The Role of Psychoanalytic Knowledge in CIA's ARTICHOKE and MKULTRA Documents During the Years 1947-1963: Use and Misuse of Psychoanalytic Techniques

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Approximately 20.000 documents of CIA's efforts to manipulate human behavior are available to the public since 1977[1] and accessible via internet for more than a decade. Despite a decades's long opportunity a thorough evaluation of CIA's use – and abuse – of psychodynamic theory and practice is still pending. The following should therefore be understood as a first (and therefore incomplete) look into CIA's exploitation of psychodynamic theory and practice for intelligence purposes.[2]

The OSS and its successor, the CIA, made use of psychodynamic concepts for research in the field of mind-altering methods and substances,[3] exploited psychodynamic approaches for interrogation strategies, including the induction of »accelerated« regressive processes which became the basis for psychological torture experiments (e.g. psychodynamic evaluations of isolation, sensory deprivation, ETC- and drug-induced regressive mental states, etc.), and used its findings in operational programs. Psychoanalytic insights also became first choice for intelligence related personality assessment procedures[4] – the latter being a continuation of Murray's »Office of Strategic Services Assessment Staff« that tested and implemented assessment procedures for future OSS agents based on their findings.[5]

Psychoanalysis also became the treatment of choice for its own personnel.[6] According to several authors, *Chestnut Lodge* in Rockland, MD, USA, held CIA-cleared psychiatrists »for in-house employees and other ›sensitive‹ cases«[7] and was officially »approved by the

[1] US Senate 1977a, b.
[2] The collaboration of psychoanalysts is outlined in Müller, 2016b.
[3] For a more thorough overview of participating members of the psychoanalytic community, see Müller, 2012, 2016, 2017. In 1941 the first centralized US-intelligence agency – »Office of the Coordinator of Information« (COI) – was founded. Due to structural changes within the COI it was renamed »Office of Strategic Services« (OSS) in the summer of 1942. The OSS Truth Drug Committee already began its search on unwitting patients in 1943. Psychoanalyst Lawrence Kubie was a member of this committee and one of the experimenters (ibid.). Thus, the CIA only continued what began with the OSS.
[4] For a far more detailed overview of the collaboration of the psychoanalytic community with the US-military-intelligence-complex since 1940, see Müller, 2016b.
[5] OSS Assessment Staff, 1948.
[6] Mori ID#: 148376, p.1.
[7] Albarelli, 2009, p. 90.

CIA Security Office for use« in 1953.[8] The *Lodge*, as it was known, was the home of famed psychoanalysts like Harry Stack Sullivan and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann.[9]

The collaboration between US-intelligence and Chestnut Lodge psychiatrists and psychoanalysts began during WWII. Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts Mabel B. Cohen, Robert A. Cohen, and Alfred H. Stanton, all security-cleared OSS-medical personnel assigned to Henry A. Murray's OSS Assessment Staff, worked at Chestnut Lodge. Some of their OSS-assignments were conducted at the Lodge.[10] This collaboration continued when the CIA superseded the OSS in 1947.

In other cases, psychodynamic thinking became a helpful tool in trying to manipulate behavior and motivation of subjects that were considered important for intelligence gathering. For example, when CIA-affiliated Alfred Paumier commented as a lay person on the case of Otto John, a former member of the German resistance to the Nazi regime who was involved in a famous Cold War espionage entanglement,[11] he made extensive use of psychodynamic theories by psychoanalyst Edmund Bergler in a commentary Paumier published in CIA's own journal »Studies in Intelligence«.[12] Thus he continued what psychologists and psychoanalysts Walter C. Langer and Henry A. Murray began in 1943 on behalf of the OSS[13] and what psychodynamic oriented psychiatrist Jerrold M. Post and his CIA-based »Center for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior« did for the CIA over a period of 21 years (1965–1986).[14]

An example of a far more problematic objective was outlined in »Subproject 2« of »*Project MKULTRA, the CIA's Program of Research in Behavioral Modification*«.[15] While the main research interest of »Subproject 2« focused on ways of how to administer psychoactive drugs on unwitting subjects (in this case on »criminals«), an additional research

