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## Feature

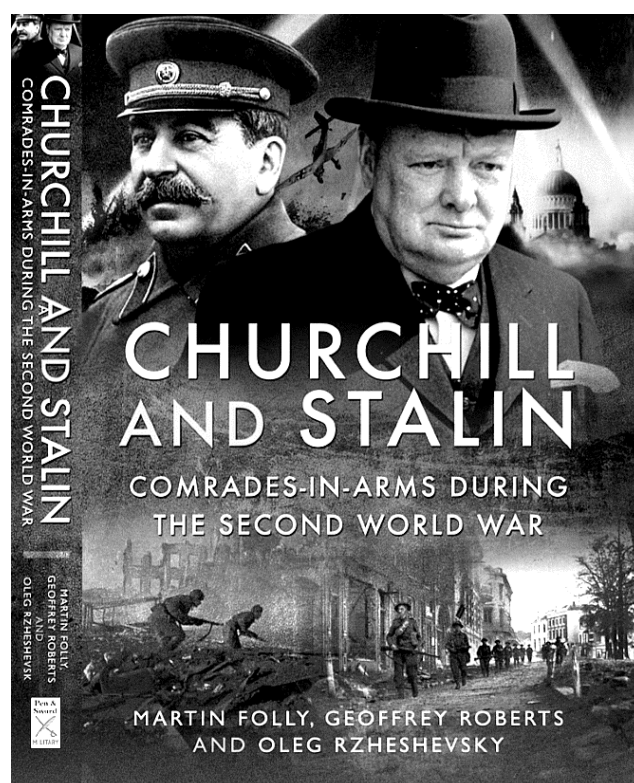
### Churchill and Stalin: Comrades-in-Arms

By Geoffrey Roberts

It is often said that the Grand Alliance was forced into existence by Hitler and fell apart as soon as Nazi Germany was defeated. But neither the formation of the Grand Alliance nor its collapse was inevitable. The Grand Alliance was willed into existence by its leaders and sustained through four years of total war. To achieve victory, it was necessary to develop deep and far-reaching economic, military and political co-operation. It was one of the most successful alliances in history and each of the major partners in the coalition – Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States – made significant contributions to the common cause.

An old saying about the Second World War is that to beat the Nazis the Russians gave their blood, the Americans their money and the British the time they bought by refusing to capitulate to Hitler after the fall of France in summer 1940 – an historical fact that Churchill was fond of reciting to Stalin. Had

Britain sued for peace or succumbed to invasion in 1940, it is possible the Red Army would have been defeated by the Germans when they invaded the USSR in summer 1941. The United States, with no European platform from which to project its industrial and military might, would perforce have pivoted to Asia and focused on the Japanese threat, leaving Hitler as the unchallengeable master of Europe. Nazi genocide and ethnic cleansing on a continental scale would have been the fate of European states from the Atlantic to the Urals.



Cover of Geoffrey Roberts' forthcoming book

When the Grand Alliance – as Churchill later called it – emerged in the latter half of 1941 it was not clear the Anglo-American-Soviet coalition could survive the vicissitudes of war. The three countries had very different socio-political systems and there was a

bitter history of ideological conflict between Soviet Communism and Western liberal democracy. Within Western states there were anti-communists hostile to alliance with an ideological enemy, while on the Soviet side there were deep suspicions of Western capitalist leaders, not least of Churchill, who had tried to strangle Bolshevism at birth by massive military intervention in the Russian Civil War. The Grand Alliance also had to deal with Hitler's efforts to sow seeds of doubt by spreading rumours that each of the allies was negotiating a separate peace with the Germans.



Yalta Conference, 1945: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin seated, with Eden, Stettinius and Molotov standing behind (image courtesy of Sputnik)

There were significant internal tensions during the coalition's early years when most of the fighting was being done by the Red Army, while the British and Americans fought on the margins of the conflict. But increasing amounts of allied material aid did reach the USSR from 1943, and in June 1944 the Western allies invaded northern France – an operation Moscow had been demanding since July 1941.

The Grand Alliance overcame these difficulties because the so-called Big Three – Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin – put aside ideological differences in the interests of a greater cause. At Yalta in 1945 the Big

Three proclaimed their commitment to a peacetime Grand Alliance that would prevent war and provide peace, security and prosperity for all states – a goal reaffirmed that same year at the Potsdam summit and at the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco.

