

Contents

Fyodor Lopukhov and the Revolution in Russian Ballet	1
SCRSS News	3
Soviet Memorial Trust Fund News	8
2018 FIFA World Cup Russia	9
Book Reviews	13

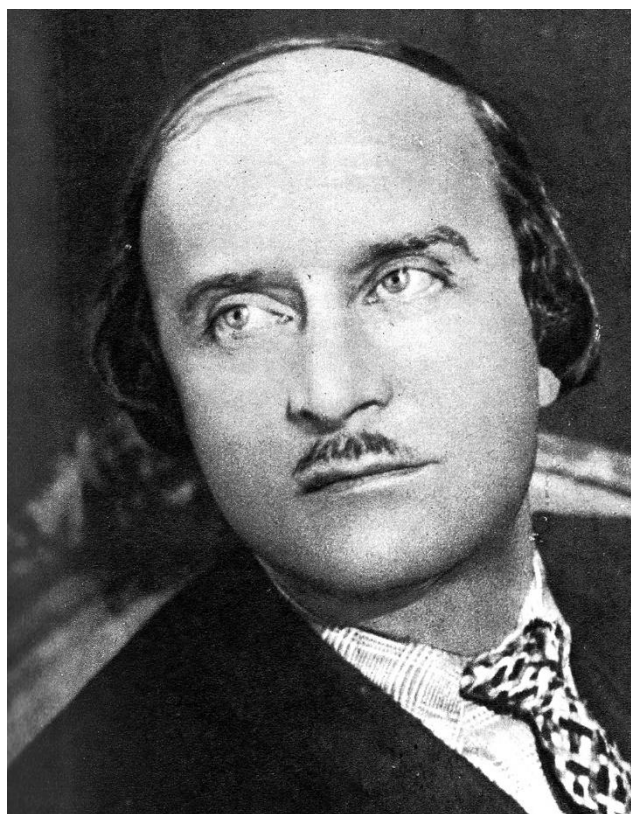
Feature

Fyodor Lopukhov and the Revolution in Russian Ballet

By Tony Devereux

As Russia's national art, ballet was inevitably impacted by the Revolution. It began with the First Revolution in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War. The signal event was the Bloody Sunday of 9 January (Old Style calendar – OS), when hundreds were shot on the streets of St Petersburg, while theatres remained open. Notably, the latter included the Mariinsky Theatre, where Marius Petipa was staging a benefit performance for the ballerina Olga Preobrazhenskaya.

The next day the ballet company was in ferment. Sympathies were sparked one way or the other. Young Anna Pavlova was one of those who were conscience-stricken. Dissension continued, alongside the country-wide agitation, until the Tsar issued the October Manifesto in October 1905, which established a State Duma and, later, the Russian Constitution of 1906.



Fyodor Lopukhov (SCRSS Library)

In that same year of revolution, the company was joined by a young man recognised as the leading figure in post-revolutionary Russian ballet: Fyodor Lopukhov. A lifetime later he wrote about the traumas of 1905 in his autobiography *Sixty Years in Ballet*. These included the shocking suicide of its young male principal Sergei Legat, who was deeply upset over the turmoil within the company. The Second and Third Revolutions of February and October 1917 (OS) brought the Tsar's abdication and the Bolsheviks' seizure of power, but, says Lopukhov, the cleft in the Mariinsky opened by the First Revolution, between those for and against, never healed, even if they were obliged to partner on stage. The Revolution found more resonance in ballet than in other stage arts, he adds.

Ballet had made enormous progress in Russia during the 1800s, in contrast with stagnation in Western Europe and despite Russia's reliance on French ballet masters. Its advance escaped Western notice, but in the early 1900s it broke through sensationally with Sergei Diaghilev's Paris Seasons and Pavlova's international touring company. Iconic names associated with Diaghilev were choreographer Mikhail Fokine, ballerina Tamara Karsavina, and Vaslav Nijinsky. When World War I began in 1914 Russian ballet was at its pinnacle – only for war to open another divide and create a diaspora of artistes outside their homeland. Nevertheless, performances continued in both St Petersburg (renamed Petrograd) and Moscow. Even in early 1918, during the upheaval following the October Revolution, Bruce Lockhart, Britain's envoy to the Bolsheviks, writes in his *Memoirs of a British Agent*: "On Sundays [in Moscow] we went to the ballet. Except that the Imperial box was crowded with 'comrades', the performance was the same as in Tsarist days, and excellent it was."

Lopukhov's progress was slow, he was seen as a rebel, although he declares that he did not associate with the underground groups reputed to exist within the company. Nevertheless, in *Sixty Years in Ballet* he makes clear his sympathy with revolutionary aims and ideals. He offers no complaint when the political climate later turned against him for a while, but instead looks for the faults in himself. Luck enabled him to transfer to the more tolerant Moscow Bolshoi in 1909. An invitation from his former tutor Nikolai Legat (brother of Sergei) took him to Paris in 1910, whence he left to tour America with his sister Lydia Lopukhova. But he suffered a breakdown and when Lydia remained in America, Fyodor returned to Russia. At this point, his career becomes rather obscure, although we know that he was in military service from 1914 to 1916. Lydia's exotic career eventually brought her to the UK where she acquired a link with our Society as the wife of John Maynard Keynes, one of the founders of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR (the original name of today's SCRSS).

From the end of 1916 Lopukhov's career began to take off again as a choreographer. Ironically, given his later prodigious output, his only surviving piece in today's repertoire from his early years is the clandestine Lilac Fairy variation in *Sleeping Beauty*. It was surreptitiously inserted for ballerina Lyubov Yegorova who, taking on the role, found no authentic original existed, Petipa having only provided a walk-on part for his daughter Maria (who was popular but not a classical dancer). Lopukhov's piece had to be passed off as genuine Petipa.

