and Japan and an open international trade order after World War II) have strengthened rather than weakened U.S. security and interests.

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Christina Ezrahi’s book is a welcome addition to the growing literature about cultural production/consumption, cultural politics, and ideology in the Soviet Union, especially during post-Stalin socialism. Her book, based on extensive archival research and oral history, focuses on two major (and the most popular in the West) ballet troupes in the USSR, one from the Mariinskii (later Kirov) Theater in Leningrad and the other from the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. Although the book begins with the era of the October Revolution, it concentrates mostly on the post-Stalin period of Soviet ballet’s international fame in the 1950s and 1960s. Ezrahi explores “the remarkable resilience of artistic creativity under the Soviet regime” and tells a story of “the struggle for artistic autonomy” (p. 5). Using the theories of James C. Scott casting everyday resistance as a “weapon of the weak,” which became popular in Soviet studies in the West in the 1990s, especially in the work of Stephen Kotkin, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Lynne Viola, and Alena Ledeneva, Ezrahi examines the “artistic resistance” and “struggle for artistic autonomy” of both Soviet ballet companies (pp. 6–7).

In chapters 1 and 2, Ezrahi discusses the survival of the prerevolutionary traditions of the Russian school of ballet, their adjustment to the ideological requirements of the Soviet regime after the October Revolution, and the transformation of these ballet traditions during the Stalinist “cultural revolution” in 1923–1936. Then she concentrates on the most interesting period when the Soviet ballet flourished under Nikita Khrushchev. In chapters 3 and 4 Ezrahi examines the Kirov Ballet troupe’s strategies of “artistic” resistance to and compromise with the Soviet ideologists who were pushing for more “contemporary” topics of socialist realism and “Komsomol themes” in the ballets staged for Soviet audiences during the “Khrushchev Thaw.” Chapter 5 explores how cultural diplomacy and the Bolshoi Theater tour in London in 1956 had mutual effects on both Soviet and Western performers and on the audiences in the West. Ezrahi finishes her book with two chapters devoted to a story of the staging of the two most controversial ballets in the history of Soviet choreography: *The Bedbug*, directed by Leonid Yakobson at the Kirov; and *Spartacus*, directed by Yurii Grigorovich at the Bolshoi.

Overall, the narrative of the book (including its archival findings) is a good summary of what is already well known (especially to Russian readers) about the interactions of ballet performers, theater administration, and Soviet authorities. Unfortunately, the new literature (in both Russian and English) about similar themes is
Although Ezrahi mentions Michel de Certeau in the book’s bibliography (p. 302), she does not use his theoretical approaches, which have become an important theoretical base for the new literature on cultural production during the post-Stalin period. According to these approaches, in post-Stalin Soviet society, “the imposed knowledge and symbolisms become objects manipulated by practitioners who have not produced them.” In this interpretation, practitioners (e.g., Soviet ballet performers) usually subverted practices and representations that were imposed on them by the ruling party not by rejecting them or by transforming them (though that occurred as well) but in numerous other ways. According to de Certeau’s The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 31, practitioners “metaphorized the dominant order: they made it function in another register. They remained other within the system which they assimilated and which assimilated them externally. They diverted it without leaving it.” Ezrahi completely ignores the new studies about cultural production by Alexei Yurchak, Stephen Bittner, Julian Fürst, and others who use de Certeau’s approach. Moreover, for some reason, recent popular books on Soviet ballet by Fedor Razzaakov, Jennifer Homans, and Julie Kavanagh (about Rudolf Nureyev) are missing from Ezrahi’s bibliography. The new literature on cultural consumption during the post-Stalin period could have strengthened the main argument of Ezrahi’s book as well. In a book I published in 2010, Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960–1985 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 161, I showed how Soviet ideologists compared Grigorovich’s ballet Spartacus with the U.S. film of the same name (directed by Stanley Kubrick), as part of their efforts to introduce Soviet secondary school children to the principles of “class struggle” portrayed in Soviet ballet. Despite Ezrahi’s thesis that Grigorovich’s choreography was a form of “resistance” to the Soviet regime (e.g., p. 201), the real cultural practices of the Thaw period demonstrated the very different approaches of Soviet ideologists to this cultural product, which was incorporated as an “ideologically reliable” ballet in the Soviet regime’s Communist indoctrination efforts.

Another problem with Ezrahi’s book is her reliance on interviews with former Soviet ballet administrators and performers, who try to present themselves now as part of the “resistance” to the Soviet regime, observations Ezrahi does not interrogate critically. I doubt also the reliability of some of the personal interviews. Here we seem to be dealing with a chronological problem I call “the effect of condensed memory,” in which interviewees try to “condense” information about the past, sometimes confusing and mixing together historical events that took place at different times.

Despite these criticisms, Ezrahi’s book should be applauded as an important attempt to explore relations between Soviet ballet practitioners and Soviet power. Paradoxically, an engagement with the recent literature on the history of cultural production and consumption could make Ezrahi’s main argument more plausible for both Russian and Western scholars and make her book more attractive to a wider audience.