

NOTE: MILITARY PSYCHOHISTORY

In response to an inquiry concerning the military application of psychohistory, especially in preparing enemy orders of battle, a search uncovered no treatise on the application of psychohistory of military intelligence information. Various US-prepared enemy orders of battle and related handbooks on file here were reviewed and found, as expected, to be devoid of behavioral information derived from psychological analysis.

Psychohistory, which combines psychoanalysis with the standards of historical research and evidence, is a relatively recent and still somewhat controversial methodology. It seeks to understand past human behavior by exposing and interpreting subconscious motivations. Proponents argue that its validity requires nothing less than the full competency of both historian and psychoanalyst. The progress and problems of psychohistory are discussed in various articles and essays since the mid-1950's, of which the following are examples:

Lowenberg, Peter. "Psychohistory." The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States. [Ed by Michael Kammen] Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1980. pp. 408-32. D13P36.

Manuel, Frank E. "The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History." In Historical Studies Today. Ed by Felix Gilbert & Stephen R. Graubard. NY: Norton, 1972. pp. 211-37. D16G5.

Weinstein, Fred, and Platt, Gerald M. "History and Theory: The Question of Psychoanalysis." Jrnl of Interdisciplinary Hist (Spring 1972): pp. 419-34. Per.

Wolman, Benjamin B., ed. The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History. NY: Basic Books, 1971. 240 p. D16P8.

An oft-cited example of the military application of psycho-history (before it was called "psychohistory") is a psychoanalysis Walter C. Langer's 1943 study published as The Mind of Adolf Hitler: The Secret Wartime Report (NY: Basic Books, 1972; DD247H5L29).

Interestingly, the noted historian, William L. Langer, brother of Walter, became very interested in psychohistory. His 1957 presidential address to the American Historical Association is considered the formal beginning of psychohistory as a professionally- recognized method of inquiry. During World War II, he had served as chief of the Research and Analysis Branch, OSS. That branch employed the services of psychologists, as well as other social scientists. Unfortunately, no OSS reports were found here that overtly use the concepts of social psychology and psychoanalysis when reporting on enemy military units. See:

Lowenberg article, cited above, pp. 411-12.

Langer, William L. "The Next Assignment." Amer Hist Rev (Jan 1958): pp. 283-304. Per.

U.S. War Dept. War Report of the OSS. Vol. I. NY: Walker, 1976. pp. 49 & passim. D810S7U56.

Although psychohistory has been employed, more or less successfully, in biographical studies, its applicability to analysis of group and institution behavior has yet to be clearly demonstrated. There are, to be sure, certain methodological problems involved in applying psychoanalysis to groups and organizations, some of which problems are considered in Peter C. Hoffer's "Psychohistory and Empirical Group Affiliation: Extraction of Personality Traits from Historical Manuscripts." Journal of Interdisciplinary History IX (Summer 1978): pp. 131-145.

Groups in general receive brief psychoanalysis--but not historical treatment--in Franco Fornari's The Psychoanalysis of War (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), Chap 4. A psychohistorical approach appears to have been used or attempted in the following studies of military and quasi-military groups, i.e.:

Fellers, Bonner F. "The Psychology of the Japanese Soldier." Student paper, C&GSC, Ft Leavenworth, KS, 1934-1935. 55 p. U22.3F45.

Rudimentary attempt, but interesting if only because of the date.

Lowenberg, Peter. "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort." Amer Hist Rev (Dec 1971): pp. 1457- 1502. Per.

Possible model for group analysis.

Madej, W. Victor. "Effectiveness and Cohesion of the German Ground Forces in World War II." Jrnl of Pol & Mil Sociology (Fall 1978): pp. 233-48. Per.

Psychological insights, but not psychoanalytical ones, give an added dimension to the following "national character" studies of earlier American military forces:

Barton, Michael. Goodmen: The Character of Civil War Soldiers. University Park: PA State U, 1981. 135 p. E491B37.

Royster, Charles. A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783. Chapel Hill, NC: U NC, 1979. 452 p. E259R69.

Pragmatic military application of psychological insights and potential psychoanalysis can be seen in the following selected studies of groups:

Bradbury, William C. Mass Behavior in Battle and Captivity: The Communist Soldier in the Korean War. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1968. 377 p. U22.3B7.

_____. Methodological Considerations Involved in an Exploratory Study of the Motivations of Soldiers from the Chinese Communist Forces in Korea. Staff memo, HUMRRO, George Washington U, Jun 1966. 34 p. UA839.3B72.

Daugherty, William E. A Psychological Warfare Casebook. Bethesda, MD: ORO, Johns Hopkins U, 1958. pp. 425- 549. UB275P79.
Chap 7, "Role of Intelligence, Research, and Analysis in Psychological Warfare."

Germany, Federal Republic. Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr. Psychological Education of EGA Personnel Relative to the "Enemy Image. Booklet, Sep 1973. 17 p. UA719.3F8.
Indoctrination given East German Army.

Kahn, Lessing A. A Preliminary Investigation of Chinese and North Korean Soldier Reactions to UN Weapons in the Korean War. Study, ORO, Tokyo, 1 Feb 1952. 44 p. DS921.5P78K33.

_____, et al. A Study of North Korean and Chinese Soldiers' Attitudes Toward the Korean War. Study, ORO, Tokyo, 26 Feb 1953. 93 p. DS921.5P78S782.

Mead, Margaret. Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Problems of Soviet Character. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1951. 148 p. DK268.3M395.

U.S. Army. 7th Psy Ops Group. Psychological Operations Intelligence: Target Analysis, Population Groups in Cambodia. Research notes, 16 Jan 1968. 26 p. DS554.44P74.

U.S. Dept of Army. Order of Battle Intelligence. FM 30-19, Jun 1959. FMs.
See esp pp. 17-20 on personalities & unit histories.

Incidentally, note that the US Army Center of Mil Hist's Guide to the Study and Use of Military History (Wash, DC: GPO, 1979) does not index the subject of psychohistory, although a few remarks on the application of psychological theory to the study of military history appear on page 436.

See also:

-Bibliographies on Intelligence, History and Psychiatry in Medical.