The Revolution and the ensuing Civil War drained the Mariinsky of nearly all its stars. Particularly dramatic was Karsavina's flight to the interventionist British forces in Northern Russia – a nightmare adventure as Lockhart called it. She settled here, a great gain for British ballet. Meanwhile, Lopukhov's fortunes gradually turned. In 1921 he was surprisingly chosen as artistic director of the former Mariinsky above the rival claims of Nikolai Legat. Lopukhov's revolutionary sympathies were probably decisive. Legat came here instead and set up a school, initially based in London, that preserves his name today. We owe much to the Revolution.

Lopukhov faced endless challenges rebuilding and restoring the depleted company, and recovering its unrivalled artistic heritage. There were those who demanded the complete abolition of ballet as an outdated bourgeois manifestation. Anatoly Lunacharsky, People's Commissar for Education in Lenin's government, is credited with being its defender. In fact, objective reading of ballet history shows the Revolution only added to the momentum started when Empress Anna founded the St Petersburg school in 1738. The momentum became an avalanche, extending interest in ballet to every layer of the population, including workers and peasants who had never seen it in tsarist times.

In 1944 Iris Morley, a press correspondent in Moscow, visited Leningrad soon after the end of the Nazis' unrelenting 872-day siege of the city. As she recorded in her book *Soviet Ballet*, she was astonished to find the

great theatre being restored with priority over everything else. What would have happened in London if Sadlers Wells needed restoration, she wondered. The company itself had been evacuated, leaving only Olga Jordan and a small group to dance through the blockade. Indeed, from the beginnings of Soviet power, ballet had been promoted across the vast USSR with new or improved theatres and companies in Minsk, Kazan, Novosibirsk, Alma Ata, Tbilisi (whence came the famous dancer Vakhtang Chabukiani) and others too numerous to list, opening new cultural avenues and creating ballets hardly heard of in the West.

Lopukhov worked with tremendous energy. He provided the innovation that the times demanded, introducing words, singing, doll theatre and, particularly, acrobatics. His book illustrates two of his principal dancers, Olga Mungalova and Pyotr Gusyev, performing in a tree in *The Ice Maiden*. But he rejected the demand that as the Revolution had changed everything, everything in ballet had to change too. He valued ballet's heritage and was more conservative than his Moscow counterpart Kasyan Goleizovsky. Lopukhov is particularly remembered for *The Greatness of the Universe*, a pioneering abstract ballet set to Beethoven's *Symphony No 4*, which he produced with the volunteer Molodoy Ballet (Young Ballet) group in 1923. Naturally there were ballets with revolutionary themes – *Red Whirlwind* and *Red Poppy*. He is also credited with beginning the trend to *dramballet*, the fusion of drama and ballet.

But the taste for innovation faded, and he was obliged to give way to Agrippina Vaganova at the end of the 1920s, only to be appointed artistic director of the newly formed Leningrad Maly Ballet (now the Mikhailovsky) soon after. Here his collaboration with Shostakovich in the hugely successful *Bright Stream* brought a transfer to Moscow. But the political atmosphere was clouding and a notorious article in *Pravda* in 1936 spelt temporary disaster for them both. Interestingly, despite intensifying suspicion of foreigners at that time, ballerinas were among the few still

officially encouraged to meet them on diplomatic occasions, as Fitzroy Maclean, then serving in the British Embassy in Moscow, records in *Eastern Approaches*. But ballet did not always escape persecution, as related in the autobiography *I, Maya Plisetskaya*. Despite her father being shot, Plisetskaya remained dedicated to Russia. Marina Semyonova, hailed as the first great Soviet ballerina, who died in 2010 aged 102, lost her second husband in a purge.

Amazingly, Lopukhov came back, not once but many times. He was destined to hold his former position again in 1944–45 and 1951–56 in the now renamed Kirov. Thus, when he retired in 1956, he did so from the position he was appointed to in 1921. In his final phase his work did not give rise to controversy, rather he devoted himself to encouraging the work of younger choreographers. In his last year the company launched *Spartacus*, choreographed by Leonid Yakobson, whom he had put forward. Lopukhov had gone by the time it was premiered, but his contribution was significant. He provides a thoughtful study of it in *Sixty Years in Ballet*, the autobiography he completed in 1962. He died in Leningrad in 1973, aged 87.

Tony Devereux is grateful for his launch as a writer about ballet to the late Mary Clarke, Editor of the 'Dancing Times', in the 1980s. He also acted as an intermediary with 'Soviet Ballet', the corresponding magazine published in Moscow. Apart from writing on ballet, he is UK Editor for a German technical publishing company.

SCRSS News

Latest news by Ralph Gibson, Honorary Secretary, SCRSS, unless otherwise stated

SCRSS AGM 2018

The Society held its AGM on 19 May 2018. Meirian Jump, Archivist and Library

Manager at Marx Memorial Library and Workers' School (MML), updated our members on the background to its joint work with the SCRSS, and the recent response from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to an initial project outline submitted in early 2018. Guidance from the HLF regarding the bid approach will be considered by the SCRSS Council and the joint MML–SCRSS Working Group. The initial bid for a Resilient Heritage grant envisages undertaking preliminary work on the SCRSS collections, as well as looking at governance, audience surveys and fundraising. Meirian emphasised the long-term nature of the joint project (five to ten years), which also explores the possibility – subject to a successful further large capital bid for funds from the HLF – of the SCRSS transferring its office and collections to expanded premises at Marx House on Clerkenwell Green.

The Annual Report and Accounts were discussed and approved. The Honorary Secretary noted the very positive impact for the Society of the centenary of the Russian Revolution (see *SCRSS Digest*, Spring 2018). The Lenin photo exhibition commissioned by the North Wall Gallery in Oxford had provided a substantial boost to the Society's finances – from the exhibition fee and sales of the Society's mugs and the special centenary issue of the *SCRSS Digest*. The SCRSS Russian Language Seminar in 2017 had also boosted income. However, he noted that membership fees, as well as regular and one-off donations from members, still provided the bulk of the Society's income. The Honorary Treasurer noted the surplus in the accounts and thanks were expressed to all members for their continued support for the Society. The approved Annual Report and Accounts were sent to members already on our email list. If you are not on our email list, or would like a copy sent by post, contact the Honorary Secretary.

