

## Contents

Russia Gears Up for Election Season	1
SCRSS News	3
Soviet Memorial Trust Fund News	6
Russians & the Russian Language in the Post-Soviet Space, Part II	6
Chernobyl Children's Life Line	10
Child Welfare in Russia 1973–2011	11
Book Reviews	12
From the Russian Press	15
Listings	19

## Feature

### Russia Gears Up for Election Season

By Ralph Gibson, RIA Novosti

With parliamentary and presidential elections due in December 2011 and March 2012 respectively, one could be forgiven for thinking that the results were already in. There is every likelihood that the political party United Russia, backed by the recently launched All-Russian People's Front (ARPF), will maintain its healthy majority in the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament. And it already seems inevitable that Vladimir Putin will run for, and win, the presidential election several months later.

It is worth noting that the winners in the upcoming elections will receive longer mandates than previously: since the last election cycle the State Duma term has

increased from four to five years and the presidential term of office from four to six years. As in 2007, parties fighting for seats in the Duma will need to pass a seven per cent threshold to gain significant representation. (An amendment to election law in 2009 gives parties gaining between five and six per cent – one seat, and between six and seven per cent – two seats.)



Using digital ballot boxes at a presentation of sample ballot papers for the sixth elections to the State Duma (RIA Novosti photograph)

### Party of Power

In 2007 the seven per cent threshold dramatically reduced the number of parties represented in the lower house of the Russian parliament, with only four overcoming this hurdle: United Russia gained 315 of 450 seats (70 per cent); the Communist Party (KPRF) – 57 seats; the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) – 40 seats; and Just Russia – 38 seats.

Only three other political parties are currently registered in Russia: Patriots of Russia, Yabloko and Right Cause. The People's Freedom Party (PARNAS), led by

the former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov, and The Other Russia, led by writer turned politician Eduard Limonov, have both been denied registration this year. With PARNAS, the Justice Ministry insists that its list of supporters included "dead people and teenagers" and therefore did not fulfil the necessary requirements. As for The Other Russia, the Ministry states that "its charter contradicts federal law". It is unclear whether appeals against the Ministry's rulings will succeed in time to allow either party to field candidates at the forthcoming elections.

Pre-summer polling by the Levada Centre suggests that only three parties may pass the seven per cent threshold on 4 December. Their poll put United Russia firmly in the lead with 53 per cent, ahead of the KPRF on 17 per cent and the LDPR on 13 per cent. Trailing behind were Just Russia on five per cent and Yabloko on one per cent. Before the ruling that denied it registration, PARNAS was supported by around three per cent of responders.

## People's Front

The creation of the All-Russian People's Front, proposed by Vladimir Putin at a United Russia conference in May, is expected to bolster the election prospects of the 'party of power' by bringing in support from individuals and organisations outside the party. "United Russia needs new ideas and new faces," said Putin at a meeting with civic leaders at the time. The party's list of candidates in December is likely to include significant numbers of government ministers, as well as public figures such as chess player Anatoly Karpov, tennis champion Marat Safin and cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova. The creation of the ARPF has highlighted the lack of a similar 'opposition' front, with the other major political parties seemingly unable to agree on a common platform to challenge United Russia's dominance. There are likely to be plenty of rumours and speculation about possible alliances, but the history of the last twenty years and five previous Duma elections since the demise of the USSR

point to continued splits in the opposition forces.



The State Duma building, Moscow, viewed from Manege Square (RIA Novosti photograph)

One new figure causing a stir is metals tycoon Mikhail Prokhorov who took over as leader of the Right Cause party in June. Right Cause is a centre-right, pro-business party, which positions itself as the 'protector' of the middle class. Presumably some of Mr Prokhorov's fortune, estimated at over £13 billion, has been spent on the hundreds of billboards promoting him and his party in major cities across Russia. However, many of these, according to Mr Prokhorov, have been defaced or removed "on direct instruction from local authorities, who know even before the election campaign what the election results should be". Nevertheless, he claims he would make a good prime minister.

## Presidential Manoeuvres

As for the presidential election, scheduled for 4 March 2012, United Russia and the ARPF will support whichever of the current ruling 'tandem' chooses to run. As president since 2008, Dmitry Medvedev has promoted a 'modernisation' agenda, pushing for greater transparency and the rooting out

of corruption. He also proved his leadership credentials in the 2008 conflict with Georgia. However, many observers feel confident in predicting that he will step aside to allow Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to return as president. To many people, both inside and outside Russia, Mr Putin has remained 'in charge' even as prime minister, while a Levada Centre poll earlier this year gave him an approval rating of 69 per cent (down from 78 per cent in January 2010). It is too early to say whom Putin might find himself running against. However, with no other figure currently commanding widespread popular support, it seems likely that he will easily achieve the 71 per cent of votes received last time he ran for presidential office in 2004. The fact that the newly elected president could rule for twelve years – a maximum of two six-year terms is allowed – means that Mr Putin could be in charge until 2024.

### Sources

Russia Profile ([www.russiaprofile.org](http://www.russiaprofile.org))  
RIA Novosti ([www.rian.ru](http://www.rian.ru))  
Moscow News ([www.themoscownews.com](http://www.themoscownews.com))

## SCRSS News

---

### SCRSS £50,000 Library Appeal

Since its launch in January 2011 the SCRSS Library Appeal has raised over £6,000. This welcome addition to the Society's income has helped us cover some heavy winter bills and purchase new audio-visual equipment for use in our film shows and lectures. In particular, we now have the facility to show DVD films, widening the range of classic and contemporary Russian films we can offer at our film shows. We launched with the well attended two-part showing of *The Battle for Moscow* in June and July. Our next show is the new Russian film *The Brest Fortress* on Friday 23 September at 7pm (see opposite for details). We are also allocating money from the Library Appeal towards the digitisation of

some of the Society's rare 16mm Soviet films: this will support conservation and enable us to make these classics available once again for viewing by members and the general public. We are very grateful to everyone who has contributed to the Library Appeal. Please continue to give generously: we still have much to do to preserve the SCRSS Library and Archive for the future and to improve its premises.

