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THE GREAT ANGLO-RUSSIAN NAVAL ALLIANCE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND BEYOND, By Richard Dietrich*, Published by: Boydell Press. Written by Philip MacDougall, Year of Publishing: 2022. Subject Area: British Navy, Russian Imperial Navy, History. Book Type: Naval Military History. Total Number of Pages: 234. ISBN: 1783276681, \$111.50 (Hardcover).

Organized into a Preface, ten chapters and a Conclusion, this book examines the long, generally informal naval alliance between Russia and Great Britain that began with Peter the Great's brief stint as a trainee shipwright at the Deptford dockyard in 1698 and ended with the opening of the Crimean War in 1853. It discusses the factors that led to the formation of this alliance, what made it beneficial to the two sides, and why it eventually came to an end.

The first three chapters are dedicated to the establishment of the Anglo-Russian naval alliance during the reign of Tsar Peter the Great (r. 1682-1725). It examines the what motivated both the Russians and the British to establish this alliance, the growing British reliance on Russia as a source of naval stores for both its navy and merchant fleet, and their increasing concern over Russian naval power in the Baltic.

Chapters four through seven trace the generally smooth commercial and military relations between the two powers through the 18th century and provide detailed information on the levels of cooperation and the extent to which Britain continued to assist in the development of the Russian navy.

The next two chapters examine the first major strain, the Polish-Russian war that began in 1792 and resulted in the complete partition of Poland by Russia, Austria and Prussia in 1795. Despite the unpopularity of Russia's occupation of much of Poland, the British government took no action against Russia, whose fleet was needed to assist the Royal Navy in its confrontation with Revolutionary France. Despite political differences that emerged in this period the alliance held, and would be strong enough to persuade Tsar Alexander I to abandon his conciliatory moves towards Napoleon and maintain his ties with Britain.

Chapter ten shows that while the desire to defeat Napoleon motivated Russia and Britain to cooperate at sea, Napoleon's final defeat and the political developments that followed left the two powers questioning their alliance. Russia was becoming increasingly concerned over Britain's growing economic power and imperial expansion, while Britain was suspicious of Russian territorial expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire and in Central Asia. Not only was the Russian fleet increasingly seen as a potential threat to British interest, Britain had developed new sources of naval stores, reducing its dependence on Russian supplies. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853, which pitted the powers against one another, marked the end of the Anglo-Russian naval alliance.

The book is clearly written and extensively researched, using both unpublished archival material as well as numerous published primary and secondary sources. However, it should be mentioned that this work primarily presents the British perspective on the Anglo-Russian naval alliance, and British interpretations of Russian motives and actions. While the bibliography is rather extensive, very few Russian sources have been cited. Nevertheless, this book sheds light on a lesser-known aspect of Russian history and is a valuable contribution to the study of relations between Russia and the West, the Imperial Russian navy and the important role Russia played in the 18th and 19th centuries in the creation of the British Empire. It is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in any of these topics.

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