

The book is thoroughly researched and annotated. Some visible omissions in literary criticism include Vladimir Golstein's essay on "At Home," especially noticeable because of the scarce attention this story has received in English, and Michael Finke's study of *The Steppe*. Noting that the protagonist's name in *The Steppe* links the events in this work to St. George begs for a reference to Savelly Senderovich's work (228). At one point, Alexei Suvorin's newspaper *Novoe vremia* is confused with *Peterburgskaia gazeta* (308n2).

Those, however, are just quibbles. Overall, the book succeeds in its presentation of Chekhov's model of childhood and goes even further than that. "For Chekhov, childhood is a continuous process of learning by failing" (252). The same would be true of life in general, as it occurs on the pages of Chekhov's multifaceted oeuvre.

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Eurasia without Borders: The Dream of a Leftist Literary Commons 1919–1943.

By Katerina Clark. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2021. 448 pp. Notes. Index. \$49.95, hard bound.
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Despite a renewed scholarly attention to the history of the Communist International or Comintern (1919–43), the Bolsheviks' efforts to create a worldwide common "red" cultural space has received little attention. There are several reasons for this, one being that there was no central and permanent organization to rally the cultural practitioners, despite early policy initiatives by the Soviet Russian literary avant-garde and repeated efforts for the stronger institutionalization of a communist literary movement. It was not until the Kharkov conference of internationalist writers in November 1930 that something like a literary international emerged. Even then one must distinguish, as Katerina Clark underlines, the organizations and individuals constituting this literary international, "committed communists or hardcore leftists integrated with Comintern or other Soviet-linked literary bodies" (23) from what she calls "ecumene," a never formally constituted body of like-minded writers, referred to as "leftist cosmopolitans," as opposed to the former "hegemonic cosmopolitans."

The second reason lies in the linguistic requirements necessary to study the dream to create a revolutionary Eurasian cultural space, fired by the official Soviet speeches in September 1920 at the Congress of the Toilers of the East in Baku. The intention to "meld" the cultures of Europe and Asia, as the leading Bolshevik authority on Eastern affairs, Mikhail Pavlovich, declared, serves as Clark's point of departure. But what would the language of world revolution be? Which translations would be necessary? How to translate concepts and tropes from one culture to the other? And, fundamentally, how could a national or ethnic culture be incorporated in a new common culture without losing its distinctiveness? Clark therefore opts for an approach based on individual countries and individuals to delimit her object of research. She is very careful, however, to inscribe her examples in the bi- and multidirectional flows of ideas and literary models, taking into account the complex picture of mutual, if not always egalitarian, exchanges, influences and circulations of concepts and practices between communist and Soviet-orientated institutions as well as horizontal interactions through personal or institutional contacts between Euro-Russian and Asian writers.

Her chapter structure is more or less chronological and divided into two parts, one covering the years 1919–30, when anti-imperialism was a common cement in the communist world, the other one the years 1930–43, when antifascism played this role.

The narrative starts with the Turkish writer Nâzim Hikmet, a student at the Communist University of Toilers of the East (KUTV) in Moscow, and his use of sound for his agitational poetry. The next chapter charts the attempts by the Persian and Kurdish writer Abolqasem Lahuti, another KUTV student, and the Russian avant-gardist Velemir Khlebnikov to integrate the Persian literary tradition into revolutionary poetry. Chapter 3 focusses on another literary genre, looking at the travelogues of Larisa Reisner and Lev Nikulin sent to Afghanistan, the gateway to India for the Bolsheviks, and how the two writer-diplomats tried (and failed) to escape imperialist stereotypes in their writings. The account then moves to India, a country closed to communists by British imperialism. In this chapter, Clark chooses a different angle with Nicolai Marr's challenge to Indo-Europeanism with his alternative map of languages that gave priority to oral culture and the languages of the Caucasus. Chapter 5 moves further east, to China, to which the revolutionaries turned their hopes in the first half of the 1920s, and to the question faced by writer-journalists such as Qu Qiubai, Sergei Tretiakov, André Malraux, and Boris Pilniak how to convey "authentic" or "true" knowledge in their accounts. China is also central in the first chapter on the 1930s, but the focus lies on the literary and cinematic interactions with Soviet Russia (Vsevolod Pudovkin, Iakov Bliokh) and Germany (Anna Seghers, Bertold Brecht, Friedrich Wolf) and on the cultural intermediaries (Émi Xiao, Mao Dun). Chapter 7 asks how the members of the London literary left (in particular Mulk Raj Anand) negotiated their appropriation of socialist realism. The last chapter then turns to the late 1930s and the Sino-Japanese war, the time when the literary ecumene began to unravel.

By looking through the lens of literature at the attempts to create a leftist Eurasian cultural space, Clark's book fills a void. Even if the Eurasia without borders did not come about, Clark carefully excavated the traces of the many committed writers and cultural practitioners who, each in their own way, participated in the realization of this internationalist vision. Her dense book draws our attention to an alternative literary world whose hitherto little-known networks stretched across large parts of the globe in the interwar period. The only regret is that the gender dimension is neglected in this innovative book about a rather unique political experience of creating a single cultural space through literature. As the brief comments on this (page 228) show, it would undoubtedly have been fruitful to pursue such an approach. It should also be noted that the name of Johannes Itten (not von Itten) and his origin (Switzerland not Austria) should be corrected.

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Soviet Samizdat: Imagining a New Society. By Ann Komaromi. NIU Series in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022. xviii, 318 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$49.95, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.229

There are two schools of thought about how best to describe the complicated relationship between the Soviet project and those who were its makers, beneficiaries, participants, and victims. One school privileged theory, especially the kind that was pioneered by twentieth century French sociologists. This school embedded the Soviet experience in a more universal cultural reading. The second school concentrated on the meticulous recovery of empirical evidence from archives, memoirs, interviews, newspapers, and other primary sources. It foregrounded the diversity of Soviet society. These two schools did not always see eye to eye—or better, their findings