## Visitors to the Society

Julia Volkova, administrator at the St Petersburg Association for International Co-operation, visited the Society on 5 August 2011. She was met by SCRSS Council members Jill Cunningham and Barbara Ellis, and SCRSS library assistant John Cunningham. Julia was taken on a tour of the library collections and presented with a CD on the history of the Society. In return she presented the library with a new illustrated book with previously unpublished photographs of the Siege of Leningrad.

## Next Events

**Friday 23 September 7pm**

**Film: The Brest Fortress**

New war drama set during the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June 1941, when Soviet troops held onto the Brest Fortress in Belarus for nine days. Directed by Alexander Kott, Russia, 2010. Cast includes Pavel Derevyanko, Andrei Merzlikin and Alexander Korshunov. English subtitles.

*Note: Admission to this particular event is free (SCRSS members and non-members), but all tickets must be reserved at least one week in advance. Telephone the SCRSS on 020 7274 2282 to reserve a ticket.*

**Friday 7 October 7pm**

**Lecture: Caroline Walton on *The Besieged – Surviving Catastrophe***

This year is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Siege of Leningrad. In her talk she focuses on what we can learn from the survivors of the siege, what kept them alive and how creativity contributed to their survival. Caroline's new book *The Besieged*

is published on 1 September 2011 by Biteback Books and copies will be on sale at the event (see book review on page 14).



Defence work at the Admiralty during the Siege of Leningrad, 1941 (SCRSS Photo Library)

### **Friday 28 October 7pm**

#### **Lecture: John Riley on the *Film Society***

The UK's first film society was established in London in 1925 by a group of left-wing intellectuals. From 1925–39 the Film Society aimed to show films of 'high quality' that had little chance of commercial distribution, including Russian and Soviet titles refused certification by the BBFC. One of the Film Society's guiding spirits was Ivor Montagu, and he and several other founder members were also associated with the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR (the original name of today's SCRSS). In his talk John Riley will look at the Film Society, its shows and the debates that surrounded its work. John Riley is a writer, curator and lecturer. His books include *Dmitri Shostakovich: a Life in Film* (IB Tauris). He has recently written on the Film Society for OUP and on 'Pioneering Russian Film in London' for the second volume of *Russian Presence in Britain*.

### **Friday 18 November 7pm**

#### **Lecture: Michael Jones on *Total War – From Stalingrad to Berlin***

Michael Jones talks on his new book, *Total War*, published by John Murray in June 2011. *Total War* tells the story of the Red Army as it freed Russia and Ukraine from Hitler and fought its way to Berlin. The book also reveals the horrors that Soviet soldiers experienced and shows how the Red Army, brutalised and traumatised by four years of

war, took revenge on the German civilian population. *Total War* includes a wealth of new material – from Red Army diaries and letters to the remarkable testimonies of Soviet veterans. Copies of *Total War* will be on sale at the event (see book review on page 12). Michael Jones is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a member of the British Commission for Military History and works as a writer, media consultant and presenter. He has written books on the battles of Stalingrad, Leningrad and Moscow.



Battle of Stalingrad, 1942 (SCRSS Photo Library)

### **Friday 2 December 7pm**

#### **Lecture: Christine Lindey on *Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde Art 1900–1935***

Early twentieth-century artists such as Goncharova, Kandinsky and Malevich created modernist art that challenged late Tsarism's aesthetic, political and social norms. In the Bolshevik era artists such as Tatlin, Popova and Rodchenko put avant-garde art at the service of the Revolution by applying modernist aesthetics to the production of textile designs, ceramics, posters and illustrations for the benefit of the working class. This illustrated lecture will explore the social, political and aesthetic debates that underlay this vibrant period in Russian and Soviet art and design.

*Events take place at the SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9. Admission fees for films and lectures (unless otherwise stated): £3.00 (SCRSS members), £5.00 (non-members). Admission fees for other events: as indicated.*

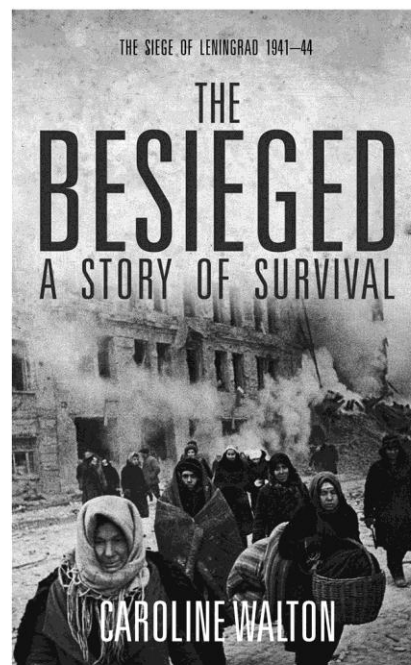
# 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF LENINGRAD

## THE BESIEGED: A STORY OF SURVIVAL

### CAROLINE WALTON

*The Besieged* is a beautifully observed account of one of the defining moments of twentieth-century history: the Siege of Leningrad. The Siege began in September 1941, when German forces severed the last connection to the city, and was to last for 872 days, during which the dying population suffered horrors almost beyond the powers of description.

Caroline Walton, a fluent Russian-speaker, has spoken with dozens of the survivors. The result is history in the broadest and best sense: a deeply personal and universal story of survival in extreme circumstances.



• £17.99 • 288 PAGES • HARDBACK • PUBLISHED 1 SEPTEMBER 2011

.....

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque made payable to Biteback Publishing Ltd for £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my ☐ Maestro ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ for the amount of £ \_\_\_\_\_

Card number

Start (mm/yy)   /   Expiry (mm/yy)   /   CVC

Please send your order to: Biteback Publishing, Westminster Tower, 3 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SP Tel. 020 7091 1260 Email [info@bitebackpublishing.com](mailto:info@bitebackpublishing.com)

[www.bitebackpublishing.com](http://www.bitebackpublishing.com)

# Soviet Memorial Trust Fund News

---

## Next Events

**Sunday 13 November 12.30pm**

**Event: Remembrance Sunday**

Events inside the Imperial War Museum start at 11.00am. Full details will be sent to everyone on the SMTF mailing list in early October. If you are not already on the mailing list, please email Hon Secretary Ralph Gibson on [smtf@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:smtf@hotmail.co.uk) or write to: SMTF, c/o 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB.