The meeting re-elected Michael Costello and Len Weiss to the SCRSS Council for a further three-year term each. Following the AGM, the SCRSS Council met to appoint the Executive Committee (EC). The full list of the Society's Honorary Officers and

Council Members is as follows: *Honorary Officers* – President: Professor Bill Bowring; Vice Presidents: Robert Chandler, Professor Robert Davies, Dr Kate Hudson, Dr David Lane and Dr Rachel O'Higgins. *SCRSS Council* – Philip Matthews (Chair); Kate Clark and Charles Stewart (Vice Chairs); Ralph Gibson (Honorary Secretary); Jean Turner (Honorary Treasurer); Christine Lindey (Exhibitions Officer); Andrew Jameson (EC); Len Weiss (EC); Bethany Aylward; Mel Bach; Christine Barnard; Michael Costello; Diana Turner. The EC is formed of the named officers and two additional members of the Council.

The AGM was followed by a screening of the new documentary *Red October: Revolution in Russia* directed and produced by Chris Reeves of Platform Films. The film features archive material taken from the SCRSS's 16mm film collection, as well as interviews with a number of the speakers at the centenary conference organised by the Russian Revolution Centenary Committee at TUC Congress House in November 2017. Copies of the DVD are on sale at the SCRSS.

SCRSS Library

In light of the recommendations from Professor Judith Pallot, President of BASEES, who produced an excellent 'academic review' of the SCRSS Soviet Collections last year, the SCRSS Council has decided to drop research fees for members. SCRSS membership will now allow free-of-charge access to all of the Society's holdings, excluding the SCRSS's own organisational archives, and subject to staff / volunteer availability. We will update the SCRSS website by the end of June to reflect this. To request access to the SCRSS Soviet Collections or to learn more about them, contact the Honorary Secretary by email. Please note: for the time being, weekday access to the Library is very limited. The Saturday openings provide the easiest way of accessing the Society's holdings (generally the first Saturday of each month but check the website for details).

Thanks are due to Council member Mel Bach, effectively our 'Honorary Librarian', together with the team of volunteers working on the library: Bethany Aylward, Nadia Bezkorvany, James Hardiman, Gordon Harris, Jane Rosen and Claire Weiss. They continue to make progress in cataloguing, removing duplicates, sorting shelves, classifying, labelling and other library jobs. Work continues on the History and Sports sections, and has been largely completed on the Education Section. The Children's Literature collection has been moved out of the basement and is currently being re-shelved on the top floor. The additional shelving installed in the basement earlier this year, with help from volunteer John Pirker, has allowed for much easier access to various subject areas located there.

Fiona Wright – A Tribute

The SCRSS was greatly saddened to hear of the death of Fiona Wright on 22 March 2018, following a long illness.

Fiona will be remembered as an inspiring and tirelessly enthusiastic teacher and promoter of Russian language and history.

She joined the SCRSS in 2000, was voted onto the SCRSS Council in 2011 and served as Chair in 2013–2014. Despite the unexpected diagnosis of her illness in late 2014, we are honoured that she remained a member of the Council until 2016. Fiona was an infectiously enthusiastic and proactive member of the SCRSS Council, sociable, always brimming with new ideas – and a brilliant hands-on organiser. Fiona also wrote many lively book reviews for the *SCRSS Digest*.

As a Russian language teacher, Fiona was active in the Russian Teachers Group (RTG) and had also served as its Chair. She contributed regular reports on the RTG's annual conferences to the *SCRSS Digest*, participated regularly in the SCRSS Russian Language Seminars, and kept the SCRSS Council abreast of developments in Russian language teaching and methodology.



Fiona Wright in November 2013

As a history teacher, Fiona was instrumental in proposing and organising the first two of three SCRSS Russian History Seminars that ran annually in November between 2012 to 2014. The seminars were aimed particularly at teachers of A-Level History and university students, covered key periods of Soviet history from World War II to The Thaw, and were delivered by leading historians and specialists on Soviet social, cultural and military history.

The SCRSS sends its sincere condolences to Fiona's family and friends.

Diana Turner

Lenin Exhibition

Following its successful run at the North Wall Gallery in Oxford, the *Lenin: Leader of the Russian Revolution* photo exhibition, with exhibits from the SCRSS Library, continues on display at the Society's premises until December 2018. Entry to the exhibition is free to members and non-members during our events and Saturday openings (check the website for details).



**THE
EUROPEAN
BOOKSHOP**

THE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES OF EUROPE

Russian Language and Literature

Discover our extensive range of Russian books including language learning resources, classic and contemporary literature, children's books, periodicals and much more...



Visit our **European Bookshop** in London
123 Gloucester Road SW7 4TE
or place your order online

www.russianbookshop.co.uk

We speak Russian and are happy to advise
you on the most suitable materials.

До скорой встречи!

Email: russian@esb.co.uk Telephone: 01242 245252

SCRSS Russian Language Seminar, 2018



Group photo in the garden, SCRSS Russian Language Seminar 2018

Our popular weekend Russian language seminar on 21–22 April 2018, organised in collaboration with the St Petersburg Association for International Co-operation, was led by two energetic and inspiring lecturers from St Petersburg State University. Tatiana Piotrovskaya, Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Philology & Language Culture Studies taught the Russian Language and Linguistics stream, while Dr Natalia Bogoliubova, Associate Professor in the Department of International Cultural and Humanitarian Co-operation, taught the Contemporary Russian Culture stream.



Natalia Bogoliubova (left) and Tatiana Piotrovskaya

Our lecturers provided up-to-the-minute insights into the current state of the Russian language, language teaching in Russia, Russia's internal and external cultural

policy, and contemporary Russian music, theatre, dance, art and museums.

