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The Art of War

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Sun Tzu

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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

paradigms with no obvious utility in the practical world. Rather it is a concise, orderly purposeful work which offers practical advice to the leader on how to achieve his or her goals. Although Sun Tzu intended his work as an instruction to monarchs and their generals, much of it is equally useful to leaders in other fields—commercial, financial, industrial, etc. In sum, *The Art of War* teaches the leader how to order one's thoughts and remember the objectives; how to measure, train, and lead subordinate leaders; how to earn and maintain the respect of subordinates of all rank; and how to seize and maintain the initiative against one's opponents.

Clavell's version of this work is especially worthwhile. It incorporates his exceptional insight into the Chinese mind and character. After decades in the Far East, and following a long association with the Middle Kingdom and its inhabitants, James Clavell is far better equipped than a mere translator to accurately describe to the Western mind the thoughts of Sun Tzu.

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Shalit, Ben. *The Psychology of Conflict and Combat*. New York: Praeger Pub., 1989. 224pp. \$39.95

This is one of those exciting offbeat books like Robert Ardrey's *Territorial Imperative*, where truths jump off the page. It contains a

whole pod of new and old verities learned from soldiers in combat. There is also a psychologically well-defined theory that Lebanon may be Israel's Vietnam.

Shalit reaches this conclusion through eleven comparison points:

- Unconventional ideological reasons and target population.

- Blurring the identity of the enemy, causing breakdown of structure and causing higher combat stress reaction than any prior Israeli experience.

- The mistreatment of civilian population, (in Shalit's term) the dirty war.

- The breakdown of cohesion caused by rotation. (Although tours of duty in Vietnam were based on individual rotation, the Israeli problem is alleviated only in part by using unit rotation.)

- The ratio of combat to support troops.

- The use of drugs.

- The level of psychiatric treatment. The Israeli treatment model is to place the psychologist in the field to treat "disorders as a coping problem, rather than as a clinical issue."

- Divisive antiwar protests. Soldiers are going to prison, rather than serving in Lebanon. A brigade commander sought to resign rather than follow the order to attack Beirut.

- The transition from military to civilian life.

- The media bias in covering antiwar protests.