*The Soviet War Memorial is located in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park (adjacent to the Imperial War Museum), Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ.*

## Feature

---

### Russians and the Russian Language in the Post-Soviet Space, Part II

Dr Nataliya Rogozhina considers the situation in the European republics of the former Soviet Union

*"Those who regret the collapse of the USSR have no head, those who don't – no heart."*<sup>1</sup>

The end of the twentieth century was marked by a surprising phenomenon: the former Soviet republics were shaken by language wars. It is almost twenty years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, yet the contraction or disappearance of the Russian language space remains as significant as ever both in the sphere of state politics and the everyday lives of millions of people.

One of the most striking events of recent European history in this regard was the

appearance of a new state – the unrecognised Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic. The country operates on the principle of strict observance of the equality of three languages – Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan. In the central square in Tiraspol, its capital, an eternal flame burns in front of Heroes' Cemetery. The graves hold the remains of dozens of people who gave their lives for the right of their fellow citizens to freely choose their native language.

In neighbouring Moldova the situation with Russian is ambiguous. On the one hand, discussions over many years on the merger of the two fraternal countries of Moldova and Romania have led to a change from Cyrillic to Latin script for written Moldovan, and to reduced opportunities for studying Russian in the republic's schools and higher educational institutions. On the other hand, as Andrei Tserne, leader of the Patria Moldova party, confirms, Russian forms the basis for his fellow citizens' economic well-being: simply by knowing Russian, millions of Moldovans working in Russia today are better off and earn more than similar migrant workers from the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. "If a country cannot provide work for its citizens, then it should at least maintain their knowledge of Russian at an appropriate level," he announced recently.<sup>2</sup>

In Byelorussia Russian is an official language on an equal footing with Byelorussian. Moreover, its position is more secure: more than 80 per cent of the 10-million strong population of the country uses Russian. Take the following spectacle observed on Byelorussian state TV channels: journalists ask questions stubbornly in Byelorussian but are answered exclusively in Russian. Each year the number of final-year school students choosing Byelorussian for the state language test, which counts towards university entrance, decreases. This year almost two times fewer final-year school students took Byelorussian than Russian – 53,000 as opposed to 96,000. This situation is bolstered not only historically by tradition and Byelorussia's economic orientation towards Russia, but also by President Lukashenko's personal political stance.

However, Lukashenko's impulsiveness is no guarantee of stability in this matter.

The last twenty years have brought about an abrupt change in the linguistic landscape of Ukraine – the country closest to Russia in ethnic terms <sup>3</sup> and the country with the highest percentage of Russians within its population. Notwithstanding the predominance of Russian in Kiev where, in informal conversation, middle- or older-aged state employees use Russian with greater ease than their native language, 'political battles' over the Russian language space continue to rage in the country.

Former president Viktor Yushchenko's policy of total 'Ukrainisation' resulted in social upheaval, while an election promise to recognise Russian as the second official language and protect the country's Russian-speaking citizens brought victory to the Party of Regions and its leader, Viktor Yanukovich, the current Ukrainian president. Let me offer two facts in support of this view. Firstly, as Professor Lyudmila Kudryavtseva of Kiev National University bears witness, for the first time last year the Russian Department welcomed students studying Russian 'from scratch'. Secondly, the city administration of Russian-speaking Odessa has decided that from 2011 all schools will conduct lessons bilingually in Russian and Ukrainian. However, as Alexander Vasil'yev, leader of Odessa City Council's Education Committee, has noted, many parents are not rushing to take advantage of the opportunity to send their children to Russian classes as this will cause them difficulty later at university: higher education is only available in Ukrainian and there are currently no plans to introduce bilingualism in higher educational institutions.

In Latvia and Estonia, which share a common border with Russia, the rejection of Russian has taken the form of prohibition and this has been grounds for serious inter-state conflicts, as the Russian-speaking population in these countries remains extremely high. <sup>4</sup>

Here I must express my personal opinion which differs from declarations made by

Russian politicians and local Russophiles. I am completely in solidarity with the desire of the former Soviet republics to re-assert their native languages. This aspiration is natural and not illogical. It is hard to imagine a situation where Georgians, Moldavians and Tadzhiks resident in Russia began to demand the right to have their children educated or to pursue their profession in their native languages. Why should Russians, therefore, insist on retaining their schools? This path will only impede their children's integration. Russians have a saying: "Don't impose your own rules on someone else's monastery." <sup>5</sup> A residual imperialistic mentality prevents protesters from admitting that they are in someone else's 'monastery' now, not their own. It is precisely their lack of knowledge of the local language that hinders Russians in gaining citizenship. The status of 'non-citizen', held by a significant number of ethnic Russians in the Baltic States, severely restricts their social rights and opportunities, and is reflected in their standard of living. The answer is not to demand the impossible, but to learn the language.

For a complete picture, we should mention Lithuania. In contrast to its Baltic neighbours, this country chose the path of tolerance and in so doing avoided any language conflicts. Lithuanian, Russian, Polish and Byelorussian schools have equal rights in Lithuania. However, school leaving examinations must be sat in the official language and higher education is only available in Lithuanian. This carefully thought out language policy has enabled the country to pass peacefully through the difficult period of establishing a new post-Soviet Lithuania.

Despite experiencing the loudest protests about discrimination against the Russian-speaking population, fewer Russians have left Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine than other former Soviet republics. This is due primarily to cultural similarities, a common European mentality and a comparatively high standard of living. Moreover, the children of ethnic Russians see themselves as citizens of the country in which they live. It can be painful at times for parents to see their children

choosing the path of integration, rather than struggle, but that is in the nature of things. On the other hand, it is no secret that in recent years the vast majority of school children in the Baltic States have chosen Russian as their second foreign language (English, indisputably, occupies first place), albeit this is largely their parents' choice. Today no one is shocked to hear Russian spoken on the streets of Tallinn and Riga, shop assistants will always reply in Russian, and newsstands stock the latest newspapers and magazines from Russia. Of course, the situation in the provinces is different: here there are fewer and fewer Russians and Russian-speakers, Russian theatres and libraries have long since closed, and teachers of Russian have changed profession.