Half of the twenty-two participants were professional teachers, translators and interpreters of Russian, with the group split almost evenly between SCRSS members and non-members. There was a lively and friendly atmosphere and, as usual, we were lucky with sunny weather, allowing use of the garden. Average ratings (out of 5) from the feedback forms were: booking and course administration 4.9; lecturers, lecture content and handouts 4.2; refreshments 4.4; facilities 4; price 4. Our welcome pack was kindly sponsored by European Schoolbooks.

Thanks to the following SCRSS volunteers and staff who made this event possible: Ralph Gibson, Diana Turner, Jean Turner, John Cunningham, Nadia Bezkorvany, Chris Barnard and Andrew Jameson.

Diana Turner

Membership Renewal

A substantial number of members will receive a membership renewal notice with this issue of the *SCRSS Digest*. As always, an early response is of great assistance to the Society – both financially and in terms of avoiding further reminders. Please check that you are paying the correct membership fee (see www.scrss.org.uk/membership.htm), in particular if you pay by standing order. We accept payment by bank transfer, standing order, cheque or cash. Please contact the Honorary Secretary for the Society's bank details to make a bank transfer, set up a standing order to pay your membership fee annually and / or make regular monthly donations.

The SCRSS is grateful to all members who 'top up' their membership fee with a donation. Donations are also eligible for UK Gift Aid, which provides a further substantial benefit for the Society. Let us know if you are a UK income tax-payer and are not sure if you have completed a Gift Aid form for the SCRSS.

Next Events

Saturday 2 June 2018, 11.00–14.00

Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members and Exhibition *Lenin: Leader of the Russian Revolution*

Free admission to exhibition.

Saturday 2 June, 14.00

Talk: Dr Kate Hudson, General Secretary of CND, on *Russia and the New Cold War*

Explores the current stand-off between Russia and NATO, the history of relations between the USSR and the West, and the period since the collapse of the USSR in 1992. *Normal admission fees apply.*

Saturday 7 July 2018, 11.00–16.00

Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members and Exhibition *Lenin: Leader of the Russian Revolution*

Free admission to exhibition.

Please note: Full details for all the above events are available on the SCRSS website at www.scrss.org.uk/cinemaevents.htm.

Events take place at the SCRSS, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB, unless otherwise stated. Admission fees: films and lectures £3.00 (SCRSS members), £5.00 (non-members); other events as indicated. Please note: dogs are not permitted on SCRSS premises, with the exception of guide dogs.

Soviet Memorial Trust Fund News

Latest news by Ralph Gibson, Honorary Secretary, SMTF

Holocaust Memorial Day 2018

The annual Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) event at the Soviet War Memorial and inside the Imperial War Museum was held on 26

January, as HMD itself fell on a Saturday this year. The wreath-laying at the Soviet War Memorial, and at Southwark Council's Holocaust Memorial Tree located nearby, was followed by a moving and informative event inside the Imperial War Museum, hosted by the Mayor of Southwark. In addition to dignitaries from Southwark and several other London boroughs, the event was attended by diplomats from several CIS countries, war veterans and representatives of a broad range of organisations. Holocaust survivor John Dobai gave a moving testimony of his experiences during the war and his struggle for survival. The event concluded with the lighting of memorial candles and the Kaddish.

Victory Day

Hundreds of people gathered in the sunshine on 9 May to mark the 73rd anniversary of the Allied Victory over Fascism. The Mayor of Southwark, Cllr Charlie Smith, noted that the Borough is proud to host the Soviet War Memorial, which will mark its 20th anniversary in 2019. A small-scale copy located in the Mayor's office is a daily reminder to all holders of that position and attracts the attention of many visitors. The Russian Ambassador, HE Alexander Yakovenko, delivered a brief address, noting: "Seventy-three years have gone since the end of the Second World War, but the 9th of May still remains our biggest holiday. We have no other day that reminds us so powerfully of the value of life and the high cost of our freedom paid by all those who fought against Nazism. The Great Patriotic War was the battle for the future of all mankind. The Allied victory became a defining event for the whole world. On this day we all share the memory of our fathers and grandfathers who bravely fought on the frontlines and selflessly toiled on the home front. The memory of them lives with the veterans, who remember this great tragedy, with those who were born after the war, and with very young people, our children, who live in the XXI century. We thank all those who fought this horrible war for their valour and self-sacrifice, modesty and courage. Our gratitude to your

generation is immense. We will always remain faithful to your legacy and will pass this memory on to our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.” Once again, the presence of UK and Russian war veterans attracted significant attention. After the formal ceremony concluded, the Russian Ambassador invited guests and members of the public to a reception nearby to raise a toast “To Victory”.

The Soviet War Memorial is located in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, adjacent to the Imperial War Museum in London. For more information about the Memorial and events organised by the SMTF, see the SCRSS website at www.scrss.org.uk/sovietmemorial.htm.