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[8] Ibid., p. 115; see also: Cockburn & St. Clair, 1998, p. 191; Lee & Shlain, 1985, p. 31; Marks, 1979, p. 88.
[9] Beinfeld, 2010, p. 483; Cockburn & St. Clair, 1998, p. 191, Marks, 1979, p. 88; Lee & Shlain, 1985, p. 99; Treaster, 1975a.
[10] OSS Assessment Staff, 1948, pp. V-VI; Beinfeld, 2010, p. 483; about the OSS-affiliation of Mabel B. Cohen, Robert A. Cohen, & Alfred H. Stanton, see Beinfeld, 2010, p. 483; Müller, 2010b.
[11] Otto John was the first president of West Germany's counterintelligence service in 1950. He mysteriously defected to East Germany in the summer of 1954 and suddenly reappeared in the West after a little more than a year. Up to this day it is not clearly proven whether John was kidnapped or worked as either an agent for the East German intelligence service or the KGB or as a double agent for both West and East German intelligence agencies (Pace, 1997, p. B5; Heuwagen, 1997, p. 6).
[12] Paumier, 1961, Communication to the Editors. *Studies In Intelligence*, 5(2), pp. 45-50. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol5no2/html/v05i2a06p_0001.htm. Accessed: 01/13/18.
[13] Langer, 1972, Murray, 1943.
[14] Post, 2003, p. xi.
[15] Foster, 2009 (Reprint of: US Senate, 1977).

effort prepared »[a] survey of methods which have been used by criminals for surreptitious administration of drugs. Analysis of the psychodynamics of situations of this nature [is to be done].«[16]

The last sentence can be understood as a way to induce regressive processes in conjunction with fostering transference dynamics that would create dependence of the subject on the interrogator and thus weaken the subject's defenses. As a result, key aspects of psychodynamic functioning were used for manipulative purposes: regression (including the enhancement of regressive processes as mentioned above) and transference. Elements of psychoanalytic technique were thus reverse-engineered to manipulate targeted subjects for interrogation purposes. The CIA's 1963 torture manual KUBARK is very specific about the use of regression and transference processes:

> »The problem of overcoming the resistance of an uncooperative interrogate is essentially a problem of inducing regression to a level at which the resistance can no longer be sustained […][17] The deprivation of stimuli induces regression by depriving the subject's mind of contact with an outer world and thus forcing it in upon itself. At the same time, the calculated provision of stimuli during interrogation tends to make the regressed subject view the interrogator as a father-figure. The result, normally, is a strengthening of the subject's tendencies toward compliance«.[18]

A 1949 memorandum outlines the scope of the CIA's interest in the early years of behavioral control:

> »General Interrogation: Routine interrogation methods, both formal and informal, utilizing non-technical procedures to obtain the desired information.
>
> Technical Aids to Interrogation:
>
> Physical: Various methods of physical persuasion utilized to elicit information from the uncooperative subject.
>
> Psychological: Threats, inferences, promises and extended procedures stylized in special interrogation approaches, softening-up procedures as an aid and verification in interrogation procedures.
>
> Mechanical: Various modes of lie detection apparatus utilized as an aid and verification in interrogation procedures.
>
> Medical: Various drugs, such as the so-called "truth serums," utilized to break down inhibitions and resistances and to produce short or prolonged control or influence over the

[16] Ibid, p. 112.
[17] KUBARK, 1963, p. 96
[18] Ibid, p. 90.

subject. Also medical techniques used as a form of medical duress to produce pain or discomfort to the subject.«[19]

On April 29, 1949, a memorandum was prepared outlining steps to be taken in order to install a CIA program that included four specific fields of activity: »[P]ersonnel screening, personnel security check, psychological and psychiatric treatment of personnel, and interrogative research«.[20] In the case of psychological and psychiatric treatment of CIA-personnel, following treatments were recommended:

»[…] [A]ccelerated psychoanalysis; treatment of personality and character deficiencies; elimination of undesirable traits and habits such as smoking and drinking, stuttering, etc., and the treatment of various phobias; psychological regression and memory restoration; tests and cure for sleep-talking; and the susceptibility and reaction to various stimulants such as alcohol, Benzedrine, and caffeine.«[21]