After the war Soviet-Western collaboration continued. Major Nazi war criminals were tried at Nuremberg, and convicted of crimes against humanity and of conspiracy to wage aggressive war. A peace conference was convened in Paris in summer 1946, and in 1947 peace treaties were signed with the Nazis' wartime allies – Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Italy and Romania. In spring 1947 the inter-allied Council of Foreign Ministers met in Moscow to negotiate Germany's future. These negotiations were inconclusive but Stalin remained optimistic: "Don't despair", he told the American Secretary of State, George C Marshall, "results can be achieved at the next session. On all the main questions – democratisation, political organisation, economic unity and reparations – it is possible to achieve compromise."<sup>1</sup> However, negotiations about a German peace treaty soon collapsed and the Grand Alliance disintegrated. The failure of the Grand Alliance led to the Cold War and to decades of division, conflict and rivalry between the Soviet Union and its erstwhile Western allies.

The social background, personalities, politics, leadership styles and working methods of the Big Three were diverse. But they had one important trait in common: they were men of long political experience who placed a high premium on personal relations with each other.

The response of the Big Three to the supreme crisis and challenge of war was broadly similar: each actively assumed the mantle of commander in chief, thereby concentrating, centralising and personalising military, as well as political decision-making.

In the diplomatic sphere the Big Three each had trusted confidants who accompanied

them or represented them in the most important and intimate negotiations. Vyacheslav Molotov, Stalin's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, drafted his correspondence with Churchill and Roosevelt, carried out important diplomatic missions at home and abroad, and acted as his deputy in face-to-face negotiations with the British and Americans. Harry Hopkins was President Roosevelt's chief diplomatic advisor and personal envoy. Important, too, was Averell Harriman, Roosevelt's Lend-Lease co-ordinator in London and his ambassador in Moscow from October 1943. Churchill liked to keep his own counsel and preferred personal diplomacy to that conducted via intermediaries. During the war he travelled more than 100,000 miles, meeting Roosevelt eleven times and Stalin twice, as well as taking part in tripartite summits at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam. But it was Churchill's Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who travelled to Moscow in December 1941 for the first wartime summit with Stalin and he attended most of Churchill's bilateral meetings with Stalin and Molotov.



Conversation between Churchill and Stalin at the Yalta Conference, 1945 (image courtesy of Sputnik)

Personal contact between the three leaders – at meetings, through correspondence and via intermediaries – convinced them that they could work together and trust each other. At times that trust and friendship was strained, but difficulties were overcome and differences resolved through compromises that respected honour and protected vital

interests. The Grand Alliance, as it developed during the war, is unimaginable without this personal bond between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin.

Power in the Grand Alliance lay with Roosevelt and Stalin. As Churchill famously said, it was the Red Army that tore the guts out of Hitler's war machine, while it was American industrial strength and manpower that tipped the balance of forces decisively in the Allies' favour. But the beating heart of the Grand Alliance was Churchill's relationship with Stalin. As Averell Harriman recalled, while Stalin admired and respected Roosevelt and praised him as a "great man for war and a great man for peace", Churchill he toasted as "my comrade-in-arms".<sup>2</sup> Churchill and Stalin were the Big Two of the Grand Alliance, the personal axis around which it revolved.

Stalin's relations with Churchill were fragile but intimate and intense. Churchill was a mercurial personality and his relations with Stalin were volatile. He had a history of militant anti-Bolshevism and was unapologetic about it. Yet Stalin, a dedicated communist, hoped Churchill would win the 1945 British General Election and was shocked when he lost in a landslide to the Labour Party. During the war the two men conducted a 500-message correspondence (two-thirds of the messages were Churchill's) and Churchill travelled twice to Moscow – in August 1942 and October 1944 – for crucial bilateral meetings with Stalin. The only time Stalin met Roosevelt was at the Tehran and Yalta conferences, although he did send Molotov to Washington in June 1942. After the war Stalin clashed publicly with Churchill following the now ex-Prime Minister's 'Iron Curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri in March 1946, but the two men never lost their affection for each other.

It is commonly assumed that the Cold War was inevitable, that once Hitler was defeated the conflicting interests and ideologies of the Soviet Union and the Western powers inexorably drove the two sides apart. His reputation as an early cold warrior notwithstanding, that was not

Churchill's view at the time; indeed, even in his iron curtain speech he said that there was a need for a good understanding with Russia.

