broke—despite the fact that he was constantly caught lying. Eventually, he was made a \$35,000-a-year consultant to the CIA.

In my opinion, Nosenko either cracked or was brainwashed. Why else would the CIA in later years use Nosenko—actually peddle him about Washington as an expert on Soviet secret operations in the U.S.—for propaganda and misinformation purposes to unsuspecting and naive publishers, such as the Readers Digest Press? By the time the Agency had finished with him, he was nothing more than a robot.

But late last year during the hearings of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, a CIA spokesman officially denounced Nosenko as a braggart and liar, saying that the ex-KGB officer's information and views could not be trusted. Still, the Agency spokesman claimed that Nosenko was a legitimate defector. Only the CIA would dare to advance such an Alice-in-Wonderland explanation, and only a gullible Congressional Committee and American public would accept it. But a discerning author should not.

A second major flaw in the book is the fact that the author relies almost exclusively on Freedom of Information Act data—and everyone knows (or should know) that the Government, especially the CIA, releases only that information it wants the public to have . . . and nothing more. (This I know from first-hand experience!) Therefore, there is nothing new in the book. It is, in fact, only a retelling of the CIA drug story as the CIA prefers the public to know it—'Yes, we used to experiment with drugs but nothing ever came of it, and we stopped the program back in the mid-1960's.' The author consciously, or otherwise, promotes this misleading

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