As speculations of the use of mind-controlling drugs arose in connection with the political show trial of Cardinal József Mindszenty in Soviet-controlled Hungary in 1949, the fear that the USSR might have succeeded in developing a reliable transference/regression-oriented interrogation technique progressed.[22] Within due time, the CIA prepared a report on this matter.[23] Alarmed by the »anomalous and incomprehensive«[24] behavior of the defendant and his doubtful confessions, it was presumed that certain interrogation techniques must have been employed by Hungarian (i.e. communist) forces the US-intelligence was not yet aware of; techniques, the report stated, that were capable of »reorganization and reorientation of the minds of the confessees«.[25] As a consequence, the CIA began to reinforce already started OSS and Navy projects that experimented with mind alteration techniques (such as the 1942 »OSS truth drug committee« and Navy's 1947 »Project CHATTER«).[26]

The following is an excerpt of a document dealing with the Mindszenty trial:

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[19] Mori ID#: 184383, p. 1.
[20] Mori ID#: 148376, p. 1.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Drugging Feared in Cardinal's Case, 1949; Mind-Control Studies Had Origins in Trial of Mindszenty, 1977.
[23] Mori ID# 184374. This document is dated with an estimated publication date (1/1/1943), but since the Mindszenty trial took place in 1949 (Mindszenty Has Confessed, Hungary Says, 1949, January 20, p. 8; United Press, 1949, February 5, p. 1), the given publication date must be false. Another CIA memorandum (Mori ID#: 144891) is dated May 5, 1949, and contains the exact passages as quoted above. Thus, the above-mentioned memorandum must have also been issued around May of 1949.
[24] Mori ID#: 184374, p. 1.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Müller, 2016a; Lee, 2012, p. 58; Lee & Shlain, 1985, p. 5. Contrary to common arguments, the CIA was only defensively implementing mind control programs to counter Soviet strategies of behavioral modification techniques, I argue that the USA followed an offensive strategy that already began in 1942 by the implementation of the OSS truth drug committee.

»[…] There is adequate historical experience to establish that basic changes in the functional organization of the human mind cannot be brought about by the traditional methods of physical torture – these at the most, achieve a reluctant, temporary yielding and, moreover, leave their mark upon the victim.

Newer or more subtle techniques had, therefore, to be considered for the working hypothesis. Among the recognized methods are:

a. Psychosurgery: a surgical separation of the frontal lobes of the brain.
b. Shock Methods:
   (1) electrical
   (2) drug: metrasol, canabis [sic] indica, insulin, cocaine.
c. Psychoanalytic methods
   (1) psychoanalysis
   (2) narco-analysis and synthesis
   (3) hypno-analysis and synthesis
d. Combination of the foregoing.

[…] MINDSZENTY

1. Regression to infantile state of object dependency on a parental object (the State), characteristic of hypnosis (consistent with transference phenomenon), a basic change in character structure result hypnosis.
2. Necessary to determine:
   a. Technique for dealing with resistance-repression dynamism.
   b. Technique for obtaining regression to specific age level.
   c. Reconstruct the psychodynamics of the change in the functional organization of the patient
   d. How the procedure is accelerated – resistances are high – usually require long periods for resolution and full interaction with control (therapist).

   Repeated and prolonged hypnosis during which subject reconditioned unconsciously to his associational sensations – thus associated with personality and character change.

   Conditioning of sensation to extraneous, innocuous events (as key words).

   Background: - Psychoanalysis aims at a reorganization of the mind. Conscience was divorced from the standards imposed in early life.«[27]

This CIA document suggests the unknown author was either knowledgeable of psychoanalytic theory or was a trained psychoanalyst. It states that psychoanalysis was not only one of the »recognized« methods but was thought to be a »newer and more subtle technique« to manipulate subjects in interrogation settings. Thus it verifies how elements of psychoanalytic technique were implemented as means of trying to grasp the function and eventually the control of the human mind – again emphasizing the use of regressive techniques and the exploitation of transference processes.[28]

[27] Mori ID#: 184374, p. 1-3.
[28] I will not engage in a discussion whether the OSS/CIA-understanding of psychoanalysis had anything to do with »psychoanalysis proper«. The OSS/CIA seemed to hold enough promises that certain »proper