The Cold War was not Stalin's choice. Throughout the war the Soviet dictator had stressed the long-term common interests – economic, political and military – of the partners in the Grand Alliance. An avid reader of historical works, Stalin told Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta that “in the history of diplomacy I know of no such close alliance of three Great Powers as this”.<sup>3</sup> After the war Stalin clung to the hope that the Grand Alliance could endure in some form. Not until the founding of the Cominform in September 1947 did the Soviets declare that the postwar world had definitively split into two camps.<sup>4</sup>

In the end the story of the Grand Alliance and its denouement is quite simple. During the war its leaders chose to ally against a common enemy and then carry the coalition forward into peacetime political collaboration. After the war different choices were made – to pursue the separate, as opposed to the common, interests of the Grand Alliance. The result was the Cold War. The first set of choices saved the world from Hitler and the Nazis. The second set of choices plunged the world into decades of a potentially catastrophic conflict, whose vast nuclear arsenals continue to pose an existential threat to humanity.

#### Footnotes

1 Cited in G Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953*, Yale University Press, London, 2006, p 314

2 William Averell Harriman Papers on Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941–1946, Rare Book & Manuscript Library (Butler Library), Columbia University, MS0557, Box 1, File 4.

3 D Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War*, Penguin, London, 2005, p 468

4 The Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) was established as a successor to the Communist International (Comintern) which had been abolished by Stalin in 1943, partly as a sop to his Western capitalist allies. The Cominform's function was to

fight the ideological battles of the Cold War. It was disbanded in 1956.

**Note:** *Churchill and Stalin: Comrades-in-Arms During the Second World War* by Martin Folly, Geoffrey Roberts and Oleg Rzheshesky is published by Pen & Sword Books in July 2019.

*Geoffrey Roberts is Emeritus Professor of History at University College Cork and a Member of the Royal Irish Academy. Currently, he is a Senior Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. He is an internationally recognised expert on Stalin, Soviet foreign policy and the history of the Cold War. His publications include 'Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953', 'Molotov: Stalin's Cold Warrior' and 'Stalin's General: The Life of Georgy Zhukov'.*

## SCRSS News

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*By Ralph Gibson, Hon Secretary, SCRSS*

### Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the SCRSS AGM will take place at 11.00 on Saturday 18 May 2019 at the Society's premises. The meeting is open to SCRSS members only. The deadline for motions and nominations of members for election to the next Council is Friday 22 March. All motions and nominations must be seconded by another SCRSS member. The agenda will be available from early May.

### Anniversary Year

This year marks the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Society in July 1924, as well as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society's move to 320 Brixton Road, London. It has remained here far longer than in any of the other locations it occupied up to 1969. The SCRSS Council is discussing how best to celebrate both these milestones, but we are planning a summer party on Saturday 1 June and a relevant exhibition.

## Library News

Under the direction of Mel Bach, now accorded the title of Honorary Librarian by the SCRSS Council, the last year has seen a great deal of progress made in sorting out the incredibly important library that the Society has built up over the ninety-five years of its existence.

The relocation and shelving of our unique Soviet Children's Literature Collection has been completed, thanks to Jane Rosen, a former SCRSS librarian and current volunteer. For the first time in many years all the material is accessible, and should prove useful for the many PhD students and other researchers studying this topic. Jane plans to begin cataloguing the books in due course. Subject to volunteer availability, members can access this collection, located on the top floor, during our regular openings on the first Saturday of the month.

Cataloguing of our important Soviet Education Collection is also complete, thanks to volunteer Claire Weiss. Located in the basement, it includes early textbooks and other materials identified across the library over the last six months. We aim to make at least part of the catalogue data available on the SCRSS website in due course.

As with our other specialised collections, the Children's Literature and Education Collections are for reference only.

Volunteer Gordon Harris continues sorting our History Collection and applying class mark labels to the books. Together with the cataloguing now commenced by Claire Weiss, this should make the collection much easier to use. It is located in the basement and most books are available for loan.

The almost complete set of the *Library of International Literature* series, donated last year (see *SCRSS Digest*, Autumn 2018 issue), has now been shelved – thanks to Mel Bach and James Hardiman. These volumes supplement our section of literature

translated into Russian, located in the basement loan library.

Books withdrawn from the SCRSS library are on sale at a bargain price of 50 pence each. In addition to the permanent selection available in the entrance corridor, more material is set out on tables for browsing at our monthly Saturday openings. Most titles are exact duplicates from our Literature Collection, but there are also books on history, religion and other areas currently being sorted. Most titles are in Russian, but there are significant numbers in English.

## Lenin Exhibition

Over fifty members and guests attended our social evening on 2 November 2018 dedicated to the 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Russian Revolution. A large number of exhibits from the *Lenin: Leader of the Russian Revolution* exhibition were sold, giving a great end-of-year boost to our income! Several framed posters and unframed exhibits are still available for sale – contact the Hon Secretary for information.

