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## The White Generals

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Norway's security might be affected. Ostreng has arbitrarily chosen to define four basic interpretations of Soviet actions on how the Northern Fleet might be used in wartime: "operationalist," "revisionist," "geostrategic," and "processist."

The author poses and counterposes the views of the so-called revisionists, operationalists, and other experts on various aspects of the combat employment of the Soviet Northern Fleet. Their opinions are presented with little connecting or explanatory analysis. While there is too little analysis, there are too many statistics. Matrices provided in the text oversimplify the problems and are of little use.

Chapter 2, which deals in some detail with geographic and oceanographic characteristics of the area, is probably the most instructive. The discussion of the Soviet geostrategic problems in the Arctic in chapter 3, has some interesting observations.

Ostreng rightly concludes that various proposals aimed at removing nuclear weapons from the Arctic are unrealistic. There is simply too much asymmetry in the positions of the U.S.S.R. and the United States to reach any equitable agreement on the issue. He is critical of the Canadian plan called Flexible North of 60-Degrees Plan (FN60-plan). However, he seems to endorse a proposal to create a sanctuary for strategic submarines. Its acceptance would presumably make the Soviets more open to discussing the arms control agreements in other regions of the world.

This book suffers from the rapid changes in the Soviet Union since its publication. But, despite its shortcomings, people who are interested in the problems of the Arctic will find it a useful summary of various Western views on the Soviet potential and probable actions in the Arctic theater. There are also some good maps.

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Lockett, Richard. *The White Generals*.  
London: Routledge & Kegan Paul,  
1988. 413pp. \$25

It is seventy years since the end of the Russian Civil War. Now, seven decades after the Red triumph over the White Generals, the Bolshevik regime is collapsing upon itself. Just as the Russian parliament, (the Duma) eventually supplanted the Tsar who formed it, one is tempted to wonder whether the newly restructured Supreme Soviet will dethrone Gorbachev and the Party. If so, will the Soviet Union disintegrate into anarchy and civil war again?

Amidst the political chaos of 1917, General M. V. Alekseev, then Commander-in-Chief of the Russian forces, stated that "Russia is dying. She stands on the edge of an abyss. A few more shocks and she will crash with all her weight into it." Substitute Soviet Union for Russia and the words seem as valid today as they were 74 years ago.

Alekseev was speaking to the first major meeting of the Union of Officers, an organization established to counterbalance the Soviets being formed by the enlisted men. From the ranks of the Union would come the counter-revolutionary generals whose saga is recounted in Richard Lockett's *The White Generals*. This history is generally one of failure. It was only in Finland that a White General (Mannerheim) achieved his objectives. Unlike most of the White movement, Mannerheim had a clear idea of his objectives and adroitly handled the political aspects to support his military efforts. That the Finnish forces never attempted to unseat the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) following their victory over the Reds in Finland points to the great failing of the White movement.

The key point to remember is that the true White leadership did consist of generals. These officers were unable to develop a unified political theme around which anti-Bolsheviks could rally. They also proved to be inflexible in the political area: it was not until too late that any of the major White Generals became willing to recognize Finnish independence in return for an attack on the Bolsheviks. This inflexibility made it difficult for the Whites to garner support among any of the non-Russian elements of the Empire. Even the Cossacks, often portrayed as the bastion of the empire and counter-revolutionary movement, did not rally to the White movement. Massive numbers of Cossacks

did not join the Whites until they realized that the Bolsheviks intended to end their way of life.

The counterrevolutionary movement was thus doomed. Lockett's book traces the military aspect of the White movement from its roots in pre-Revolutionary Russia to the end of the Civil War when General Wrangel, the last on the dock, departed Sevastopol on 14 November 1920. Lockett has taken on a tremendous task in attempting to write this history. Many of the critiques that can be leveled at the work stem from the fact that the subject truly deserves a multivolume and multischolar effort. Thus, as Lockett notes, this is a work of popular history. As such, it is generally satisfying. Lockett writes well and has a touch for relaying anecdotes. *The White Generals* provides a good feel for the White military side of the Soviet Civil War period. Two critiques are worth making. For the general reader, there are too few maps to comfortably follow the confusing trail of force movements back and forth across the Russian landscape. I would recommend an atlas for any not already familiar with Russian geography. Secondly, the work is somewhat apologist in tone on the White movement. Whenever some immoral or ruthless White action is discussed (whether killing of prisoners or pogroms in White territory), it is temporized by commenting that the Soviets were doing the same or even worse. For example, after discussing the "vicious and merciless

pogroms" in the Ukraine "in the burning, dry summer of 1919," Lockett makes the questionable assertion that "a similar persecution was taking place in many areas which the Red Army occupied." While it is true that pogroms were not limited to White territory, the severity and scope of pogroms was far worse in White territory in comparison to those in Red controlled areas. Like in a biography, such bias is not uncommon in histories of movements. It is therefore important to remember that *The White Generals* is not a history of the entire Civil War but a limited look at one set of players in the conflict.

In many ways, the history of the White Generals is difficult to read. Although hindsight is 20-20, unless one believes in predestination, it cannot be argued that the Whites were doomed to failure. Thus, this is a history filled with "what ifs?" What if President Wilson had given a more active charter to the U.S. troops in Siberia? What if Wrangel had commanded the troops in the south for a longer period of time? What if the Whites had more assiduously sought the support of the non-Russian regions of the Empire? The answer to many of these may be the Whites would have defeated the Reds. Despite the interesting questions of historical flights of fantasy, one returns to the reality of the Red victory. In addition to the blunders by the Whites, the Bolshevik forces had a number of crucial advantages, all of which can be described by the word centrality: in command, pol-

icy, and in position (since the Reds were surrounded, they could use their central position to move forces rapidly from one threatened area to another).

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Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. James Clavell, ed. New York: Dell Pub., 1988. 90pp. \$6.95

Sun Tzu's classic work has drawn consistent attention in military circles. First in China, expanding in radial fashion to other Asian nations, before finally being discovered by the West.

The first Occidental state to embrace this book as a teaching tool for its officers was Czarist Russia. Some have alleged that Napoleon made it the basis for his strategy and tactics. (Although it remains speculation, he was a voracious reader, and the first French translation on *The Art of War* was contemporary with Napoleon's years as a junior officer.) Much of what we recognize as the "Napoleonic style" can be found in Sun Tzu's work. Many of its principles have application in non-military venues as well. *The Art of War* can now be found on the reading lists of many U.S. business schools, and it is the subject of after-hours chats in some Wall Street watering holes.

Those who have not yet read *The Art of War*, should. It is not an interminable collection or apparently unrelated, mystic-sounding