Feature

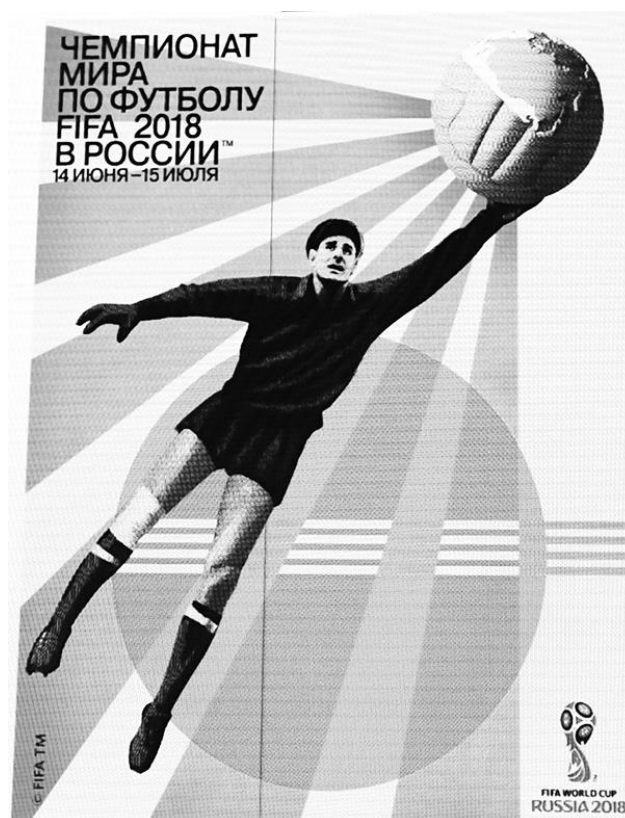
2018 FIFA World Cup Russia

By Diana Turner

This year’s FIFA World Cup opens in Russia on 14 June and runs until 15 July. It’s the first time since its inauguration in 1930 that either Russia – or the USSR before it – has hosted the championship. Compare that to Italy, France and Brazil, which have each hosted it twice; even the USA, as a relative newcomer to soccer, had the honour in 1994. That’s why this major international sporting event matters so much to Russia – just as the Moscow Olympics did in 1980 and the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014.

Eleven host cities are welcoming national football teams and fans: Moscow, St Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Nizhny Novgorod, Ekaterinburg, Kazan, Saransk, Samara, Volgograd, Rostov-on-Don and Sochi. These cities are all located in the European part of Russia, with Ekaterinburg the furthest east, at the border of Europe and Asia. However, the pre-championship FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour around the host country extends much further, taking the Trophy on a record-breaking 123-day

journey across 26,000 km and twenty-four Russian cities – from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok.¹



The official 2018 FIFA World Cup poster – close-up from a large panel at its launch in the Moscow Metro in November 2017 (image courtesy of Sputnik)

Football is Russia’s favourite sport – with over 120 years of history. The first official football game was played in St Petersburg in the late 1890s. In fact, many sources point to British responsibility for introducing the game to tsarist Russia, through football-loving English engineers invited to manage industrial enterprises in St Petersburg and Moscow.² The sport developed rapidly in the period up to World War I: by 1914 some thirty-three cities and 200 football teams were members of the Russia Football Union. Understandably, the outbreak of war and the subsequent Russian Revolution disrupted this development. However, from the early 1920s new tournaments, were organised, known as Championships of the RSFSR (later ‘All-Union’). Initially, teams represented cities and republics, but from 1936 this changed to club teams. The championships continued – with only one interruption during World War II – until the disintegration of the USSR in 1991. Today

Russian club teams such as CSKA Moscow and Zenit St Petersburg are well known in Europe as winners of the 2005 and 2008 UEFA Cup, respectively.

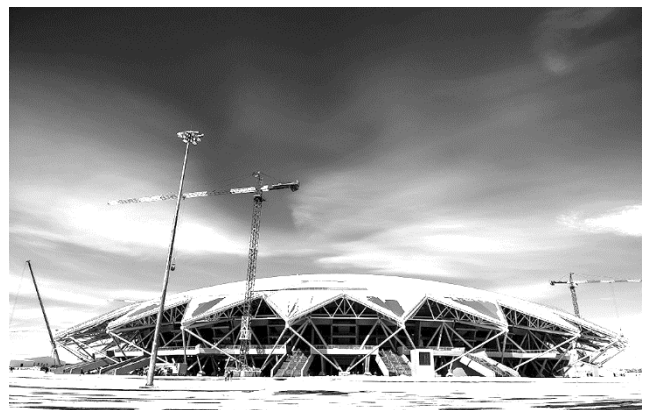


The iconic Luzhniki Stadium, Moscow, renovated for the World Cup (image courtesy of Sputnik)

The USSR national team took part in seven FIFA World Cups, achieving a best performance of fourth place in 1966 in England. However, its greatest moment was reaching the final of the European Championship in 1988 in Munich. Since 1991, Russia's national team has competed in three FIFA world cups without much success, although it reached the semi-finals of the European Championship in 2008. It is an individual player, the legendary Soviet goalkeeper Lev Yashin (1929–90), who stands out both internationally and at home. Nicknamed the 'Black Spider', Yashin played his entire professional career for Dynamo Moscow, participated in four FIFA World Cups, and saved over 150 penalties. In 1994 FIFA named him the greatest goalkeeper of the twentieth century, introducing in his memory the Lev Yashin Award, also known as the Golden Glove, which is awarded to the best goalkeeper at the World Cup.³ It's therefore fitting that the official 2018 FIFA World Cup poster features Yashin.

The social, economic and environmental impact of any major international sporting event is almost as important as the competition – and this is also the case for Russia this year. Hosting the championship has involved a huge programme of major

infrastructure works. On 25 April 2018, Russia's 2018 Local Organising Committee issued its preliminary *Report on Economic, Social and Environmental Impact of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™*⁴, evaluating the one-off and long-term benefits for Russia. Over 350,000 Russians had developed or improved skills and qualifications in major event organisation, construction, hospitality and catering, transport and communications, utilities and other services, while 52,000 had received training as volunteers and stewards. Eight new stadia had been built, four renovated and ninety-five new training grounds opened. Fourteen projects had focused on new or upgraded water supply, sewage and waste processing systems. Sixteen city hospitals had been refurbished. Twenty railway stations had been modernised, 178 km of roads built or reconstructed, airport capacity in host cities increased by at least thirty per cent, and ground transportation improved.