## SCRSS-MML

The Society continues to work with Marx Memorial Library and Workers' School (MML) on a joint approach for funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) – see previous issues of the *SCRSS Digest* for more information. Prior to a formal grant bid, a 'Project Enquiry Form' was submitted in December 2018. The feedback received from the HLF was discussed at the January 2019 meeting of the SCRSS Council. A full update will be given to members at the SCRSS AGM on 18 May 2019. Meanwhile, if you have any comments or suggestions on this or other matters relating to the Society, please contact the Hon Secretary.

## Email Address?

A benefit of SCRSS membership is our regular e-newsletter by email including the latest SCRSS news, events and offers;

information from related organisations; and occasional discounts / tickets for other events. If you are not receiving the e-newsletter and wish to, email [ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk](mailto:ruslibrary@scrss.org.uk) with 'Subscribe' in the subject line.

## SCRSS Russian Language Seminar

It was decided by the SCRSS Council not to run the seminar in 2019. However, we are considering options for reviving the seminar, possibly in a new format, in 2020.

## Next Events

**Saturday 2 February 2019, 11.00–16.00**  
**Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members**

**Friday 15 February 2019, 19.00**  
**Talk: Alexandra Smirnova on 'The Last Tsar – Blood and Revolution' Exhibition**  
Alexandra Smirnova of the Science Museum discusses their current exhibition, set against the backdrop of social upheaval and war in Russia 1900–18. It explores the huge influence of medicine on the last Tsar's family, and the advances in medical and forensic science that later transformed the investigation into their deaths. *Normal entrance fees apply.*

**Saturday 2 March 2019, 11.00–16.00**  
**Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members**

**Saturday 2 March 2019, 14.00**  
**Talk: Andrew Jameson on *The Horrible History of Russian! Part 2***  
Linguist Andrew Jameson follows on from Part I of his talk delivered in 2018, looking at what the Russian language tells us about Russian history and the Russian character. *Normal entrance fees apply.*

**Friday 15 March 2019, 19.00**  
**Talk: Christine Lindey on 'Art for All: British Socially Committed Art from the 1930s to the Cold War'**

Art historian Christine Lindey discusses her new book (Artery Publications, September 2018). The book focuses on British artists, but many were influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution, some worked in the USSR as artists in the 1930s, while Soviet Socialist Realist theory and practice were the subject of much debate among socially committed artists and critics during WWII. See review of *Art for All* on page 11. Copies of the book will be on sale at the lecture @ £25.00 (paperback edition), payment by cash only. *Normal entrance fees apply.*

**Saturday 6 April 2019, 11.00–16.00**  
**Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members**

**Saturday 4 May 2019, 11.00–16.00**  
**Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members**

**Saturday 18 May 2019, 11.00–13.00**  
**Event: SCRSS AGM**  
*See page 4. SCRSS members only.*

**Saturday 18 May 2019, 14.00**  
**Talk: Jane Rosen and Kimberley Reynolds on 'Reading and Rebellion: An Anthology of Radical Writing for Children 1900–1960'**  
Editors Jane Rosen (former SCRSS Librarian) and Kimberley Reynolds discuss their new book, co-edited with Michael Rosen (Oxford UP, September 2018). Includes an opportunity to view the SCRSS Children's Literature Collection. *Normal entrance fees apply.*

**Saturday 1 June 2019, 11.00–16.00**  
**Event: SCRSS Saturday Library Opening for Members and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Brixton Summer Party**  
Party details TBC.

*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. Up-to-date details for all events are available on the SCRSS website at [www.scrss.org.uk/cinemaevents.htm](http://www.scrss.org.uk/cinemaevents.htm).*





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# Soviet War Memorial Trust News

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*By Ralph Gibson, Hon Secretary, SWMT*



## SWMT is Now a Charity

The Soviet War Memorial Trust is now an official HMRC-recognised charity (No EW91910). This status allows the SWMT to apply for UK Government Gift Aid on donations from UK taxpayers and significantly broadens the range of institutions that can be approached to financially support its work. The Trust has opened a fundraising page on BT MyDonate at <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/sovietwarmemorialtrust> and is planning a formal launch in the next few months.

A website is being developed and information about this will be included in the next *SCRSS Digest*. Meanwhile, there is background and event information on the SCRSS website at [www.scrss.org.uk/sovietmemorial.htm](http://www.scrss.org.uk/sovietmemorial.htm).