Thus, over the last few years the situation in the former European republics of the Soviet Union, now sovereign states, has been changing for the better: 'offended' Russians are no longer planning to leave the countries in which they live and work, while 'banned' Russian is being studied in schools and universities everywhere.

Much has changed over the twenty years since the disappearance of the USSR – and will continue to change. However, on the whole, irrespective of their ethnic background and place of residence, young people living in the post-Soviet space view their countries as part of Europe and the world – and the Soviet Union as simply an historical period in the previous century.

Today, however paradoxical it may seem, the flash points for language conflicts lie within multi-ethnic Russia itself, rather than beyond its borders.<sup>6</sup> But that is another story entirely.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Zul'fagar Farzaliev, chief editor of *Svet Istiny*, quoted in *Argumenty i Fakty* (No 29, 20–26 July 2011). *Svet Istiny* is a Muslim newspaper published in Azerbaijan in both Azerbaijani and Russian language.

<sup>2</sup> According to official figures, at 1 June 2009 there were 200 Russian schools in Moldova and approximately 20 per cent of grammar schools conducted lessons in Russian. However, in 2005 there were 280 schools of this type, evidence of a trend towards a reduction in the number of Russian schools.

<sup>3</sup> Russian and Ukrainian are the closest related languages belonging to the Eastern Slavonic group of languages.

<sup>4</sup> In Soviet times Russian had the status of official language, making life easy and uncomplicated for Russians. The Russian school curriculum in each Soviet republic did include study of the local language. However, I have met almost no Russians living beyond Russia's borders who spoke the local language.

<sup>5</sup> *В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят*. The English equivalent is: "When in Rome, do as Romans do."

<sup>6</sup> For example, REGNUM news agency reported that protest meetings were organised in defence of the Russian language in Tatarstan and Bashkiria in April this year. Following a decision by the governments of these two constituent republics of Russia, all children must now follow the same school programme, irrespective of ethnic background. As a result, ethnic Russians must learn Tatar as part of a common language curriculum, studying alongside native Tatar speakers. The protest meetings elicited no official comment from the authorities. However, parents and others who took part in street protests have been subject to open harassment, while their children have suffered problems at school.

*Dr Rogozhina is Professor of Russian Language in the Faculty of Philology at St Petersburg State University and Vice-Director of the Secretariat of MAPRYAL. Part I of this article appeared in the spring 2011 issue of the SCRSS Information Digest.*

Translated by Diana Turner.



*Русский язык и литература*  
*Книги на русском языке*

LANGUAGE LEARNING MATERIALS  
AND LITERATURE IN RUSSIAN  
FROM  
THE EUROPEAN BOOKSHOP



We offer an extensive range of Russian books including textbooks, dictionaries, fiction, poetry, non-fiction, children's books, audiobooks, DVDs, subscriptions & language learning resources.

Come and visit our bookshop in central London, less than a 5 minute walk from Piccadilly Circus.

Tel: 020 7734 5259  
E-mail: [direct@esb.co.uk](mailto:direct@esb.co.uk)



Or visit us online today @

**[www.russianbookshop.co.uk](http://www.russianbookshop.co.uk)**

Why not follow us on Facebook & Twitter?



The European Bookshop



european books



**THE  
EUROPEAN  
BOOKSHOP**

For trade enquiries: European Schoolbooks Ltd. The Runnings, Cheltenham, GL51 9PQ  
Tel: 01242 245252 • E-mail: [direct@esb.co.uk](mailto:direct@esb.co.uk) • Web: [www.eurobooks.co.uk](http://www.eurobooks.co.uk)

# Charity Reports

---

## Chernobyl Children's Life Line

By Christine Breden, Chair of Princes Risborough Link

Can you remember the Chernobyl disaster back in April 1986? It is now twenty-five years since that event, but it was recently highlighted in the news, following the latest nuclear accident in Japan.

Belarus was the region hit most by the Chernobyl disaster with 70 per cent of the fallout landing on its territory and around one fifth of its land seriously affected. The rest of the Belarus countryside was affected by very low-level background radiation. By 1990 it was established that 20 per cent of the country's forests and well over 250,000 hectares of agricultural land had been contaminated. It is estimated today that several million people still live in contaminated areas where there is no access to 'clean' food or water. Older people, in particular, continue to till their fields, keep livestock and poultry, and eat contaminated fruit and vegetables grown on the land. The Chernobyl plant was closed in December 2000 and it is estimated that it will take up to 400 years to rid Belarus of the contamination caused by the explosion.

The emerging picture of the impact on children born after the disaster shows a rise in childhood cancers such as leukaemia, tumours and thyroid cancers. Some are also born deformed. Those children are now having families of their own and it is the next generation that the Chernobyl Children's Life Line is trying to help.

The Chernobyl Children's Life Line is a charity formed in 1991 by Victor Mizzi. There are now over 145 Links (local groups) throughout the UK. These are all run by volunteers who raise funds to bring groups of children to the UK for respite care. Each year we bring over approximately 3,000 children in groups of eight to twenty-five for

a four-week break. It costs about £500 to bring each child to the UK, covering air fare, insurance and passport costs.

We bring the children over for four weeks to boost their immune systems by providing them with clean food and healthy outdoor activities. At the age of 11, the age at which we host the children, they are starting into puberty. Giving them a break here at this time in their lives has been found to clean out their thyroid gland, where the radiation collects. When they go back home and their bodies begin changing, they start with a 'clean sheet'.



Children invited by the Princes Risborough Link meet the Motley Morris men, a traditional Welsh group

Every child has medical clearance to come to the UK and will have been chosen for respite care for one or more of the following reasons:

- They have had cancer and are now in remission after treatment
- They may suffer from frequent colds or similar because their immune systems are degraded
- They live in one of the more heavily contaminated parts of Belarus
- The child and their family (probably their parents as children) will have been evacuated previously from a contaminated area, so have had to restart their lives
- They may have other illnesses related to the situation in Belarus or have recently recovered from an operation

Many of the Links each year are looking for host families. A network of families and helpers, known as Host Supports, support each host family when they take two children into their home. For five days each week the children participate in planned activities organised by the Link. These include canoeing, morris dancing, horse riding, archery, swimming, tennis, football, outings to zoos and museums. Most of these activities will have been donated to the Link by local businesses, churches and other organisations.