The Agency invented its own term for the establishment of a sufficient rapport between interrogator and the potential subject. They called it »the general 'roping' technique. A basis of trust and friendship must be established by the operator before administering the drug«.[29] In analytic terms, a »good enough« working alliance became central to CIA interrogations. In conclusion, the CIA made use of psychoanalytic techniques to develop a two-step program: First, the implementation of a working alliance, at best serving as a mildly positive transference, followed by accelerated induction of psychic regression via psychoanalysis itself or by incapacitating and thus dependence-enforcing substances or various (electro-)shock treatments to enforce regressive psychic processes. The latter was intended to undermine or break down defense mechanisms of a subject in order to get to the »truth«. Concerning drug enforced regression the following CIA document states:

> »The procedure is termed narco-synthesis or narco-analysis. The drug is merely administered as a means of breaking down the person's inhibitions and stimulating him to reveal the problems that exist in both the conscious and subconscious mind. Actually the procedure is merely one of several means of isolating and making contact with the subconscious mind to the exclusion of conscious resistance.«[30]

Efforts in exploiting hypnosis for interrogation and mind-control purposes already started during the times of the OSS. Several early CIA-memoranda also deal with this issue.[31] An undated memorandum confers on the use of unwitting subjects in relation to hypnosis and the use of psychoanalysis:

> »The problem of how to effect control of a subject by the use of hypnosis or chemical or a combination thereof, without the subject being aware that he is being approached [deleted], is one of the most interesting and complex problems studies by the ARTICHOKE[32] group. This approach could (can) be made through any of the following techniques:
>
> a) The subject who is brought under H [hypnosis] control by the use of the indirect techniques (relax-rest or possibly monotonous sounds, etc.).
>
> b) The subject who falls under H control by accident.
>
> c) Use of "medical cover" for:
> 1) Narco-interrogation and control;
> 2) Narco-hypnotic interrogation and control.
>
> d) Use of surreptitious agents

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psychoanalysts« were more than willing to work for them, regardless of the OSS/CIA's psychoanalytic (mis)understanding.

[29] Mori ID#: 144769, p. 3.

[30] Mori ID#: 149443, p. 1.

[31] e.g. Mori ID#: 144892; 149613; 184472.

[32] Project ARTICHOKE was the successor of Project BLUEBIRD, both early CIA mind-control research programs (Müller, 2010b, 2016a, b).

1) Concealable chemicals
2) Odorless gases or aerosols
3) Dusts
4) Possible deprivation of oxygen or food

e) By-products of medical treatment
1) Shock therapy
2) Medical pre-conditioning with chemicals, etc.
3) Medical treatment for illness or accident
4) Psycho-analysis or psycho-therapy«[33]

Hypnosis was deemed an especially promising field of combining the psychic phenomena of transference and regression to exploit »high-value«[34] subjects of that era. Breaking down psychological resistance was thus at the center of inquiry. G. H. Estabrooks, an early adventurer of the hypnotic experience, was only one of several scientists trying to sell hypnotic techniques to the CIA (as he has done to the OSS in post-Pearl Harbor years).[35]

Outlining the planned establishment of a »Security Validation Team«,[36] it was proposed that such a team »should have an interrogator qualified to do skillful detailed and general interrogation, to conduct both drug and hypnotic interrogation«.[37] Over the course of the next ten to fifteen years hypnosis as a regressive method became a key issue for various research efforts conducted by CIA-affiliated scientists.

Regarding the early experimental triad – drugs, hypnosis, and physical techniques of mind manipulation such as ECT (as well as fear/anxiety techniques like sensory deprivation and isolation procedures, etc.) – the CIA utilized psychoanalytic knowledge as well as psychoanalysts to work on all three components to exploit psychological mechanisms like