To keep informed of SWMT events and developments and / or support its work by volunteering or donating, contact the Hon Secretary at SWMT, 320 Brixton Road, London SW9 6AB or email [sovietwarmemorialtrust@gmail.com](mailto:sovietwarmemorialtrust@gmail.com).

## Next Events

**Thursday 9 May 2019, 11.00**

**Event: Victory Day – SWMT Act of Remembrance at the Soviet War Memorial, London**

The ceremony marks the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied Victory. The Mayor of Southwark, local politicians, diplomats from Russia and other former USSR states will join veterans and others to lay wreaths at the Memorial and observe a two-minute silence. Members of the public are welcome to attend. If you intend to lay a wreath on behalf of an organisation, contact the SWMT Hon Secretary in advance on [sovietwarmemorialtrust@gmail.com](mailto:sovietwarmemorialtrust@gmail.com).

*The Soviet War Memorial is located in the Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, Lambeth Road, Southwark, London SE1 (adjacent to the Imperial War Museum). The SCRSS has been supporting the work of the SMTF / SWMT since its foundation.*

## Feature

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### Russia's Criminal Justice System: From Tsar Alexander II to President Putin

By Bill Bowring

A typical recent criticism of Russia reads as follows: "Although the equality of arms and the right to adversarial trial are guarantees of the Russian Constitution, many cases show deep flaws within the criminal justice system and gross misconduct of the judiciary and prosecution. This includes using fabricated evidence, forced confessions and impunity for perpetrators of crimes."<sup>1</sup> There is truth in this, especially in politically high-profile cases. But is it the whole story?

Let us start in the early nineteenth century. In March 1814 the Russian Army entered Paris, having defeated Napoleon – and



returned to Russia having achieved its objectives. Russia appeared to be invincible. Ten years later, the Decembrist revolt of 26 December 1825, led by progressive aristocrats who wanted to prevent the accession of Nicholas I, to abolish serfdom and to establish a constitutional order in Russia, was crushed. Nicholas, a political conservative, ruled from 1825 to 1855.

Criminal justice under Nicholas I was aptly summed up as follows: "The secret inquisitional procedure, with its soulless records, with its formal evidence evaluated in advance and prescribing to the judge his decision, could be nothing else but a source of cruelty and inequity. The judge was deprived of liberty of decision, and bound by the rule of formal evidence. He could not acquit or condemn according to his conviction, but only act in conformity with the scale of value of evidence set forth by law. His sentence, though formally correct, was very often nothing but a flagrant injustice."<sup>2</sup> And "the best evidence in the whole world" was considered by the law to be the confession of the accused.

However, the Russian Empire lost the Crimean War, which lasted from October 1853 to February 1856, to an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, Britain and Sardinia. Nicholas I died on 2 March 1855, succeeded by his eldest son, Alexander II. Alexander was not a liberal, but could see that survival of the empire and of tsarism depended on radical reform. On 3 March 1861, in the Emancipation Manifesto, serfdom was abolished. Abolition of slavery in the USA came a few years later. Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863, and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment (ratified in December 1865) abolished slavery in the United States. Russia had led the way.

Abolition of serfdom was followed by the Great Legal Reforms of Alexander II. On 20 November 1864 he signed the decree that enforced four Regulations, including Regulations of Criminal Proceedings, and Regulations of Punishments Imposed by

Justices of the Peace (in Russian *Мировой суд*, a direct translation from the English institution established by Edward II in 1361).

Alexander established a unified judicial system, and fundamental innovations in criminal trials. These included the principle of equality of the parties, the introduction of public hearings, trial by jury (again modelled on English practice) and a professional Bar. Previously there had been no legal representation in criminal cases. The powers of the procurator were substantially reduced, and mainly concerned prosecution in the criminal courts.

The most famous case of jury trial was the acquittal in 1878 of the social revolutionary Vera Zasulich (1851–1919). Her comrade, Alexei Bogolyubov, refused to remove his cap in the presence of Colonel Trepov, the notorious governor of St Petersburg. Trepov ordered him to be flogged. A group of six revolutionaries decided to assassinate Trepov. On 24 January 1878 Zasulich shot, and seriously wounded, Trepov in front of witnesses. She was tried by jury, with Anatoly Koni, the well-known reforming judge, presiding. The sympathetic jury found Zasulich not guilty. She went on to become a Marxist and, famously, corresponded with Karl Marx as to whether Russia could achieve socialism through the peasant commune. Judge Koni was a great legal reformer until the 1917 Revolution, became a leading law lecturer in Soviet Russia, and died in 1927.