By welcoming two children into their home and caring for them as if they were their own, host families are giving the children a holiday of a lifetime. Host families don't over-indulge or spoil the children, but allowing them to enjoy the comforts of their home and join in with family activities, as well as organised group trips, makes for a very special time for these children.

If you would like to help the Chernobyl Children's Life Line as a host family or supporter, or would just like some more information, please take a look at our website: [www.ccll.org.uk](http://www.ccll.org.uk).

## **Child Welfare in Russia 1973–2011: An Overview**

By Richard Norton, ChildAid to Russia  
and the Republics

ChildAid transforms the lives of children and young people in Russia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, working with country partners to reduce poverty and relieve suffering through health and education initiatives. Historically, ChildAid's first focus was Russia when the founder Jane Ellis formed the charity Aid to the Russian Christians in 1973. ChildAid (as it became known in 2006) primarily worked on increasing awareness surrounding the state of the Russian Church and Christians imprisoned, sent to labour camps or executed on account of their faith during the Stalin and Khrushchev purges.

ChildAid's work evolved in response to the changing political, economic and social situation in the region, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the transition to a market-based economy. Poverty increased in Russia from around 10 per cent in the 1980s to around 30 per cent in 1993, with families and those with disabilities most at risk. From 1991 ChildAid strove to aid churches in supporting the vulnerable in their communities through provisions of food, clothing, medical supplies and bedding to orphanages and homes for the elderly and disabled.

Today Russia remains a key area of concern to ChildAid. Despite increasing wealth in the country, inequality prevails with 40 per cent of the population receiving less income in real terms than they did in 1991. This rising inequality has disproportionately affected children and families. Additionally, the 2008 financial crisis, together with falling oil prices, has contributed to a 30 per cent increase in the number of people living in poverty in Russia. Russia's state committee on statistics reported an increase to 24.5 million living under the poverty line in the first three months of 2009, with families increasingly at risk. Furthermore, economist Alexander Butukhanov links these economic inequalities to social tensions and potentially destructive behaviour.

By working with local project partners in the region, ChildAid supports vulnerable and disabled children, their families and orphans. ChildAid supports children and families most at risk with provisions of necessary items such as food, firewood and warm clothing, as well as helping them to access their state benefit entitlements and giving respite breaks. In order to transform children's lives, ChildAid encourages and supports school participation, providing some of the neediest with school travel costs.

Alongside this social welfare, ChildAid supports children's wellbeing. For orphans and institutionalised children, ChildAid nurtures emotional support, as well as practical living skills, health and sex education. Additionally, ChildAid empowers

young people leaving institutional care by providing health, behavioural and emotional support, and life skills. ChildAid also encourages and supports Christian parents to foster a child in their loving home.

ChildAid also provides free therapeutic rehabilitative services, psychological counselling and day care for disabled children. These services allow disabled children, who are often marginalised by society, to gain inclusion and greater independence. Furthermore, such services provide vital support to families, preventing their children from being institutionalised.

ChildAid seeks to be guided by its Christian principles in helping children, regardless of their faith, in order to transform their lives. Through both short and long-term initiatives, ChildAid works towards finding practical solutions to these under-publicised problems. For more information or to support the charity, our contact details are:

ChildAid  
PO Box 200  
Bromley BR1 1QF  
Tel: 020 8460 6046  
Email: [info@childaidrr.org.uk](mailto:info@childaidrr.org.uk)  
Web: [www.childaidrr.org.uk](http://www.childaidrr.org.uk)

## Book Reviews

---

### **Total War: From Stalingrad to Berlin**

**By Michael Jones (John Murray, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-84854-229-7, Hbk, 325pp, £25.00)**

The sheer scope of the disaster of the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June 1941, and its final defeat by Soviet and Allied forces in May 1945, is impossible to contemplate by those who have never suffered total war.

Michael Jones, a military historian, has returned to the subject once more, following his previous books *Stalingrad: How the Red*

*Army Triumphed; Leningrad: State of Siege* and *The Retreat: Hitler's First Defeat*. This time he examines the human cost to the Soviet people who experienced the loss of 27 million lives and the destruction of territory housing 40 per cent of the population of the USSR.



Soviet troops, commanded by Major General Guryev, who distinguished themselves at the Battle of Stalingrad, 1942 (SCRSS Photo Library)

He records the Soviet military misjudgements that occurred before the renowned Soviet generals turned the tide against the invaders at Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad. How this was done in the face of the initially superior German military machine has been the subject of many Soviet, German and Western histories.

What is often forgotten or misrepresented is the will of the Soviet people to sacrifice their lives to liberate their country and to seek vengeance for the inhuman atrocities the Germans had inflicted on them and their land.

Michael Jones recounts the personal memories of members of the Red Army – women and men – and quotes war

correspondents such as Vasily Grossman, Pavel Antolovsky, Konstantin Simonov, Ilya Ehrenburg and cameraman Valentin Orlyankin, who were in the front line of all the major battles. He concludes: "These men and women were not fighting as part of a robotic mass. Red Army soldiers' voices testify to the desperate pain felt over the loss of each individual life."

Many of those interviewed were women combatants – snipers, machine gunners and artillery commanders. They had seen such mindless destruction as the German army retreated – mass hangings, villagers herded into barns and burned to death, the mass extermination of the Ukrainian Jews – that they were imbued with a desire to kill all Germans.

So did the soldiers who discovered 'typhus camps' where old people, women and children were imprisoned without shelter, food and water, and infected with typhus in order to kill the Soviet troops who liberated them.

The final straw was the discovery of the extermination camps at Majdanek, Auschwitz / Birkenau and Treblinka. Here the full scale of the Nazi genocide programme was laid bare. The Soviet forces had never encountered such slaughter on an industrial scale and were barely able to come to terms with it, even after all they had seen before.

