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John Fraser was born in London. He wrote on and taught social and political theory (especially Marxism) in the UK, Canada and, after 1980, in Rome and Ferrara.

Since 1982 he has lived in Rome. He has also worked as a musician.

Also by John Fraser and published by AESOP Modern:

- Black Masks
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- The Observatory
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- Runners

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**The Other Shore focuses on a critical point in Soviet history. It deals with young Soviet intellectuals, bright but not brilliant, confronting a future threatened with war and stagnation, but still with the impetus of post-Stalinist regeneration.**

Rather than being a chronicle of the debates between neo-Bolsheviks, Leninists, social and liberal democrats, Trotskyists, Westernisers and traditionalists, it depicts a more modest but more frequently encountered search for commitment, for a meaningful political and social life, in a vast country where light and darkness flicker and alternate unpredictably.

In hindsight, theirs may seem the twittering of cage birds, the self-delusion that came to terrible ruin twenty years later. The characters are aware that war or stagnation are ever-present shadows in their paths, but they press on, aware that their guides are shadowy and faltering, long-dead.

It is the less grandiose, the less informed, struggles of the young Soviet citizens that seem more gripping and more hopeful. Although **The Other Shore** may be categorised as political fantasy, the real fantasy lies in the collapse of the aspirations which drove all the protagonists at the time. These aspirations seemed realistically held, and not unreasonably attainable. But the world they prefigured has, in the event, made them appear just wishful thinking.

**'In Fraser's fiction the reader rides as on a switchback or luge of impetuous attention, with affects flashing by at virtuoso speeds. The characters seem to be unwitting agents of chaos, however much wise reflection Fraser bestows upon them; they move with shrugging self-assurance through circumstances as richly detailed and as without reliable compass-points as a Chinese scroll.'**

John Fuller



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*'Imagine these people, their frightening intensity. You'd read later in the papers that they'd been killed, arrested, denounced. They certainly were struggling against monstrous, vicious forces. There was no communication between us – they wanted to talk of China, of the Agitprop, the Proletkult, they saw us as ruins fit for the archaeologist. The lives of most of them must be so lonely, so bitter.'*

*'Yet at times I felt we were the only young people who could speculate and create. Seeing these generations of students leaving our airports for the front, as it were, seeing the blurry photographs of them and their banners in all the demonstrations of the world – one's own discontents seemed luxurious. Will we ever meet them again? I think not – their experience has been so savage, so highly spiced with every kind of intellectual explosive ... Perhaps it takes someone more like them to carry out experiments.'*

from *The Other Shore*

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