

histories of the war in order to grasp his own points. He provides exhaustive detail on how the Red Army organized its telegraph, telephone, and radio nets; how Soviet commanders improved over time in their coordination of infantry, artillery, armor, and aircraft; and how reconnaissance and intelligence improved their collection of data and presentation of conclusions to decision makers. As a result of this focus on less-studied aspects of the Soviet military experience, Hill deliberately omits important aspects of the war. His account of the pre-war mechanization of the Red Army explicitly avoids any discussion of the development of operational art. His coverage of partisan warfare, where he is an established authority, focuses on questions of tactical employment and organization, eschewing discussion of the social and political aspects of the movement. While he does discuss operations, they serve him as illustrations of the Red Army's growth in the mastery of warfare, not as a sustained and coherent narrative.

As a result, the book is most useful for a particular audience. It is not designed or suited to be an introduction to the Eastern Front. The book's organization, revisiting Hill's chosen themes repeatedly through nearly two dozen chapters, makes for a somewhat choppy read. For those interested, however, in the concrete technological and organizational basis of the Red Army's institutional learning and growing effectiveness, Hill's work is a remarkably thorough, clear, and comprehensive account of previously-neglected technical questions of Soviet military development.

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A Soviet Journey: A Critical Annotated Edition. By Alex La Guma. Ed. Christopher Lee. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017. xviii, 265 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$95.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.173

This is a re-publication of South African novelist Alex La Guma's composite 1978 memoir of several journeys to the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s. La Guma (1925–1985) penned four political novels between 1962 and 1979 about apartheid-era society. Despite the publication of several biographies (most recently Roger Field, *Alex La Guma: A Literary and Political Biography* [2010]), internationally he remains something of a figure that only the equivalent of a connoisseur of fine wines would know. Aficionados of South African literature might remember that he was a lifelong member of the South African Communist Party and an exiled and active member of the African National Congress, South Africa's main liberation movement. Few will recall that he became the ANC's chief representative to Latin America and that he died and was buried in Cuba.

The book is graced by Professor Christopher Lee's comprehensive introduction to the enduring ties between the Soviet Union and South African freedom struggles, and La Guma's place in this relationship. Indeed, this sixty-page introduction is worth the price of the book. Lee vividly evokes that breathless moment in the mid-twentieth century when a brand new Third World, full of anger, promise, and emancipatory vision was rising out of the ashes of colonialism. As Lee writes, "*A Soviet Journey* resituates the vital role that the Soviet Union (USSR) held for liberation struggles around the world as a patron, host, and political model—perspectives that have been lost, particularly at a popular level, since the demise of the USSR itself" (3–4).

La Guma belonged to the second generation of African novelists who wrote about people who somehow collectively found the strength to endure colonialism and were

trying through sheer force of imagination to make a transition to a new world. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Kenya's most eminent novelist of that generation, has contributed a touching foreword to the book in which he tells of meeting La Guma in Sweden when they were hopeful young exiles, taking on the world. La Guma's wife Blanche has also contributed a short foreword evoking that heady time.

In the 1960s and particularly in 1975, La Guma set out to find out how much of that new world was already a-brewing in the USSR. In 1975 he travelled through Soviet Central Asia, particularly interested to find out how ethnic minorities were faring under socialism. As a colored South African (the term given to and used by the country's "mixed-race" population), La Guma was acutely aware that one of the central tasks of a new South Africa, should it ever come, would be to decide the fate of the categories of racial and ethnic divides. Trekking "in the footsteps of Alexander" (83) through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan, and Siberia, La Guma was most interested in the relationships between these far-flung peripheries and Moscow. Based on numerous conversations, meals, tours, and encounters, he concluded that the Soviet policy of decentralization had much to offer to those in search of models that one day could be used to replace apartheid in South Africa.

Hope and optimism permeate the pages of *A Soviet Journey*. Today, we "know" the fate of the Soviet experiment. But La Guma saw man everywhere successfully overcoming nature and conquering the challenges of industrial and agricultural production. He saw people of different cultures learning to live together. He witnessed a fierce pride in the accomplishments of Soviet culture and society. As a lifelong communist he might well have been looking through rose-colored glasses; but in the USSR he did not see replicas of South Africa's tarpaper shacks, hordes of hungry children, or the indiscriminate use of police dogs and bullets. Instead he met friendly, proud people who insisted on showing him their achievements and on feeding him favored delicacies, which to his increasing dismay, usually turned out to be boiled sheep's head. But there was also very good ice cream on offer! One feels La Guma's delight as he wandered into street bookstalls and found worn copies of his own novels translated into local languages.

For students of the Soviet Union and transnational communism in the Cold War era, La Guma's lively tale provides a valuable perspective on less-travelled Soviet byways, and the ways that officials and ordinary people alike presented themselves and their communities to an honored and enthusiastic African comrade.

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Magaziny "Berezka": Paradoksy potrebleniia v pozdnem SSSR. By Anna Ivanova.

Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017. 298 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index.

Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. RUB 379, hard bound.

doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.174

In the fall of 1979, as a young and ambitious disc jockey in charge of the student disco club at Dnipropetrovsk University's dorm, I had a very bad incident before the official opening of my dance party. I realized that our Soviet audio equipment was broken a few days before the very important Komsomol ideological commission's visit to check the "ideological reliability and technological efficiency" of our discotheque. My friend, our electric engineer, who had a special business assignment in Moscow, went immediately to a *Beriozka* store there, and using his connections and extra money, he bought the Japanese audio equipment in this shop, and the next day