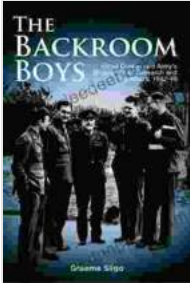


Alfred Conlon and the Army Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs, 1942-1946: A Case Study in the Development of American Psychological Operations



The Backroom Boys: Alfred Conlon and Army's Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs, 1942-46

by Nathan Myhrvold

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Alfred Conlon was a prominent figure in the development of American psychological operations (PSYOP) during World War II. As the head of the Army Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs (DRCA) from 1942 to 1946, Conlon oversaw the planning and execution of PSYOP campaigns in Europe and the Pacific. This article examines Conlon's role in the development of PSYOP and assesses his legacy as one of the pioneers of this field.

Background

Conlon was born in New York City in 1890. He graduated from Columbia University with a degree in journalism in 1912. After working as a journalist for several years, Conlon joined the Army in 1917. He served in the intelligence service during World War I and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his work.

After the war, Conlon continued to serve in the Army. He was assigned to the Military Intelligence Division (MID) in 1922. In 1940, he was appointed as the head of the MID's Special Projects Division. This division was responsible for planning and executing psychological warfare operations against the Axis powers.

The Army Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs

In 1942, the Army created the DRCA. This organization was responsible for coordinating psychological warfare and civil affairs operations in the Army. Conlon was appointed as the DRCA's first director.

The DRCA was responsible for a wide range of activities, including:

- Planning and executing psychological warfare campaigns
- Conducting research on psychological warfare techniques
- Training psychological warfare personnel
- Providing civil affairs support to military operations

The DRCA played a major role in the Allied victory in World War II. The organization's psychological warfare campaigns helped to demoralize enemy troops and undermine their morale. The DRCA's civil affairs

operations also helped to stabilize the postwar environment and prevent the spread of communism.

Conlon's Role in the Development of PSYOP

Conlon was a key figure in the development of PSYOP. He was responsible for developing the DRCA's organizational structure and mission. He also oversaw the planning and execution of the organization's psychological warfare campaigns.

Conlon's approach to PSYOP was based on the belief that the most effective way to influence enemy behavior was through psychological manipulation. He argued that psychological warfare could be used to demoralize enemy troops, undermine their morale, and disrupt their decision-making process.

Conlon's approach to PSYOP was controversial. Some critics argued that his tactics were unethical and that they could lead to unintended consequences. However, Conlon's approach was ultimately successful. The DRCA's psychological warfare campaigns played a major role in the Allied victory in World War II.

Legacy

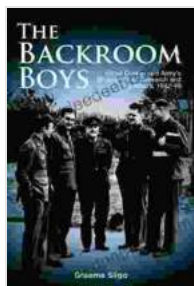
Alfred Conlon was a pioneer in the field of PSYOP. His work helped to shape the development of this field and to establish its importance in military operations. Conlon's legacy continues to this day. His ideas and techniques are still used by PSYOP professionals around the world.

Alfred Conlon was a brilliant and innovative leader who played a major role in the development of American PSYOP. His work helped to shape the

development of this field and to establish its importance in military operations. Conlon's legacy continues to this day. His ideas and techniques are still used by PSYOP professionals around the world.

References

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