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psychologically necessary in order to kill them with a clear conscience. Yet Dillon rightly resists the idea that the Dachau SS dehumanized their victims. Interactions between captors and captives were complex and varied, sometimes even personal, and guards systematically sought to torment and humiliate the prisoners. One of the great merits of Dillon's book is that it brings out some of the inter-subjective subtleties of violence in the concentration camps.

The book ends with a warning. 'In a Europe where the social and political dislocations of the interwar era may yet come to feel less remote', Dillon darkly concludes, it is important to understand how organized terror and violence can come into being. Here the story of the Dachau SS has a lot to tell us.

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Mungo Melvin, *Sevastopol's Wars: Crimea from Potemkin to Putin*. Oxford and New York: Osprey Publishing, 2017. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 752pp, ISBN: 978-1-4728-0794-6. Hardback. Price £30.00.

'No operation is of such doubtful issue as the landing in an enemy's country for the purpose of conquest. Modern, and British history in particular, is full of disastrous failures in the attempt, and those which have succeeded have been, generally, most hazardous.' So wrote Lieutenant General Sir John Fox Burgoyne, strategic adviser to Lord Raglan, prior to Britain's costly and controversial expedition to the Crimea. Yet, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, was convinced that only the destruction of Sevastopol could draw 'the eye tooth of the Bear... and 'til his fleet and naval arsenal in the Black Sea are destroyed there is no safety for Constantinople, no security for the peace of Europe'.

Predictably, the views of politicians overrode those of their military advisers with what Mungo Melvin describes as 'near-calamitous' consequences. In June 1854, the British Cabinet unanimously favoured attacking Sevastopol. The Secretary of State for War conveyed this decision to Raglan, who was to command the expedition. He replied, forthrightly, that he would do so 'more in deference to the views of the British government than to any information in the possession of the naval and military authorities, either as to the extent of the enemy's forces, or to their state of preparation'.

With clarity and in depth, Melvin sets out how Britain and her traditional adversary, France, came to make common cause against Russia. Ostensibly a dispute between Catholicism and Orthodoxy for the control of Holy sites in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the primary reason was rivalry for influence over the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. Russia's attack on Turkey in July 1853 was seen as an intolerable power-grab. During a siege lasting 349 days, a succession of battles and bombardments, individually indecisive, culminated in a French breakthrough – leading to Russian withdrawal from the south of Sevastopol and its all-important harbour.

As Melvin's account proceeds, from the Crimean War, through the 1905 Revolution, the First World War and the victory of the Bolsheviks, then the Red Terror and the coming of the Nazis, his objectivity never wavers. The strengths and weaknesses of all the military commanders are systematically laid bare and the strategic context is enlivened with sufficient personal testimony to keep the reader's interest alive. The personalities and their effectiveness are rigorously analysed; and, at the centre of it all, the role of Sevastopol is held firmly in historical focus.

Crimea was the last place evacuated by White Russian and Allied Intervention Forces, in November 1920, and Sevastopol was the first place attacked by Hitler's bombers, at 3:48am on 22 June 1941. That raid was a failure, but the 30 dead and 200 wounded civilians were 'the very first casualties of the 27 million endured by the Soviet people' during the 'Great Patriotic War'. What followed – the 'second defence of Sevastopol' – was a siege of 250 days, immortalising it with Leningrad and Stalingrad as one of the Hero Cities of the Soviet Union.

From the strategic assault of the Germans and Romanians, who captured Sevastopol in July 1942, to the last brave letter of a 20 year-old female resistance worker, executed in April 1944, no aspect of the drama escapes Melvin's meticulous research. A five-day campaign recaptured the city in May 1944, and yet another round of reconstruction and revival began.

The final chapter shows how Khrushchev – previously head of the Ukrainian Communist Party – engineered the transfer of Crimea from Russia to Ukraine in 1954. It gives an admirably concise account of the dangerous polarisation that had occurred by 2014 between Ukrainian factions (including Crimea) looking East to Russia, and those preferring to embrace the European Union and its Common Foreign and Security policies. Melvin is no apologist for the unilateral Russian seizure of territory: his analysis is admirably balanced and circumspect.

There is only one problem with *Sevastopol's Wars*: it is simply too long for its single-volume format. Not much could usefully be omitted, but scholarship on this scale, in a previous era, would have justified two volumes – or, at the very least, a synopsis at

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the start of each chapter. Nevertheless, this monumental work can only enhance Western understanding of the centrality of Sevastopol in the geopolitics and the history of modern Russia.

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Elizabeth Greenhalgh (ed), *Liaison: General Pierre Des Vallières at British Headquarters, 1916-17*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press and Army Records Society, 2016. Maps. Notes. Index. Cloth. 282pp. £20.00 (from the Army Records Society).

About five years ago, the United States Army Heritage and Education Center acquired the papers of Colonel Spencer Cosby, the American attaché to the French Army in 1915 and 1916. Even a cursory glance at the Cosby papers will suffice to demolish a few myths about America's relationship to the war in those years. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the American army, represented by Cosby, was closely observing the western front and doing all it could to distil the proper lessons about the nature of modern war. Cosby's papers are a reminder that attaché and liaison officers, although rarely at the centre of our histories of war, are critical observers and actors in their own right.

Recognising this value, the Army Records Society has done a great service by publishing the diaries of French General Pierre des Vallières, the French liaison to Field Marshal Haig's headquarters throughout 1916 and much of 1917. His diaries reveal the difficult position liaison officers had to fill, trying to coordinate the strategy and operations of two militaries that, although allied, had different languages, cultures, and interests. Des Vallières, partly raised in Dublin after the chaos of the Franco-Prussian War by his Irish mother, might seem an odd choice for such a job. His sentiments were, at least at the start of his service, partly informed by the anti-English environment of his childhood. It is not even clear how well he spoke English.

The editor of the volume, Elizabeth Greenhalgh, is ideally suited to bring this diary out of obscurity and into the hands of readers. She has spent as much time in the relevant archives as any historian and possesses a deep knowledge not just of the personalities involved, but of the historical context around the events she analyses. Her deft editorial hand, clarity of purpose, and insights advanced in the introductory sections, are invaluable.