It is here that Michael Jones counters the current view of anti-Soviet historians that the behaviour of the Red Army when it entered Germany was that of savage brutes indistinguishable from the Nazis. He explains the effect on a victorious army, which has passed through unimaginable horrors inflicted on its own people, when it conquers the enemy's land and has been exhorted to "Kill a German".

Some Red Army troops lost all control, while others retained their discipline and showed considerable restraint. Soviet war photographer Yevgeny Khaldei, seeing the terrible state of the German civilians and, especially, children, began to comprehend

that "the Germans could also be victims, that the war might be terrible for everyone".

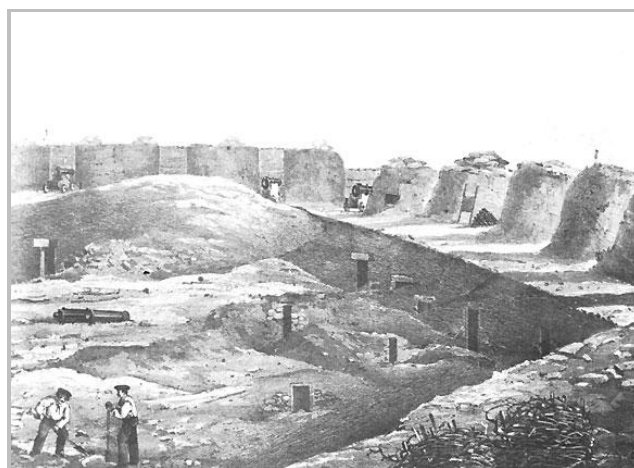
Soviet military leaders called for the restoration of order in occupied territories and any act of indiscipline was to be punished severely. Fresh orders were issued that said Soviet forces were liberating the German people from fascism. To turn from the path of vengeance was painful but, in the words of Lieutenant Andrei Eshpai, "We tried to be different".

*Jean Turner*

Note: Michael Jones will talk on *Total War – From Stalingrad to Berlin* at the SCRSS on Friday 18 November 7pm (see page 4 for details).

**Crimea**  
**By Orlando Figes (Penguin Books, 2011, ISBN: 978-0-141-01350-3, Pbk, £12.99)**

Writing this review as I recover from a bunion operation in 2011, I am very glad not to have been one of the soldiers in the British Army during the Crimean War who had amputations without chloroform. Sir John Hall, the chief medical officer, said: "The smart of a knife is a powerful stimulant and it is much better to hear a man bawl lustily, than sink into a silent grave."



The Fourth Bastion in Sevastopol, from a drawing by N Berg. Lev Tolstoy served here from 1854–5 (SCRSS Library)

This is one of the fascinating facts I gained from reading this engaging book, which links

this forgotten war with the trials of soldiers in the First World War and the current situation regarding the return of Crimean territory to Russia from the Ukraine. In his introduction, Figes encourages readers to be “patient in the early chapters (or even skip over them)” to get to the exciting descriptions of the battles of Alma, Inkerman, Balaclava and the siege of Sevastopol. However, the chapters about the causes of the war are very interesting. Figes’ main theory is that the war was religious in nature, a fact ignored by historians who have focused on the war as part of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. As Figes says: “until the religious wars of our own age, it seemed implausible that a petty quarrel over some churchwarden’s keys should entangle the great powers in a major war.”

However, it is in the descriptions of the battles (based on many British, Russian and French primary sources) that the book really comes to life. Often too reminiscent of the blunders made in the First World War, the soldiers of all sides were led by elderly, incompetent generals (the phrase “lions led by donkeys” originated in this conflict), and were ill equipped and supplied. All the armies used muskets, bayonets and cavalry charges, except for the French Army which had modern rifles. The siege of Sevastopol (October 1854–September 1855) was the first major use of trench warfare, with all the associated traumas. The Russians, of course, used “Generals January and February” to help them, leading to terrible sufferings from exposure among the ill-clad British troops on the Inkerman Heights. Many of the amputations mentioned above were due to frostbite. Eventually, however, the British, French and Turkish troops won through and took Sevastopol.

In the aftermath of the war serfdom was abolished in Russia, the British army reformed and many medical advances made. However, the human cost of the war was horrific: 700,000 soldiers killed and many more maimed. This was the war in which the role of the common soldier was recognised for the first time: the rise of Tommy Atkins and his like, commemorated on the hundreds of memorials erected

around Britain and France. It really was the first modern war in all aspects. I really recommend this exciting and exhilarating read about a neglected and bloody conflict.

*Fiona Wright*

## **The Besieged: A Story of Survival**

**By Caroline Walton (Biteback Publishing Ltd, September 2011, ISBN: 9781849541473, Hbk, 288pp, £17.99)**

This is a marvellous book, a heady mixture of travelogue to modern St Petersburg, memories of Soviet Leningrad and the early years of post-communism in Samara, and all linked together by the memories of the *blokadniki*, recorded by the author. In the end, it is a love letter to St Petersburg, to Russian endurance and to life itself.



Taking a corpse for burial, Siege of Leningrad, 1942  
(SCRSS Photo Library)

Like the author, your life will be changed by reading the memories – all heart-rending, some terrible – of the many *blokadniki*

(survivors of the Blockade of Leningrad 1941–3). We read the tales of soldiers, dancers, actors, musicians and children, and begin to understand what it was that helped them and other human beings, when pushed to extremes, to survive. Their lives were scarred by their experiences during the war, but they learned to appreciate the smallest things in life and to be happy with very little. The life of the collective and the need to be useful kept many of them going through the toughest times.



Collecting Water on Nevsky Prospect, Siege of Leningrad, 1942 (SCRSS Photo Library)

Each section is prefaced by an extract of poetry written by some of the famous authors of the siege: Bergoltz, Akhmatova and Alexeeva. The words of the poets chime with the interviews of the *blokadniki* and lend an extra dimension to the writing. At the end of the book are useful appendices providing historical information, a dramatis personae of the people mentioned in the text and a reading list of autobiographies of many siege survivors. The author also includes a modern day love story and this personal dimension makes the book very accessible to English readers.

