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The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991

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boats. A lack of standard procedures and the absence of a system for collecting and distributing lessons learned contributed significantly to the severity of *Squalus's* casualty—facts which should be seriously considered by every professional officer. Stories of sacrifices like that of Captain John P. Cromwell—a Medal of Honor recipient who chose to go to the bottom with *Sculpin* rather than risk revealing what he knew, if captured, about the impending invasion of the Gilbert Islands—are always inspiring.

Finally, one gains an understanding of the conditions that have helped to shape the current organizational submarine culture: its strict (some would say rigid) adherence to approved procedure, its occasional difficulty in working with other naval forces (let alone other branches of the armed forces), and its awkwardness in the public spotlight. Even after fifty years, World War II still remains an extremely important influence on submariners. Their dedication to secrecy and independent operations applied just as well to the Cold War as it did in the Second World War. Hence, until recently, U.S. submariners were acculturated to take pride in their separateness and insularity, and to revel in their ability to accomplish important missions completely on their own. However, as times change, different demands are being made on the force, and knowing where it came from can help one to understand where it must go. This book contributes to that understanding.

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Malia, Martin. *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991*. New York: The Free Press, 1994. 575pp. \$24.95

Only with the Soviet Union firmly consigned to history, Martin Malia contends, can its history be viewed with objectivity. While it still existed, the USSR evoked such passionate political views that any treatment of its history or politics often shed more light on the one doing the interpreting than on the subject under review. The reason for this, Malia observes, is that for seventy years the Soviet Union, alone of all states, claimed to be “the sole model of the good society, the gold standard of human affairs, and the perfect polity at the end of history.” The fact that this claim was at the same time both widely subscribed to and also the most monstrous lie of the modern age made historical interpretation contentious and short on dispassion. Malia hopes with this present work to provide the requisite objectivity and thereby, it is implied, put to rest quarrels between historians of the Soviet phenomenon.

In this latter goal, Malia unfortunately will fail. His treatment of the Soviet historical record points to one basic, underlying cause for the Soviet crackup. Simply put, the USSR died of socialism, and its demise was inevitable, because the logic of the socialist path chosen by Lenin and the Bolsheviks doomed the Soviet experiment from the beginning. Socialists, naturally, will not like this book. For his part, Malia considers it amazing that socialism as an idea survives the demise of the USSR, and he has little patience for its continuing adherents.

All good historical works are really exercises in interpretation, and this work, clothing its historical treatment in philosophical enquiry, is no exception. Malia argues convincingly, using Soviet history as a case study, that the socialist choice means to deny a people the "ensemble of institutions," especially the market and private property, which are necessary for sustained economic growth but that socialists see as instruments of oppression. Any attempt to dispense with the market, Malia writes, "leads both to economic disaster and political oppression." Suppressing what the people would do naturally means that power must be concentrated and wielded by a few—making the Party a necessary outcome of socialist logic—and producing "the extermination of civil society and the statization of all aspects of life." In other words, Malia fully endorses the thesis put forward by Friedrich Hayek fifty years ago in *The Road to Serfdom*—the socialist choice leads to totalitarianism. The only alternative is to abandon the socialist choice, as many Western socialist parties have done, but which the Bolsheviks and their successors, up to and including Mikhail Gorbachev, never did.

Marrying Hayek's thesis to the accumulated tragedies that constitute Soviet history makes this a profound work. Malia opens with a brilliant discussion of socialist thought, wrestling with varying definitions of the phenomenon, intertwined with an outline history of socialism as a political movement. He explains how Lenin managed against significant odds to impose on Russia his socialist agenda, which became a consistent "genetic

code" governing the behavior of his successors, from Stalin through the somewhat clueless Gorbachev. Malia would definitely agree with the assessment of Gorbachev that describes him as "the Soviet leader who destroyed the USSR by accident."

Throughout his survey, Malia lucidly describes how the Soviet economic decline (acute by the 1970s) moved various Soviet leaders to toy with reform. Gorbachev, wrongly viewed in the West as a visionary, strove mightily to save socialism. To overcome opposition in the Party to his reform program, *perestroika*, Gorbachev appealed to the masses and the intelligentsia by instituting *glasnost*, an unprecedented foray into openness. *Glasnost*, however, revealed the totalitarian nature of the system and thereby critically undermined the legitimacy of the Soviet state itself; for its part, *perestroika* could not work, because to introduce market reform meant to destroy the system—a core tenet of which was to suppress the market while centralizing economic life and eventually all aspects of civil society. The final, fatal blow was the revolt of the non-Russian Soviet minorities, particularly Ukraine, the Baltics, and Georgia.

Yet the dissolution of the USSR is just the well known end of the story. Waxing philosophical after reviewing the failure of the great Soviet socialist experiment, Malia warns that "it would be foolish to conclude that because the greatest utopia of our age has ended in disaster, utopian politics as such are finished." As long as there is inequality in the world, Malia notes, there will be movements aimed at eradicating it, and

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some of these will seek immense power ostensibly to pursue earthly equality no matter how many people have to be repressed or even killed. Despite the counter-example provided by the Soviet tragedy, the temptation toward absolute power in the name of the people will remain, and that is the real tragedy.

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Yates, Keith. *Graf Spee's Raiders*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. 360pp. \$32.95

As modern naval strategists rediscover maneuver warfare and protection of commerce as touchstones of naval warfare, Keith Yates's new history of Vice Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee's remarkable campaign in the opening months of the First World War is most timely. As was "Stonewall" Jackson in his Shenandoah Valley campaign, Spee was outnumbered, yet, living off the land (sea) in a brilliant maneuver campaign, he distressed the enemy far out of proportion to his numbers and weight.

In August 1914 Spee commanded the German Pacific squadron at Tsingtao, with the armored cruisers *Schamhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and the light cruisers *Emden*, *Nürnberg*, and *Leipzig*. He also had *Königsberg*, in German East Africa, and the light cruisers *Dresden* and *Karlsruhe* in the western Atlantic. Arrayed against them was the Royal Navy's Pacific squadron, strengthened with Australian and New Zealand ships and the Japanese navy. Although the

allied forces outnumbered and outgunned Spee, he had the advantage of the vastness of the Pacific, plus the choice of action. Gathering his forces, Spee set out southeastward across the Pacific to destroy "English trade." This he did by raiding ships and shore stations, disrupting vital shipping, and leading the Royal Navy a merry chase.

To further torment allied commerce, Spee dispatched *Emden* on an independent raiding expedition across the Indian Ocean, which succeeded brilliantly. Before *Emden* was surprised off the Cocos Islands and shot to pieces by HMAS *Sydney*, it had sunk eighteen British ships, captured three colliers (in order to fuel itself), and poured gunfire into the harbors at Madras and Penang. In the course of its romp, thirty-eight allied warships were variously devoted to trying to destroy it. That *Emden* could tie up such a portion of the allied navies and that no allied merchant sailor lost his life at its hands occasioned a British newspaper to describe its skipper, Commander Karl von Müller, as "the last gentleman-of-war."

Off Chile, Spee was joined by *Dresden*, which had been pursued from the Atlantic by Rear Admiral Christopher Cradock's small squadron of outmatched British ships. British and German squadrons collided off the Chilean coast on 1 November at Coronel, where Spee handed the Royal Navy its first defeat in a hundred years. Two British armored cruisers were sunk, and Cradock was lost at sea; the remaining British ships fled back to the Falkland Islands. Spee's ships were unharmed.

The British were chagrined and annoyed, for it appeared that Spee's