The Bolsheviks abolished trial by jury and justices of the peace, but the Bar continued during the Soviet period as an independent profession, remunerated by fees, and defending the accused in cases of economic and political crimes. Fearless advocates in the Soviet period, often Jewish, included my colleagues Yuri Schmidt (1937–2013) in Leningrad and Semyon Ariya (1922–2013) in Moscow.<sup>3</sup> However, the public prosecutors regained their full tsarist powers and, as Vladimir Terebilov – Minister of Justice and Chairman of the USSR Supreme Court – wrote in his book *The Soviet Court*, published in Russian and English in 1973 and 1986, a prime function

of the Soviet court was to educate the public in intolerance of crimes, respect for the law, and the rules of socialist community life.

The collapse of the USSR in 1991 has meant the restoration of many of the great reforms of Alexander II. An experiment in trial by jury in nine regions started in 1993, and covered the whole of Russia from 2003. Justice of the Peace courts were restored from 1998.

This restoration of 1864 took place against the backdrop of a revolutionary transformation in Russia's attitude to international law. In the USSR there were two key principles of international law: state sovereignty, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states. Therefore, the USSR ratified UN human rights treaties but did not permit external scrutiny of domestic legality.

Under the first president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, Russia adopted a new Constitution in 1993, with guarantees for the whole range of human rights and civil liberties, and a provision establishing the supremacy in the Russian legal system of international law. This has been explained by the Supreme Court in Resolutions of 2003 and 2013.

In 1996 the Russian Federation joined the Council of Europe (CoE) and in 1998 ratified the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which immediately became part of Russian law. For the first time every person under Russian jurisdiction could complain of violations of the ECHR to the European Court of Human Rights, and thousands have done so. As a result, legal textbooks and court judgments are now full of references to European human rights, and there have been substantial changes to Russian law and procedure.

In 2000 I had the honour of being nominated by the CoE to serve as one of three CoE experts working with Dmitry Kozak (now Deputy Prime Minister), Yelena Mizulina of the State Duma, Judge Radchenko of the Supreme Court, and Vladimir Shults, Deputy Director of the Federal Security Service

(FSB). We drafted the new Criminal Procedural Code, which introduced the principle of adversariality into the Russian criminal process, transferred the power to remand on bail or in custody pre-trial, with a presumption for bail, from prosecutors to judges, and many other changes. These reforms have been strengthened by judgments of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, referring to Strasbourg principles and judicial decisions.

Indeed, in the period from 2000 to 2003, President Putin encouraged these and other reforms, spoke often of the 'dictatorship of law', cited Judge Koni, and referred to himself as following in the footsteps of Alexander II. The arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky in late 2003, the expropriation of his oil company Yukos, his two criminal trials, and imprisonment in Chita (where Decembrists had been sent to serve their sentences after 1825), marked the end of this reform period.

Today, less than one per cent of criminal trials in Courts of General Jurisdiction end in acquittals (15–20 per cent in jury trials), lower than the acquittal rate in the USSR; and the judges are not, as in the UK, former advocates, but are drawn almost entirely from law enforcement and court administration. Members of the Russian Bar fight hard for their clients, but judges frequently read out the indictment prepared by the prosecutor by way of a judgment. All too often criminal proceedings are abused for the purpose of 'criminal corporate raiding', illegal takeovers and political vendettas. The further reform of criminal justice in Russia will require a new generation of genuinely independent judges.

**Note:** Professor Bowring's article is based on a lecture given to the SCRSS in October 2018 and draws on material in his book *Law, Rights and Ideology in Russia: Landmarks in the Destiny of a Great Power* (Routledge, 2013).

#### Footnotes

1 S Lemke, 'Who Holds Russia's Judges and Public Prosecutors to Account? How the International Community Fails to Effectively Address Judicial Harassment of Human Rights Defenders in the Russian Federation' in *Völkerrechtsblog*, 29 January

2018, URL: <https://voelkerrechtsblog.org/who-holds-russias-judges-and-public-prosecutors-to-account/>

2 S Kutscheroff, 'Administration of Justice Under Nicholas I of Russia', *The American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol 7, No 2, April 1948, pp 125–138 (at p 138)

3 After 1991 Yuri Schmidt and Semyon Ariya continued, with their colleagues, to represent defendants persecuted by the post-Soviet regime.