We should be very grateful to Caroline Walton for recording the memories of the *blokadniki* and presenting their terrible stories in such a literary and life-affirming manner.

*Fiona Wright*

Note: Caroline Walton talks on *The Besieged – Surviving Catastrophe* at the SCRSS on Friday 7 October 7pm (see page 3 for details).

## **From the Russian Press**

### **Russian Fisheries**

There was good news for the Russian fish industry with an even larger catch expected in 2011 than in record-breaking 2009, yet high-quality, cheap local fish was still not reaching the shelves of Russian supermarkets ('Na bezryb'e, *Argumenty i Fakty*, No 29, 2011).

For Russian fishermen, bureaucracy often meant it was easier to sell their catch abroad than bring it home. The Russian Fisheries organisation had introduced regulations requiring that catches should not weigh in at more than five per cent the quantity provisionally declared. It was impossible to estimate exactly the amount of fish in a hold, yet Russian customs officials refused to accept any corrections and imposed fines for overloading, even when fish were caught in the Russian Federation's own fishing waters. Fishing regulations were the same for all companies, irrespective of size. This meant that smaller enterprises, which employed fishermen in distant corners of the country, could barely make ends meet.

On land, Russian supermarkets were, in principle, ready to buy local fish, but distribution and quality packaging had not yet been resolved. Distribution costs needed to be regulated with transportation companies. Most fishermen could not handle processing even if they wanted to, due to lack of modern equipment. Their



profits were only sufficient to cover current outgoings, not investment, and banks would not loan against boats. A solution might be a change in the law to allow fisherman to use part of their fishing quotas as security. A key issue was unscrupulous traders who purchased fish cheaply and then sold on at high retail prices. This might be helped by commercial interventions, for example preferential loans to a number of major companies to enable them to buy fish at normal prices and get a reasonably priced product into the shops. For the time being, specialist chains of fish shops were still only an idea, with entrepreneurs unwilling to invest without state guarantees.

## Visa Regime

*Konsul*, a diplomatic journal published in St Petersburg, interviewed Vladimir Timoshenko, head of the city's Consular Department, on the visa regime ('Razmyshleniya na puti, vedushchem k otmene vizovogo rezhima', No 2 [25], 2011). He highlighted recent changes to the visa regime between Russia and the countries of the Schengen Agreement. All consulates now worked through dedicated visa centres. However, under the pretext of reducing queues, the new regime seemed to be more about making money: under the agreement, visas should not cost more than 35 euros, but visa centres were charging 56 euros.

The gradual move towards lifting the visa regime with European countries was, in principle, positive, in particular for popular tourist destinations such as the former Yugoslavia and Turkey. However, there had been some unexpected consequences to the lifting of visas with Turkey. In the past Russians had simply paid \$20 at the border for a 90-day visa. Under the new system, Turkey was only allowing Russians to stay for 30 days, yet many had holiday homes there. Timoshenko believed that it would take a lot longer to agree a change to the visa regime with the European Union. In his personal opinion, there was no need to abolish the visa regime entirely, rather it should be simplified and made cheaper.

Visas should only be a means of control at entry and exit, and a way of raising revenue.

## Moral Dilemma

The All-Russian Lenin Pioneer Organisation was created in 1922 to develop a new generation to build communism. Notwithstanding its ideological objectives, *Argumenty i Fakty* reflected that it had also sought to teach children the difference between right and wrong, leaving a void when it was dismantled in 1991 ('Pokoleniye na prodazhu', No 21, 2011). The newspaper interviewed Vitaly Mansky about the differences in morality between today's younger generation and Russians over 40 years old – the subject of two documentary films he had made, *Devstvennost'* (*Chastity*) and *Nasha Rodina* (*Our Homeland*).

In Mansky's view, the only moral reference point for young Russians today was television. He lambasted the reality TV show *Dom-2* (*House-2*), which enjoyed huge ratings. He had interviewed participants in the show for his film *Devstvennost'* and had been shocked by the girls' willingness to sleep around to get what they wanted. They did not see this as immoral, but were convinced that the ends justified the means. Mansky believed that the Internet was largely to blame and urged the Russian Government to take firm action. In particular, there was a need for security controls to prevent children viewing pornography online. He was scathing about the Russian social networking site VKontakte (InContact): almost all the Russian political elite had their own VKontakte page, yet the site contained a huge amount of pornographic material. He called for an amendment to current legislation to make owners of online resources responsible for all content held on their portals. The Government needed to stop looking over its shoulder at the social networking site owner lobby, which always objected to regulation on the grounds it could lose customers to Facebook.

*Summarised and translated by Diana Turner*



# SCRSS £50,000 Library Appeal

## Save our unique resource!

Our specialist SCRSS Library and Archive have extensive collections, gained over eight-seven years of promoting positive British-Russian cultural and professional relations. They provide a unique and important resource available not only to London but the whole of the UK and the world.

The SCRSS Library and Archive are now under threat due to ever rising service costs and lack of external funding. We have to face up to the fact that the Society needs an urgent injection of money in order to survive into the next decade.

The SCRSS Library Appeal is aimed at raising £50,000 to:

- Catalogue and digitise our unique library collections
- Upgrade our equipment
- Make further essential improvements to the safety and security of our premises

Please give generously!

---

### SCRSS Library Appeal 2011

Name/Organisation -----

Address -----

-----

----- Postcode-----

Donation:

£10 ☐    £20 ☐    £50 ☐    £100 ☐    £500 ☐    Other (please state) £-----

Please make cheques payable to “**SCRSS**” and send to: Library Appeal, Society for Co-operation in Russian and Soviet Studies, 320 Brixton Road, SW9 6AB. Use the Gift Aid Declaration on the reverse to make your donation of even greater value.

# GIFT AID DECLARATION

Name of Charity: **Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies**  
**Registered Charity No 1104012**

## Details of Donor

Title..... Forename(s)..... Surname.....

Address .....

.....

..... Post Code.....

## I want the charity to treat

\* the enclosed donation of £.....

\* all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise

\* all donations I have made since 6 April 2004, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise

(\*delete as appropriate) as Gift Aid donations

Signature ..... Date.....