The Samara Arena has a 'cosmic' theme, reflecting the region's history as a centre for the aerospace industry (image courtesy of Sputnik)

New or improved stadia in the host cities have enjoyed wide media coverage. This includes the renovated Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, where the World Cup final will be held. Under FIFA regulations all World Cup stadia must attain certification of their ecological sustainability. Luzhniki has managed to achieve high-profile BREEAM certification, the first stadium in Russia to do so. Water-saving technology enables the venue to save 490,000 litres of water over the course of a single match, while LED lamps achieve a seventy per cent saving in

electricity.⁵ In addition, the upgraded stadium can now accommodate 81,000 people, the stands have been fixed as close to the football pitch as possible and the sloped angle of the seating area increased to provide a good view of the arena from any point – while still preserving the historic facade.⁶



The Ekaterinburg Arena (image courtesy of Sputnik)

However, stadia improvements aside, the bulk of Russia's World Cup infrastructure programme (worth more than \$10 billion) has been spent on airport and transport projects, including a new terminal and third runway at Sheremetyevo Airport and a second runway at Domodedovo Airport, both in Moscow, a new airport at Rostov-on-Don, and new terminals and rail connections at many other of the host city airports. This ties in with Russia's aviation strategy to build or reconstruct 500 airports by 2030.⁷

But what of the practicalities for fans attending the championship? All fans with valid World Cup match tickets must also hold a FAN ID, a formal identification document required by the Russian authorities. The FAN ID entitles holders to some free transport services for matches, including inter-city trains and public transport in host cities. For foreign fans, the FAN ID (obtainable from VFS Global Visa Centres or Rossotrudnichestvo offices) also allows visa-free travel to Russia – a major consideration, given the complexity and cost of the standard visa regime.

For England fans, the Official England Supporters Travel Club, operated by

Gullivers Sports Travel for the English Football Association, is offering nine *Follow England in Russia in 2018* packages to the World Cup, including St Petersburg Basecamp packages and single match packages. However, for foreign fans wanting to travel independently around Russia, there have been major issues with booking hotel accommodation (little availability) and inter-city travel (standard trains and internal flights either not available or poorly synchronised between host cities and match dates). Pressure on hotel accommodation has led to price hikes. Russia's consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor reported 591 cases of inflated hotel prices across the host cities up to 20 April 2018, resulting in fines totalling almost six million roubles (about \$97,800).⁸

Nonetheless, once fans arrive, smooth day-to-day running of the championship will be facilitated by a large volunteer programme (around 15,000 volunteers). In Moscow alone 6,000 volunteers have been trained to help disabled visitors and advise fans on the city's landmark sights. In addition, 200 English-speaking volunteers and metro staff will be on hand at special information zones in Moscow's central metro stations and key railway interchanges to help foreign fans reach stadia and sightsee.⁹

Cultural programmes are being organised in all host cities. Kazan, for example, is planning ninety special events during the championship, at a cost of around 45 million roubles. These include an international festival *Chaliapin, Nureyev, Kazan* at the opera and ballet theatre; seven music festivals – from *Music of Faith* (sacred music) to *Kazan Live* (jazz); three new exhibitions from the Tatarstan Museum of Fine Arts; and a book festival *Library in the Park*.¹⁰ On a more sports-related front, in Moscow a new exhibition on the history of Russian football opens in the Karelia pavilion at VDNKh (Park of Economic Achievements) on 14 June. Covering the period from 1911, when the first national football team was founded, it has three sections: The History of Imperial and Soviet Football, Hall of Fame, and Modern History of Football and Football Culture. Exhibits

include rare film footage, fine art (among others, football-themed porcelain and lacquer miniatures from the National Museum of Decorative, Applied and Folk Arts), print publications, photography, graphics, rare football merchandise, Soviet-era football tables and even computer games.¹¹

In the UK, of course, what could have been a friendly build-up to the World Cup has been marred by UK Government allegations of Russia's culpability for the nerve agent attack on Yuri Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury in March 2018. Almost immediately, Prime Minister Theresa May announced a diplomatic boycott of the World Cup, confirming no British ministers or members of the Royal Family would travel to Russia. In March, Poland, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Australia and Japan said they were considering joining the UK in a boycott by state officials. In April, around fifty members of the European Parliament signed a letter calling for an EU boycott of the World Cup. However, since then nothing much has been heard officially. At least six petitions calling for a boycott of the World Cup by the England football team were submitted to the UK Government and Parliament Petitions website in March – April, but all were rejected with this response “The Government isn't responsible for the England football team”. At time of writing, no national football federations have expressed the intention of boycotting the championship.

More recently, some British MPs and media have been scaremongering about potential Russian hooligan violence against England fans, as well as wider security concerns. This view was countered by Deputy Chief Constable Mark Roberts, the National Lead for Football Policing, in evidence given to the Foreign Affairs Committee on 8 May. In light of ongoing co-operation and meetings with the Russian authorities to prevent violence at the World Cup, he said that, overall, he was reassured of Russia's aspirations to host a safe event and his security team had been impressed with what it had seen on the ground in Russia.¹²

The reality is that foreign football fans don't appear to have been put off – at least so far. Overall, by the end of April 2018 about 2.5 million match tickets had been sold, of which fifty-three per cent had been purchased by foreign fans. Around 7,000 FAN IDs had been applied for by UK fans by that date, although, interestingly, the largest group of fans expected from any one foreign country was US nationals (some 30,000).¹³ Let's hope for a successful and peaceful World Cup that showcases the many positive aspects of Russia.

Footnotes

1 'FIFA World Cup Trophy to Make the Longest-Ever Journey Around a Host Country', FIFA website, 6 July 2017, URL: <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/y=2017/m=7/news=fifa-worldcup-trophy-to-make-the-longest-ever-journey-around-a-host-c-2900525.html>

2 'The Englishmen who Brought Football to Russia', Russian Football News website, 6 February 2018, URL: <http://russianfootballnews.com/the-englishmen-who-brought-football-to-russia/>

3 “‘He Never Missed a Training Session’ – Lev Yashin's Widow on her Husband's Peerless Career”, RT website, 11 January 2018, URL: <https://www.rt.com/sport/415616-lev-yashin-wife-interview/>

4 'Report on Economic, Social and Environmental Impact of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™', Welcome2018.com website, April 2018, URL: http://cdn.welcome2018.com/upload/materials_images/journal/FWC%20impact%20study%20report_ENG.pdf

5 'Russia 2018 World Cup Stadiums Pass Eco-friendly Tests', RT website, 31 January 2018, URL: <https://www.rt.com/sport/417502-world-cup-stadiums-named-eco-friendly/>