*Professor Bill Bowring is SCRSS President. He has been travelling to Russia since 1983, and speaks Russian. He has taught international law, human rights, and Soviet and Russian law at Birkbeck College, University of London, since 2006. He is a Barrister, taking cases to the Strasbourg Court. In addition to his book 'Law, Rights and Ideology in Russia', he has 130 publications in English and Russian.*

## Book Reviews

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**Art for All: British Socially Committed Art from the 1930s to the Cold War**

**By Christine Lindey (Artery Publications, 2018, ISBN: 978-0-9558228-8-9, Pbk – £25, Hbk – £45, 224pp, col & b/w illus)**

This unique and beautifully designed book from Artery Publications, researched and written by art historian Christine Lindey, links the work of radical British artists who were active in Britain during the period covering the 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution, the 1929 Wall Street Crash, the 1936–39 Spanish Civil War and the final victory over Nazism in 1945, with other revolutionary artists from Russia, Europe, Latin America and the Commonwealth.

Copiously illustrated, her book is based on interviews with the artists concerned or their families, and on the records of various institutions of which they were members. Among these organisations were the Artists International (AI), a Marxist organisation founded by Francis Klingender and Anthony Blunt in 1933; the Artists International Association (AIA), a more popular front organisation developed from the above in

1935, with wider membership; and the War Artists Advisory Committee (WAAC), a state-funded response to the need to recruit artists to the war effort in 1939.

The AI and AIA carried out major debates on the question of Socialist Realism, a style favoured by the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, versus Modernism. Klingender defined realism as “the attitude of the artist who strives to reflect some essential aspects of reality... it reflects the outlook of those men and women who produce the means of life”.

Playing a full part in these debates were the Communist Party of Great Britain (founded 1920) through its cultural section, and the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (SCR), founded in 1924.

From the archives of the SCR (the forerunner of the SCRSS – the Society for Co-operation in Russian & Soviet Studies), the author describes how the Society held popular exhibitions and lectures, and publicised articles in its *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, on this issue. Famous members at the time included Lawrence Bradshaw whose Marx Memorial in Highgate Cemetery is renowned.

The Nazi invasion of the USSR in 22 June 1941 encouraged many artists to adopt realism in solidarity with the Soviet people and their fellow artists in the USSR, who were involved in a life or death struggle against Fascism. It also vastly increased the activities of the SCR which had branches all over Britain to promote support for the USSR.

Christine examines the class background of the socialist artists in the UK who gave their skills to further the fight against Fascism, poverty and colonial oppression. Most came from working-class families, men and women who had struggled to achieve their art education through scholarships or apprenticeships, such as Ern Brooks, Pearl Binder, James Fitton, George Fullard, Percy Horton, Cliff Rowe, Ruskin Spear, Ken

Sprague and Stan Young. But there were also outstanding radical artists who rejected their upper- or middle-class origins, like Lawrence Bradshaw, Clive Branson, Peter de Francia, Betty Rea, Priscilla Thorneycroft and Nan Youngman. Binder and Branson worked in the USSR in the 1930s.

Domiciled artists from overseas, including James Boswell, Josef Herman and Peter Peri, who dedicated their art to recording the life and struggles of British working-class people, later became famous.

Christine Lindey has given us a worthy memorial to these wonderful socially committed artists of the twentieth century.

**Note:** Christine Lindey talks about her book at the SCRSS on Friday 15 March at 19.00. Copies of the paperback edition @ £25.00 will be on sale – payment by cash only.

*Jean Turner*

### **Sentimental Tales**

**By Mikhail Zoshchenko (translated by Boris Dralyuk, Columbia University Press, July 2018, ISBN: 978-0-231-18379-6, Pbk, 214pp, £11.99)**

Mikhail Zoshchenko was born in 1894 in St Petersburg and was of noble origin. He was injured and gassed in World War I, and was dogged by ill health all his life.

Zoshchenko had started writing at an early age. After trying many professions, he joined the writing workshops set up under the auspices of Maxim Gorky. In 1921 he joined the Serapion Brotherhood literary group. Most Serapions saw themselves as fellow travellers with the regime, rather than Bolsheviks. In the 1920s, when everyone was expected to help build a new society, they faced constant attacks from Marxist critics and proletarian writers.

The political contradictions of the 1920s, when the *Sentimental Tales* were written, are reflected in the stories, and the speculation and profiteering that accompanied the introduction of NEP (New

Economic Policy) provided rich material for satirists like Zoshchenko.

These tales clearly reflect the contradictions of the era. They are full of characters struggling to adapt to the changes in society and to find a role for themselves within it, or boorish types motivated only by greed.

The introduction and footnotes contain valuable information on Zoshchenko, the era and the stories themselves.