[33] National Security Archive, John Marks Collection, n. d., p. 1.
[34] „High-value [detainees]« is a neologism created by the Bush Administration, implying that the more »value« a prisoner holds for the US, the more risk of abuse, torture, and murder by US-personnel is to be expected. Another term used excessively by the Bush-Administration has been »enhanced interrogation technique[s]« or »alternative set of procedures« which implies various forms of psychological and/or physical torture. This term is the English translation of a set of procedures the Gestapo [secret police of Nazi Germany] called »Verschärfte Vernehmung«, (enhanced/intensified interrogation) which included torture techniques such as the induction of »hypothermia« (Sullivan, 2007), »food deprivation, hard bunks, dark cell [sensory deprivation], sleep deprivation, exhaustion exercises [i.e. stress positions], but also the application of lashes with a stick« (Tuchel & Schattenfroh, 1987, p. 2; translation: K.M.) – each technique was reintroduced by the Bush Administration. Later, most of them became »Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)« - another neologism reengineered to fit the realm of Bush's torture practices. Language, like truth, is always one of the first victims of governmental misconduct.
[35] Estabrooks, 1943; Marks, 1979, pp. 20-21.
[36] Mori ID#: 149613. The »Security Validation Team« can be seen as a precursor of the DoD/CIA »Behavioral Science Consultation Teams« (BSCT), also known as »biscuits«, used in the so-called »War on Terror« by the Bush administration (Bloche & Marks, 2005; Mayer, 2008; Soldz, 2010a, pp. 72-79). These teams, consisting of behavioral scientists (mainly psychologists), were implemented at Guantànamo Bay (and other Army and CIA torture sites) to experiment on and execute psychological torture techniques via fear- and anxiety-inducing strategies (Physicians for Human Rights, 2010).
[37] Mori ID#: 149613, p. 2.

regression and transference.[38] As CIA's MKULTRA program progressed, (psychodynamic) psychiatric expertise became paramount to interrogation and mind-control experiments.

Another CIA document speculates about »accelerated psychoanalysis« as mentioned above:

> »Without presenting the detailed evidence, suffice it to say that all points toward the application of techniques of hypnotic and/or hypno-analytic, the confessions being elicited either by virtue of post hypnotic suggestion with resultant trance state, or by means of accelerated psycho-analytic techniques with post hypnotic behavior.«[39]

These techniques are described as follows:

> »Technique: (1) Narcosis induced by gradual admin. drug. (2) Hypnosis induced by verbal suggestion during light narcosis preparatory for analysis and hypnosis. (3) Routine investigation history, mental state, etc. (4) Regression and eliciting of remote events, especially of childhood to establish contact and dynamics of ideation and orientation. (5) After salient factors determining patient's orientation are determined – new associations are created to obtain new orientation to reality. (6) Repeat daily. (7) Post-hypnotic state reinforced in waking patient by explanation, persuasion, and re-education. (8) Since transference phenomena are common, it is important to choose an object which can be made suitable and is adequate for environmental contact.«[40]

According to a small note by the *Washington Post*, the CIA also financed a study to evaluate psychological consequences of circumcision, later to be identified as MKULTRA subproject 74.[41] The *Post* disclosed on October 2nd, 1977, that

> »[t]he Central Intelligence Agency funded experiments in the early 1960s on circumcised children to determine if the operation left any emotional aftereffects […]. The aim was to determine if circumcision at a significant stage of a child's development produced anxieties such as fear of castration […]. ›The inability to resolve castration complex is linked with the later emotional disorders, notably homosexuality,‹ said a CIA research paper on the experiments. The experiments were part of a long-running program known as MK-ULTRA, which focused on mind and behavior control«.[42]

In 1980 Edward Wallerstein published a book about circumcision that included the following passage:

> »Probably the most outrageous circumcision ›study‹ of the century was reported in the *New York Times* in 1977.[43] The Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) reported that in 1961 it had arranged to have 15 boys, aged 5 to 7, circumcised. The boys were from low-income

[38] For a more complete overview, see Müller, 2016b.
[39] Mori ID#: 144891, p. 1.
[40] Mori ID#: 144891, p. 3.
[41] Foster, 2009, p. 512f
[42] CIA Funded Circumcision Research, 1977.
[43] Unfortunately, I was not able to find the *New York Times* notice via ProQuest. The *Washington Post* notice carries the same date (October 2, 1977) and might be a reprint of the *Times*'s notice.

families; their ethnic backgrounds were not identified. The *New York Times* article stated that the objective of the research was to determine whether castration anxieties were caused by circumcision. The C.I.A. documents were ›heavily censored‹; however one report noted that the research sought to determine whether such ›emotional disorders‹ as homosexuality were related to castration complexes. Queries to the C.I.A. revealed that the research findings had been destroyed. No information was available as to whether parental consent had been re-quested or given. Clearly this ›study‹ represents surgical and psychiatric experimentation with human subjects in violation of accepted medical practices and government regulations.