6 'Nikolai Gulyayev: The Whole Infrastructure of Moscow is Ready for the 2018 FIFA World Cup', Moscow Mayor website, 21 December 2017, URL: <https://www.mos.ru/en/news/item/34373073/>

7 'Russia's Bid to be Match Ready', Routes Online website, 12 October 2017, URL: <https://www.routesonline.com/news/29/breaking-news/275225/russias-bid-to-be-match-ready/>

8 Over 590 hotels in Russia Fined for Inflating Prices Ahead of 2018 World Cup – Watchdog', TASS website, 20 April 2018, URL: <http://tass.com/sport/1000931>

9 'Moscow Volunteers Brace for 2018 FIFA World Cup', 12 March 2018, URL: <https://www.mos.ru/en/news/item/37402073/> and 'Moscow to Have 200 English-Speaking Consultants on the Metro during 2018 World Cup', 7 March 2018, URL: <https://www.mos.ru/en/news/item/37354073/> (both Moscow Mayor website)

10 'Cherry on Football Cake: Cultural Surprises for World Cup Fans in Kazan', Realnoe Vremya website, 15 May 2018, URL: <https://realnoevremya.com/articles/2456-cultural-events-in-kazan-during-2018-world-cup>

11 'VDNKh to Show How Russian Football has Changed in 107 Years', Moscow Mayor website, 5 April 2018, URL: <https://www.mos.ru/en/news/item/38552073/>

12 'Oral Evidence: Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Preparations for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, HC 1011', 8 May 2018, UK Parliament website, URL: <http://data.parliament.uk/written-evidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/foreign-affairs-committee/the-foreign-and-commonwealth-offices-preparations-for-the-2018-world-cup-in-russia/oral/82561.pdf>

13 'Some 2.5 million Tickets Sold for 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia', TASS website, April 27 2018, URL: <http://tass.com/sport/1002243>

Diana Turner is the Editor of the 'SCRSS Digest' and an SCRSS Council member.

Reviews

Inside Russian Politics

By Edwin Bacon (Biteback Publishing, 2017, ISBN: 9781785902314, Pbk, 272pp, £12.99)

Edwin Bacon's book is informative and up to date in its analysis of the political set-up in today's Russia. The author, of Birkbeck, University of London, attempts to examine

how it is that the Putin regime rules Russia, and by what means it rules.

Whilst Edwin Bacon takes it as a given that Russia is a "non-democratic country", he rejects what he calls the "othering" of Russia – seeing Russia as somehow eternally different and alien from the rest of the world.

He maintains that Russia has seen no change of regime despite seven parliamentary elections and five presidential elections between 1993 and 2016.

The Putin regime identified itself from the start, Bacon argues, as a response to the 1990s, and its priority has been to create stability and unity, something the recently re-elected President has clearly achieved. The chief narrative of Putin's regime is that the 1990s, under Boris Yeltsin, was "a decade of poverty, chaos and national humiliation".

The author recognises that Putin has done much to deliver better welfare and to create a functioning fiscal system with proper tax collection: modest achievements in the economy have contributed to a rise in life expectancy to 72 years. Referring to Russian newspapers and polling bodies, the author gives interesting statistics revealing that the state sector still dominates in the economy.

The book looks at opposition parties and groups, and the changes Putin has brought about in the way regional authority is exercised. He argues that officials' competence in their posts is now seen by the President as more important than mere loyalty. This has resulted in a number of younger officials being promoted from the regions in recent years.

I found the chapter on public opinion interesting. The author gives useful statistics taken from polls conducted by the Levada Centre. *Inter alia*, these reveal that Russia today is more egalitarian than either the USA or the UK, but that seventy-five per cent of the wealth of the nation is owned by only one per cent of the population. Ninety per cent of people disapprove of the

differences in wealth and most people see corruption as the main problem.

Polls by this independent public opinion agency show that many Russians see President Putin as an experienced politician who is energetic, decisive, strong-willed and far-sighted. Of those respondents critical of the President, “the most disliked features were his ties with big capital and corrupt politicians (17% each).”

Opinion polls regularly show that some two thirds of Russians see the break-up of the Soviet Union negatively. “Democracy” is identified in many Russians’ minds with the economic and social chaos and rapid impoverishment of the population characteristic of the “robber capitalism” of the Yeltsin years.

The Donbass conflict, Russia’s annexation of Crimea (with its key strategic naval base in Sevastopol) and current Russophobia are examined, giving the narrative from both “sides” – Russia and “the West”.

The author details recent policies aimed at fostering “patriotic values” in the youth, and the attempts by the leadership to pursue a different, specifically Russian path that takes into account Russian history and traditions.

Kate Clark

Myth Making in the Soviet Union and Modern Russia: Remembering World War II in Brezhnev’s Hero City

By Vicky Davis (IB Tauris, 2017, ISBN: 9781784539481, Hbk, 368pp, £75.00)

The closest I managed to get to the hero city of Novorossiysk was in 1986, when I led a Progressive Tours language course for UK students in Krasnodar. Intourist had offered the group an excursion but had to cancel after the tragic sinking of the passenger ship *Admiral Nakhimov* off the coast of Novorossiysk in August that year.

The offer of the excursion was not repeated when I led another course the following year. So, sadly, I was not able to see the site of the beachhead of Malaya Zemlya, the memorial complex or the other monuments in the town, all visited by the author during her research. In terms of the author’s interest in popular regard for Leonid Brezhnev, 1986 would have been a good time to visit, following his death only four years earlier. Dr Davis first visited Novorossiysk in 1999, after Gorbachev, the end of the Soviet Union and at the end of the Yeltsin era.

The 1943 battle to free the Soviet Black Sea port of Novorossiysk from German occupation was fought from the beachhead of Malaya Zemlya, where the young Colonel Leonid Brezhnev saw action. As you would expect, heroes of the campaign are still commemorated in Novorossiysk today. This action provides the case study for Dr Davis who looks at how Brezhnev was perceived by his people, and at the process of memory and wartime remembrance for the ordinary Russian citizen. Central to Dr Davis’s analysis is the idea of myth, which she defines as “a shared and simplified narrative of the past with utility in the present thanks to its enduring emotional and moral appeal”.

