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Norihiro Naganawa, ed., *Dreams of Emancipation: Russia's Empire and the Long Twentieth Century* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2025), 290 pp.

Dreams of Emancipation: Russia's Empire and the Long Twentieth Century is an ambitious effort to reframe the Russian Revolution using methodologies of transnational Eurasian history. Rather than treating 1917 as a self-contained imperial rupture or as a set of ideas originating from within a European chronology of communism, the volume situates the energies, utopian ideas, and political violence unleashed by the Revolution within the context of empire. For Naganwa this approach helps illuminate new politics of difference, questions of race and racial construction, and international relations shaping political economy and ideological legitimacy. Drawing on insights from "new imperial history," the contributors explore how revolutionary energies unfolded across multilingual, multiethnic spaces stretching from imperial borderlands to global networks.

By foregrounding sites such as Kazan, Baku, Harbin, and Bukhara, the essays highlight revolutionary and anti-imperial movements that were not centered in Moscow or Petrograd. These borderland multilingual spaces and sources reveal that the Revolution's meaning was never singular: it could signify national liberation, regional autonomy, anti-imperial revolt, or socialist transformation. The consolidation of Bolshevik power thus involved reassembling a fractured multinational imperial space out of competing visions of emancipation.

Two essays—by Sarah Slye and David Rainbow—examine contrasting regionalist visions of emancipation that emerged as political projects in the Caucasus and Siberia. Slye shows that pan-Caucasian regionalism emerged from debates among intellectuals seeking to reconcile national belonging with broader collective political frameworks in an effort to define their relationship to Russia. Influenced by European federalist and socialist thought, these intellectuals adapted these ideas to local narratives of shared ancestry. Although the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic of 1918 lasted only a month, its conceptual foundations resurfaced during early Soviet rule. Ultimately, Slye argues that Caucasian regionalism was a future-oriented political experiment born of revolutionary debates about federalism. By contrast, as Rainbow demonstrates, the intellectual origins of Siberian regionalism predated the Revolution by decades. The Siberian model of regional autonomy was not a call for an alternative to Russia, but a means of strengthening it. During the Civil War, Siberian regionalists declared autonomy while defending the Russian state against Bolshevism in the name of the February Revolution. Where Caucasian regionalism imagined new future-oriented political arrangements, Siberian regionalism sought to preserve and regenerate a collapsing imperial order.

Other contributions emphasize how revolutionary politics reshaped relationships beyond Russia's borders. Rachel Lin's essay shows how the Soviet state's collapse in Harbin created opportunities for Chinese warlords to reclaim sovereignty over the Chinese Eastern Railway zone, which had been lost to the Russian empire through imperial concessions. Ironically, in Manchuria, revolutionary upheaval and dreams of emancipation inspired anti-Bolshevik mobilization. In the southern borderlands, revolutionary promises could instead reinforce Bolshevik authority. Norihiro Naganawa's study of Tatar revolutionary Karim Khakimov illustrates how participation in the Red Army's military conquest of Central Asia paved the way for diplomatic pragmatism.

Khakimov helped shift Soviet policy from intervention to economic engagement in Iran and facilitated hajj travel to generate revenue for the Soviet state while building ties with Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

In the Western borderlands of the Soviet empire, Zbigniew Wojnowski uses the biography of Polish diplomat Wanda Michalewska to reveal the limits of socialist solidarity. Navigating tensions between national identity and ideological commitment, Michalewska's career exposes contradictions between Russification and the strategic mobilization of ethnic difference.

Other intermediaries—national communists, Muslim diplomats, and regional actors—demonstrate the persistent gap between revolutionary ideals and state practice. Sam Hirst's essay on Soviet economic relations with Kemalist Turkey underscores how ideological commitments were continually negotiated against material interests, foreshadowing later development partnerships in the postwar world.

These transregional connections extend the Revolution's significance beyond Soviet borders. Yet Naganawa also proposes expanding its temporal frame beyond Eric Hobsbawm's "short twentieth century" (1914–1991) to a "long twentieth century" beginning in the 1870s era of intensified imperial globalization and stretching into the present. In this view, the Eurasian revolutions of 1905, 1908, 1911, and 1917 formed part of a broader continental crisis linking imperial modernization, anti-colonial reformism, Bolshevik internationalism, decolonization, and even contemporary geopolitical conflicts. Although much of the nineteenth-century background remains peripheral, Peter Holquist's opening essay shows that the Provisional Government itself framed its wartime occupations in Galicia and Anatolia as liberationist—anticipating later Bolshevik rhetoric.

The period after World War II is addressed most directly in Martin Wagner's comparison of post-Stalinist and post-Maoist transitions. While Khrushchev could denounce Stalin by invoking Lenin as a purer revolutionary source of legitimacy, Deng Xiaoping faced a more complex inheritance. Mao had functioned as both Lenin—the founding revolutionary—and Stalin—the architect of personalized rule and mass campaigns. Rather than repudiating Mao, Deng reinterpreted his legacy through Leninist principles and Mao's own early maxim of "seeking truth from facts," paving the way for Reform and Opening. The USSR's other roles as a beacon for post-WWII anticolonial movements, including its provision of developmental and military support in the Third World, are summarized in broad strokes in an afterward that draws on secondary sources.

Despite its primary focus on the revolutionary era and early Soviet state formation, the collection speaks to contemporary concerns. Putin's nostalgic invocation of Soviet power and the post-Soviet appropriation of anticolonial rhetoric highlight the enduring political stakes of these histories. By emphasizing contingency and transnational entanglement, the volume demonstrates that the Soviet outcome was only one possible resolution to a wider Eurasian imperial crisis—opening the door to new comparative and global perspectives on revolution and empire.

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