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Revolution and Reality

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Bertram D. Wolfe

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commands of two dominant personalities—Beresford and Fisher—so we get an insight into the controversies arising from the various transitions that navies went through during the late nineteenth century.

In the second book, the action moves to sea. Our hero is present at Tsushima as an observer and at Dogger Bank in command of his battle cruiser *Incontestable* (which performs a role similar to that of the real *Indomitable*). He becomes involved in some of the deception and intrigue that accompanied the ship-building race that preceded World War I. The reader observes the consumption of a great deal of vintage champagne as well as the commitment of a predictable amount of upper class adultery (some of it even in line of duty). We can look forward to the final book of the trilogy in which our hero will undoubtedly see action at Jutland, perhaps as a flag officer and in command of his squadron.

These are interesting books about a navy that finds itself in an arms race—as it tries to cope with technological changes, many years after its most recent major fleet action. The author spins a good yard, one that you can feel is accurate historically.

Frank N. Snyder
Naval War College

Wolfe, Bertram D. *Revolution and Reality*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981. 401pp.

\$11

It is difficult to obtain a factual and useful political history of the

Soviet Union. Each successive Soviet leader has rewritten his nation's history since the revolution in 1917 (at least) in order to highlight his own part in it, thus consolidating his power. Under these circumstances, Bertram Wolfe's first-hand account is valuable. Wolfe was a proponent of socialism during and after the First World War, and during that period became acquainted with such leaders as Trotsky, Stalin, Bukharin, and Molotov. Thus he was in an excellent position to observe the growth of the communist regime during its early years of development without being subjected to the censorship that exists in that system.

The book consists of essays on four subjects: pre-revolutionary Russia, Leninism, Stalinism, and the future of totalitarianism. These span the time from the reign of Nicholas II to the rise of Khrushchev to General Secretary. In each area, Wolfe brings to bear his vast personal knowledge and thorough scholarly research, providing provocative insights into the workings of the Soviet political system. Through his eloquent and lucid style he leaves few loose ends in his historical analysis. He grapples with such important topics as succession in the Soviet system, Russia's influence in the world communist movement, and the future of the Soviet government. Considering that the last of these articles was originally written and published fifteen years ago, one must be impressed on how recent developments have borne out his predictions.

When reading Wolfe, however,

the reader must keep in mind his variance from the Soviet communist line and his eventual expulsion from the American communist movement in 1928. This series of events, which culminated in a personal confrontation between Wolfe and Stalin, had a marked effect on his views about the future of the Soviet system. In several passages, Wolfe indulges in diatribes against Stalin and the system he created. Weighed against the value of the rest of his work, though, these do not seriously taint his credibility as a historian. This book, because of the experience of its author, warrants the attention of anyone seriously interested in studying the origin and fate of the Soviet system.

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Baker, David. *The Shape of Wars to Come*. New York: Stein and Day, 1982. 262pp. \$19.95

This is yet another book trying to cash in on growing public fear of nuclear war and growing interest in warfare in space. It may be the worst of its genre that this reviewer has encountered.

The cover entices the reader with the claim that inside he will find "The inside story of the secret weapons that are being designed and tested now." He finds instead a dreary recitation of satellite launch after satellite launch beginning with the first American efforts in space. No theme, no analysis, no scientific purpose guides this catalog of technical details. At the end of the book the reader still awaits

enlightenment about the shape of wars to come.

Even more disturbing than the misleading title and false cover claims is the political message of the author. In the introduction and conclusion Baker recites the gospel according to George Keegan: the Soviets are well advanced in laser and particle beam research, the American intelligence community is unwilling to face the facts in this regard, and crash programs are necessary for the United States to maintain a credible deterrent. No evidence whatsoever is adduced anywhere in support of these claims. Keegan himself has written the introduction to the volume in which he states that "while the West sleeps, a chilling body of evidence and basic scientific research data continues to be produced which the highly politicized CIA, along with its richly subsidized stable of Left-leaning pro-disarmament consultants, refuse to accept lest such acceptance put at risk their utopian hopes for SALT, détente and the diplomacy of appeasement."

This reviewer who has worked in the CIA's Office of Strategic Research, can attest to the fact that most of the leading figures in that office are retired military officers whose outlook on the Soviet Union is considerably more conservative than any other "group" of analysts in the Agency. The consultants they work with generally hold similar views. To see these strategic analysts and consultants as "Left-leaning pro-disarmament" requires an unusual