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## The War of the Flea

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*U.S. Navy*

Robert Taber

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He makes it plain that if the Soviet Army had not recaptured the vital Tikhvin rail junction, Leningrad would have starved to death as the Nazis intended that it should. Stalin's apparent antipathy toward Leningrad showed itself in the savage intrigues and plots which he directed against various leadership groups in the city and in the variety of measures, administrative and otherwise, by which he sought to reduce the prestige and importance of the former Russian capital. It is typical of the value of Pavlov's book that this instance of Stalin's interference with Leningrad's defense arrangements had never been publicly mentioned until reported in his book.

To the Western world, and to history, Pavlov's major service has been the writing of this book on the siege of Leningrad, one of the epics of man's experiences in war.

R.W. BENNETT  
Commander, U.S. Navy

Taber, Robert. *The War of the Flea*. New York: Stuart, 1965.  
192 p.

*The War of the Flea* is a short, easy-to-read work on the "wars of liberation" in the world. "The record stands," says the author, "no colonial war has yet been lost by a colonial people, once entered into." He cites Ireland, Israel, and French Morocco as examples of shortcuts to freedom: lots of publicity, little spilling of blood, and finally, freedom through political persuasion. Cyprus, Algiers, and French Indochina, on the other hand, were on a grander scale and more costly; but they followed exactly the same pattern. Yet there have been three failures in the war of the flea: the Huks in the Philippines, the Chinese in Malaya; and the Communists in Greece. The Huks were beaten at their own game by Magsaysay and never regained their guerrilla status. The Chinese in Malaya were not of the people and therefore received no popular support. The Communists in Greece turned against the people and lost their support. A successful revolution must have full popular support—what the author calls the "bandwagon effect." The Huks lost it, the Chinese in Malaya never had it, and the Greek Communists threw it away. Insurgency, if truly of the people, cannot fail, says Robert Taber. After describing the completely successful, worldwide wars of liberation, the author warns the United States that it is being cast in the role of "counterrevolutionist" and that it is "slowly moving into a worldwide conflict which it cannot win."

In his conclusion, Robert Taber suggests that the United States draw back its worldwide ring of Communist containment and concentrate on its biggest problem, Latin America. Here his solution is simple: (1) abandon all military aid, (2) declare an economic New Deal, and (3) embrace the revolution. The author's summation—"The United States can make the accommodation that it *must* make with the forces of revolution. Or it can, in the end, be destroyed." He suggests the "surrender of force to reason," and implies, if you can't beat them, join them. This reader says, "Tell it to the Marines."

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Woodward, David. *The Russians at Sea*. London: Kimber, 1965.  
254 p.

Mr. Woodward, using the pragmatic British approach, presents a rather scholarly and interesting overview of the history of the Russian Navy. Taking for his point of departure the emergence of Russian naval forces into the Baltic in the period 1703-1725, Mr. Woodward follows all of the major confrontations in which Russia employed sea power. He traces the growth of the Soviet Navy as the interest of the political leaders in this service flowed and ebbed like the tide. For example, the great interest of Peter the Great in the value of sea power provided the genesis of this Russian service, whereas Lenin's belief that a Navy was merely a waste and therefore a drain on the "people's" treasure all but sounded the death knell for the Navy. Unfortunately, while the material set forth appears factual, there is very little indication of source. An Acknowledgments section does provide some reference sources, but even this is very sparse and reflects only secondary material. Yet overall, Mr. Woodward's history will provide a valuable assist to the student of maritime history, while also proving to be very interesting reading.

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