

Naval War College Review

Volume 38
Number 1 *Winter*

Article 21

1985

Dezinformatsia Active Measures in Soviet Strategy

Steven Ross

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Ross, Steven (1985) "Dezinformatsia Active Measures in Soviet Strategy," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 38 : No. 1 , Article 21.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol38/iss1/21>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

there are occasional inaccuracies and lapses as when the one-dimensional and long outdated books by Alexander Kendrick and Thomas Power on "the war at home" are described as "solid surveys."

The authors also include a graph which purports to illustrate "the technological substitution of firepower for manpower: decline in ratio of casualties to manpower deployed." What the graph actually shows is a decline in the rate of battle deaths per thousand since World War II. That such figures are practically meaningless for determining the combat intensity of a war like Vietnam seems not to have occurred to the authors. Their idea that increased use of firepower is directly connected to lower casualty rates is as simplistic as charges by writers like John Helmer that US tactics in Vietnam produced unnecessarily high casualties.

Vietnam specialists will doubtless find other things to quarrel with in this guide; but despite any such shortcomings, it is nonetheless a valuable contribution to Vietnam studies and one certain to be extensively utilized.

RONALD SPECTOR
University of Alabama

Shultz, Richard H., and Godson, Roy. *Dezinformatsia Active Measures in Soviet Strategy*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1984. 210pp. \$19.95

The Soviet active measures program involves the use of overt and covert techniques for influencing the actions of foreign countries. Active measures may entail influencing the

policies of another government, undermining confidence in the leaders and institutions of the target state, disrupting relations among rival nations and discrediting and weakening both governmental and nongovernmental enemies. Active measures may be conducted overtly through officially sponsored foreign propaganda channels, diplomatic relations and cultural diplomacy. Covert techniques include the use of covert propaganda, disinformation, agents of influence and international front organizations. Active measures programs are coordinated at the highest levels of the Soviet regime and are executed by important elements of the state and party bureaucracy including the KGB.

Professor Richard Shultz and Professor Roy Godson have written a detailed accurate study of Soviet disinformation. They describe the organizational structure for active measures and offer a detailed discussion of Soviet overt propaganda themes from 1960 to 1980. They go on to provide examples of Soviet techniques including the use of international front organizations, agents of influence and forgeries. They provide interviews with former Soviet bloc intelligence officers which reveal many of the techniques used by the KGB. They conclude that active measures do indeed form an important element in the Kremlin's approach to foreign policy.

Although based exclusively on unclassified published sources Shultz and Godson have written a clear informative and detailed

exposition. There is more they could have said. For example, elements in the Dutch peace movement are Soviet controlled and the Hungarians under Soviet direction once forged and distributed throughout Africa a bogus edition of *Newsweek*. They might also have attempted to judge the impact of active measures initiatives, although such an effort might not in fact be possible. In any case these are minor points. Shultz and Godson have produced a fine book on an important aspect of Soviet foreign policy methods. Their contribution is especially important because active measures have not heretofore been studied in such detail.

STEVEN ROSS
Naval War College

Griffith, Samuel B. II. *The Battle for Guadalcanal*. Annapolis: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company, 1979. 282pp. \$18.95

Lee, Robert Edward. *Victory at Guadalcanal*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1981. 260pp. \$15.95

Two years ago in my review of Herbert C. Merillat's *Guadalcanal Remembered*, I made the point that while the volume was one of the best of the Guadalcanal books, it was not apt to nudge aside Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith's *The Battle for Guadalcanal*. What I should have added was that Griffith's classic account was once again in print.

The Battle for Guadalcanal was first

published in 1963. The present edition forms part of the Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company's Great War Stories series which also includes such titles as Colonel Robert D. Heinl's *Victory at High Tide*, Captain Cyril Falls' *Armageddon*, John Buchan's *History of the Great War*, and two particular favorites of mine, C.S. Forester's *The General*, and Alan Moorehead's *Gallipoli*. The books are facsimile copies of the original editions, printed on good paper, uniformly bound, and with matching book jackets, so that they make a handsome set.

Sam Griffith died last year after a very full life as Marine, scholar, and author. As a lieutenant, he chased the elusive Sandino in Nicaragua. Then came service in China as a language student and an observer of the Sino-Japanese War. He was probably the first person to translate Mao Tse-tung's *Guerrilla Warfare* into English (1941) and one of the first Westerners to rediscover Sun Tzu. He had firsthand knowledge of Guadalcanal: he fought there with Edson's Raiders, first as executive officer, then as commanding officer.

Winston Churchill, in his *Marlborough*, speaks of great battles which "won or lost, change the entire course of events, create new standards of values, new moods, new atmospheres in armies and in nations, to which all must conform." Griffith applies Churchill's definition to the Battle of Guadalcanal.

CominChUSFlt Admiral Ernest J. King had tersely defined the US plan of operations in the Pacific in nine