

of America, which “could be heard in any point in the USSR” (137). Alas, these efforts also managed to interfere with domestic transmissions; having adopted this defensive posture in the propaganda war, the Soviets suffered from the radio equivalent of friendly fire.

One gets the sense from Lovell’s book that Soviet radio peaked in the 1960s when listeners enjoyed a wide range of programs, including news, music, sports, radio theater, and children’s shows. Still, the lasting impression is of a medium singularly unfit to flourish in Soviet circumstances. The desire to create a collective form of national address hindered the development of something more intimate, authentic, and individual. Furthermore, the utopian potential of radio—its ability to cross borders and reach a truly global audience—seemed beyond Soviet broadcasters and only managed to frustrate the state authorities. In any case, this peak was also short-lived. With the invention of TV, broadcasters found a new means of capturing a collective audience that soon eclipsed the hard-fought accomplishments of Soviet radio.

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The Red Army and the Second World War. By Alexander Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xii, 738 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$34.99, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.172

Shelves bend under the weight of books on the epic Soviet-German clash on the Eastern Front from 1941–45. In addition to older, rigorous scholarly accounts by John Erickson and Earl F. Ziemke, more recent books by Chris Bellamy, Stephen G. Fritz, David M. Glantz, Jonathan Mallory House, Ewan Mawdsley, and Geoffrey Megargee, to give an incomplete list, take advantage of new archival revelations to cover the Second World War in the east within the space of a single volume. Is there really room for another book synthesizing the voluminous secondary literature and selected archival material?

As it turns out, there is. Alexander Hill not only finds room to say something not covered in other synthetic works on the Eastern Front, but in fact he depends on those other books to make his points. His book does not pretend to be comprehensive, despite its length and weight. Instead, he looks at a particular theme: how “the Red Army was transformed into a more effective fighting force” (3). This is in itself not especially new. Indeed, an almost universal theme in recent literature on the Soviet military in World War II has been how almost all aspects of the Red Army’s military performance, from the lowliest rifleman to Iosif Stalin himself, displayed a clear pattern of increasing sophistication and effectiveness from the dark days of 1941 to the occupation of Berlin in 1945. Hill’s contribution is in focusing on specific aspects of that transformation.

In particular, Hill examines specific technical questions of military effectiveness in great detail. Both scholars and general readers with an interest in military history are likely reasonably well-informed about the operational and strategic history of the Eastern Front. They are familiar with the T-34 tank and the *Shturmovik* and other iconic examples of military technology which contributed to Soviet victory. Hill’s focus lies elsewhere, with communications technology, reconnaissance, intelligence, logistics, training, and organization, along with less glamorous weapons systems alongside tanks and aircraft. Indeed, Hill makes it explicit that he expects his readers to have read and become familiar with more traditional operational

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