The *New York Times* reported the story without immediate or delayed comment. So did the *Washington Post*. A few days later, Richard Cohen, a Washington Post columnist, wrote a blistering attack not only on the C.I.A. but on the silence that had ensued:

›I waited for some senator or congressman to yell bloody murder. Nothing. I waited for someone to ask for an investigation. Nothing. I waited for an editorial, somebody maybe asking what business it was of the C.I.A.'s to find out anything about circumcision. Nothing.‹[44]

The press carried no criticism or protest from any section of the medical establishment, or any government official, of this prostitution of a surgical technique or of the surgeons who performed the operations. It is not that the C.I. A. is immune to criticism. In recent years hundreds of this agency's cloak and-dagger acts have been attacked-from the media to the pulpit to Congress. Why then no comment when the issue is circumcision? Is the subject sacrosanct?«[45]

The entire psychoanalytic establishment also utterly failed to comment on CIA's MKULTRA subproject 74.

Conclusion

Besides offering psychoanalytic treatment for mentally troubled OSS/CIA-agents in security-cleared psychoanalytically oriented hospitals, several CIA documents outline the use of psychodynamic approaches to enhance interrogation techniques and to gain additional information on human behavior for exploitative means. Two distinct psychoanalytical concepts were reverse-engineered by the CIA to foster interrogation methods and using them as distinct methods in order to break the mind of a subject and eliminate its efforts to implement adequate defense mechanisms. As the 2015 report of the »Senate Select Committee on Intelligence«[46] unequivocally showed, regression and the exploitation of transference-related processes with isolated and sensory deprived subjects eventually amount to psychological torture. Although it seems that only a few psychoanalysts did take part in mind-control experiments (and an even fewer number might have been engaged in operational OSS/CIA-activities), the destruction of CIA documents relating to these topics and the heavy

[44] Cohen, 1977, in: Wallerstein, 1980, p. 195.
[45] Wallerstein, 1980, p. 195.
[46] SSCI, 2015.

censorship of the few remaining ones do raise the question whether the involvement of psychoanalysts had indeed been only marginal, or if a greater number of psychoanalysts collaborated with CIA-operations including, but not limited to, BLUEBIRD, ARTICHOKE, and MKULTRA.

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(XXXX) = Year of original publication, [XXXX] = Year of edition used in this paper

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CIA documents used:[47]

Mori ID#: 140393, [Title deleted], CIA Memorandum, 1951, July 9. [This memo reads: *On 2 July 1951, approximately 1:00 p.m. the instruction began with [deleted] relating to the student some of his sexual experiences. [Deleted] stated that he had constantly used hypnotism as a means of inducing young girls to engage in sexual intercourse with him. [Deleted], a performer in [deleted] orchestra, was forced to engage in sexual intercourse with [deleted] while under the influence of hypnotism. [Deleted] stated that he first put her into a hypnotic trance and then suggested to her that he was her husband and that she desired sexual intercourse with him. [Deleted] further stated that many times going home on [deleted] he would use hypnotic suggestion to have a girl turn around and talk to him and suggest sexual intercourse to him and that as a result of these suggestions induced by him he spent approximately five nights a week away from home engaging in sexual intercourse.*]

Mori ID#: 144769, Memorandum Relative to the Use of TD in Interrogation, CIA Memorandum, 1950, January 1 [Estimated Pub Date].

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[47] Source: FOIA-Request for MKULTRA Documents – 3 CD-ROM-Disc, except where indicated by URL; see also full Mori ID-documentation at: http://www.wanttoknow.info/mind_control/cia_mind_control_documents_orig/ (Accessed: 01.06.2016).

Mori ID#: 184374, An Analysis of Confessions in Russian Trials with Attachment Titled »Mindszenty«, CIA Memorandum, 1943, January 1 [Estimated Pub Date], p. 1-3. [This estimated date must be wrong because the Mindszenty trial took place in 1949. Thus, this memo must have been written either in 1949 or 1950.]