## Notes

- **You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 20p for each £1 you give).**
- You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the charity.
- If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
- If you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment tax return
- If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief ask the charity.

**Return to: The Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies, 320, Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB, Telephone: 020 7274 2282, Fax: 020 7274 3230**

# Listings

---

## Art

### Royal Academy of Arts

Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1,  
Tel: 0844 209 0051 (bookings), Web:  
[www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)

29 October 2011–22 January 2012: *Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915–1935*.

Fired by the Constructivist art that emerged in Russia from circa 1915, Russian avant-garde architects transformed this radical artistic language into three dimensions, creating structures that reflect the energy and optimism of the new Soviet state. The drive to forge a new Socialist society in Russia encouraged synthesis between radical art and architecture. The exhibition will compare large-scale photographs of extant buildings with relevant Constructivist drawings and paintings, vintage photographs and periodicals. Many of the works have never been shown in the UK before. It is organised by the Royal Academy of Arts in collaboration with the SMCA-Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki, and with the participation of the Shchusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow.

## Business

### Russia House Business Networking

Heeltap Bar, White Hart Yard, Borough High Street, SE1 1NX

Russia House Business Networking takes place on the last Tuesday of the month from 6pm. It is a casual stand-up-and-mingle cash bar event for those in or wishing to connect with the world of Russian trade. Bring your business cards for networking and the vodka raffle.

## Film

### 25<sup>th</sup> Leeds International Film Festival

Web: [www.leedsfilm.com](http://www.leedsfilm.com)

The film festival runs from Thursday 3 November to Sunday 20 November.

## Worldonlinecinema

Web: [www.worldonlinecinema.com](http://www.worldonlinecinema.com)

The Worldonlinecinema website includes a comprehensive list of DVDs focusing on European and world cinema, British and documentary cinema, as well as literature on film. DVD listings include a short description and biographical information. DVDs are in the original language with English subtitles. Worldonlinecinema is run by Julian Whiting, J Whiting Books, 46 St Olaves Rd, York YO30 7AL.

## Music

### Alan Bush Music Trust

Following the success of the CD of the first recording of Alan Bush's *Concert Suite for Cello and Orchestra, Op 37* (LX7263 Dutton Epoch), the Alan Bush Music Trust is now planning a further CD and an appeal has been launched to raise the necessary funds. The new CD will include three of Alan Bush's orchestral compositions: *Dance Overture Op 12*, *Dorian Passacaglia and Fugue, Op 52* and the *Lascaux Symphony, Op 98*. It will be recorded by the Royal Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Martin Yates. For information, contact: Dr Rachel O'Higgins, Hon Secretary, Alan Bush Music Trust, Email [info@alanbushtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@alanbushtrust.org.uk). Note: Professor Alan Bush was a Vice-President of the Society for several years until his death.

### Leeds Town Hall

Box Office: 0113 224 3801, Web: [www.leedstownhall.co.uk](http://www.leedstownhall.co.uk)

Saturday 8 October 7.30pm: Mussorgsky's *Night on a Bald Mountain* (arranged by Rimsky-Korsakov), Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto* and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The concert is performed by the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Yuri Simonov, with Nikita Boriso-Glebsky (violin).

### Royal Festival Hall

South Bank Centre, London

10 November 2011 7.30pm: *A Night under the Stars: From Russia With Love*. The concert is held in aid of The Passage, an

organisation that helps London's homeless. The Orion Orchestra will be conducted by Tony Purser, with Joanna MacGregor (piano), Charlie Siem (violin), Richard Harwood (cello). The repertoire includes: Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (excerpts) and *1812 Overture*, Rachmaninov's *Vocalise*, Shostakovich's *Gadfly (Romance)* and *Piano Concerto No 2*, and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet (Dance of the Nights)*. Booking Tel: 020 7592 1856, Email: tickets@passage.org.uk

## Publications

### **The Struggle for Civil Society in Central Asia: Crisis and Transformation**

By Charles Buxton (Kumarian Press, May 2011, ISBN: 978-1-56549-299-8, Pbk, 256pp, £21.50, b/w photographs)

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NGOs and civil society (CS) activists in Central Asia found themselves struggling to set up new organisations that would fight for democracy, sustainable development and social justice. This book describes the gradual establishment of the CS sector in Central Asia. It shows how the neo-liberal policies of international agencies failed to spur progress in the 1990s and how national government control gradually re-asserted itself after 2000.

### **Symbolism in Nineteenth-Century Ballet**

By Margaret Fleming-Markarian (Peter Lang, 2011, ISBN: 978-3-0343-0267-8, Pbk, 290pp, £42.00, 18 illus)

This book investigates allegorical meaning in the ballets *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* principally by examining their original librettos and costume designs, as well as considering their surviving choreographic legacy. Margaret Fleming-Markarian trained at the Benesh Institute in London and went on to teach dancing, including ballet, for many years. Now retired, she researches the history of ballet and is a member of the Royal Academy of Dance.

## Radio Drama

### **BBC Radio 4: Life and Fate**

Kenneth Branagh will star in *Life and Fate* on BBC Radio 4 from 18–24 September 2011, an ambitious eight-hour dramatisation of Vasily Grossman's epic masterpiece set during the Battle of Stalingrad. In support of this major dramatisation, Radio 4 will tell the remarkable story of the author in a documentary on his work – *The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman* – and three readings from his front line journalism. It will also be reflected in a special edition of *Start the Week*.

## Russian Language

### **Russian at the Abbey Centre**

34 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BU

Classes at four levels, including new beginners, start again in September. For further details, email Charles Stewart at charles0207@yahoo.co.uk.

*The SCRSS cannot accept responsibility for incorrect information or unsatisfactory products. Always check with the organisation concerned before sending money. Reviews and articles are the opinions of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the SCRSS.*

*Copyright notice: All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner. © SCRSS 2011*

---

---

**Printed and published by:**  
**SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB**

**Tel: 020 7274 2282, Fax: 020 7274 3230**

**Email: ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk**

**Website: www.scrss.org.uk**

**Registered Charity No 1104012**

**Editor: Diana Turner**