This has the potential for some controversy. It leads the author into the areas of post-war state policy and current national cohesion in the face of external threat. Nonetheless, her work, which includes local testimony, underscores the continuing importance of the memory the Great Patriotic War in Russian national identity. We see this annually in the celebration of Victory Day, now in renewal with the march of the Immortal Regiment, as the author confirms. The Immortal Regiment is a procession of young and old, of veterans and the descendants of veterans, bearing photographs of their ancestors who served and often died in the war. It takes place on 9 May (Victory Day) throughout Russia and across the world.

I found the book engaging and written in a readable style, making it accessible to a wide range of readers.

Vicky Davis received her PhD from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, and currently works as a freelance educational consultant and researcher.

Charles Stewart

Stalin's Economic Advisors: The Varga Institute and the Making of Soviet Foreign Policy

By Kyung Deok Roh (IB Tauris, February 2018, ISBN: 9781784536930, Hbk, xvi + 235pp, £69.00)

Anyone with an interest in Russia and the Soviet period, whether a specialist or not, will find this new book thoroughly readable, indeed fascinating. It will disrupt many preconceived opinions as to the nature of economic research under Stalin, and the decisive influence of Western bourgeois economics on his foreign policy.

Kyung Deok Roh is a (South) Korean scholar, who obtained his MA and wrote his PhD thesis in Soviet history at the University of Chicago, where his supervisor was Sheila Fitzpatrick. Roh's book, based on his PhD thesis, is enriched by new exploration of archives, including those only recently available. It is not clear to me, however, whether he spent any time in Russia, or instead reviewed archives available only in the US. As I show below, there is one significant error that, apparently, was not picked up by his supervisor, examiners or the editors at his publisher.

The focus of the book is Eugene Varga and the Institute that was later known by his name. The latter started as the Institute of World Economy and World Politics, established within the Communist Academy on 21 January 1925. Before Varga, it was small and largely devoted to publicising the views of leading Bolsheviks. Under his leadership it grew to become one of the largest Soviet research institutes.

Varga was born in Hungary in 1879 (he died in Moscow in 1964, at the age of 85), and was trained as an economist in Vienna with

his contemporary, Karl Polanyi. He came to Soviet Russia in 1920 as a refugee, having served as Commissar of Finance in the short-lived Hungarian Revolution. He was the leading economic theorist in the Comintern and was invited to lead the Institute in 1927, continuing in the post until 1946. He was always fully integrated into the Communist Party and was never a critic of Stalin's regime. Nor did he innovate in Marxist economic theory. Instead, as Roh points out, Varga's theoretical position was eclectic, combining the views of Luxemburg and of Hilferding, based on Engels.

To these Marxist analyses he added a surprising ingredient, the life work of the American economist Wesley Clair Mitchell (1874–1948), research director of the National Bureau of Economic Research from 1920 to 1945, and author in 1913 of *Business Cycles*. Varga was attracted by Mitchell's concrete methodology and rigorous approach to statistical data.

Stalin constantly referred to Varga and his associates, used their work in his own writing and often consulted Varga personally. For example, in 1934 he preferred Varga's analysis of Western economies to that of the Comintern, announcing in his speech to the 17th Party Congress that the Great Depression had ended, and laying the basis for the turn to the Popular Front.

The surprising error throughout the book is that WC Mitchell is referred to on every occasion as WH Mitchell. Neither Varga's nor Mitchell's works appear in the Bibliography. Nevertheless, this is an informative and enjoyable read.

Professor Bill Bowring

Labour and the Gulag: Russia and the Seduction of the British Left

By Giles Udy (Biteback Publishing, 2017, ISBN: 978-1-78590-204-8, Hbk, xxvii + 660pp, £30.00, map, illus)

It is hard to understand what the motive is in writing this massive tome. If it were intended

to subtly undermine the reputation of the British Left in the inter-war period, the author would surely not have used the title or the scornful tone in which the book is written. I have searched in vain for a critical academic review of the book and found only a few glaring right-wing 'puffs' and a handful of reviews in serious newspapers. While searching, I have also come across details of lectures and articles by Udy rubbishing the Labour Party, warning of their communist past and the apocalyptic results were they ever to achieve power.

It is easy to say that this is a book that should never have been written. I disagree with that. Think how many of us were skilful at reading *Pravda* in the past. I well remember the boxed article on the front of *Pravda* on the morning when the Warsaw Pact forces occupied (they didn't invade) Czechoslovakia. My Russian class at Lancaster University and I worked out that this masterpiece of propaganda contained at least twenty items of actual fact about what had just occurred.

So far, I've not actually described the volume in detail. What we have is a book almost exclusively about the British Left and its reactions to the various twists and turns of Russian and Soviet policy, much of which, despite certain heroic achievements, was achieved at huge human cost, a lot of which was actually unnecessary. Those on the Left who believed that this was a worthwhile experiment were in the end disappointed, but some stubbornly refused to believe what was happening behind the propaganda. But we have been here before, have we not? For some time now, revisionist historians have tried to convince the British Right of the real history of the British Empire, which in many ways was equally bad (although not on the Russian epic scale).

What disqualifies the book from academic validity is the relentlessly sneering tone and, for example, the Conclusion and Postscript which appear to form part of a personal campaign by the author to discredit the Labour Party. Nonetheless, Udy's massive research effort in examining public and

private statements by the British Left, and documenting them, is useful and useable: a useful remedy against political naivety. We now await a similar volume documenting the British Right and their statements about Russia and foreign policy in the inter-war period. Or perhaps that would be just too embarrassing? If such a volume exists already, I look forward to hearing about it!

Andrew Jameson

SCRSS Image Catalogue Numbers, This Issue

Page 1: Fyodor Lopukhov (SCRSS002557).

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 2018

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
Publication date: June 2018