The preface to the first edition introduces the narrator, Kolenkorov, as the purported author of the volume. He warns potential readers not to waste their money if it is revolutionary content they want: "... this sentimental book contains only negligible amounts of heroism. Its subject is ... the little man, the fellow in the street in all his ugly glory." The second and third prefaces reveal that Zoshchenko had a role; finally, in the preface to the fourth edition, Zoshchenko emerges from behind the smoke screen he has created and admits that he is, indeed, the author.

The stories themselves follow a pattern. All are set in small provincial towns and start with Kolenkorov lamenting the writer's lot, introducing his flawed heroes and the small lives they lead. Throughout the stories he interrupts with his own comments. Always a comic situation is interwoven with tragedy, love blossoms and is thwarted, nobler instincts are obliterated by base, mercantile concerns. In *Apollo and Tamara*, a musician falls in love, goes away, returns ill and in rags; finding his possessions sold and with no work, he finds peace working as a gravedigger. In *Lilacs in Bloom*, a "mistrustful and sickly man" marries for material advantage, then regrets his haste as he falls for a pretty girl.

Kolenkorov's idiosyncratic Russian cannot have been easy to translate and Boris Dralyuk tackles it with gusto. His translation captures Zoshchenko's style well on the whole. However, some of the translation choices read rather awkwardly or simply jar: "doggone", for example, too obviously



American for this British reader, and the too-contemporary “gobsmacked”.

The stories are translated from the *Collected Works* published in 2008; they can be found at: <http://ruslit.traumlibrary.net/page/zoschenko-ss07-03.html>. Soviet editions will have been edited.

*Christine Barnard*

### **Flight MH17, Ukraine and the New Cold War: Prism of Disaster**

**By Kees Van Der Pijl (Manchester University Press, July 2018, ISBN: 978-1-5261-3109-6, Pbk, 208pp, £18.99)**

There was a terrible loss of life when the Malaysian civil airliner MH17, which left Amsterdam on 17 July 2014 bound for Kuala Lumpur, was brought down over Donetsk during the civil war in the Ukraine. What followed was an immediate condemnation of Russia for the disaster, without waiting for the results of the official Dutch investigations into the crash. These results have never been released due to a veto given to Ukraine over its conclusions.

Kees Van Der Pijl, the author of this densely argued and important book, goes into convincing detail regarding this issue, while examining the events in the Ukraine that preceded it.

He notes that on the same day, and following a similar route, the Russian President Vladimir Putin was flying back from a visit to Brazil where he had met with the leaders of Brazil, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) to sign a charter to set up a New Development Bank. He had also met Angela Merkel during the World Cup finals to discuss the Minsk agreement for a settlement of the ongoing Ukrainian civil war, and a proposed Land for Gas agreement with the EU. The latter would have allowed an extension in 2017 of the existing Russian Nord Stream gas supply to Europe via a South Stream through Italy to Austria, in return for a massive rehabilitation of Ukraine's economy. These proposals were violently opposed by the US.

Whether by accident or design, the downing of MH17 by a land or air missile attack put an immediate end to these agreements and triggered the subsequent Western identification of BRICS states as 'contenders' to US world hegemony, with Putin as their enemy. Putin's project for a Eurasian custom union was seen by the US as a restoration of the Soviet Union. The West's aim was for regime change in these countries. Under the cover of the 'War on Terror', designed to consolidate US power in the Middle East, the result has produced disastrous wars that have paradoxically strengthened Russian influence on the international scene, together with that of China.

The concept of a New Cold War is the theme of Van Der Pijl's examination of the issues behind the downing of MH17. He classifies the current Cold War between East and West as the third one since 1945. The first took place from 1945 to the 1970s when capitalism was forced to compromise, faced with the post-World War II emergence of the USSR as a major international power supporting anti-colonial and working-class struggles. The second was the establishment of the USA as the sole world superpower following the disintegration of the USSR, and the advance of NATO and the EU to the borders of Russia.

The author sees the third Cold War as the fight between speculative international capital carrying out high risk operations in a casino-like society with strong links to public and private security sectors, including state-guaranteed bank bail outs for failed adventures, versus state-directed capitalism as in Russia and China.

The author forensically demolishes media misinformation about the so-called 2008 'Russian invasion of Georgia', the 'annexing of the Crimea' and 'Russian aggression in the Ukraine'. He shows the opposite to be true. As Goebbels stated, if you repeat a lie often enough, it will come to be believed. The Western media has turned this into a fine art, particularly regarding anything to do with Russia or its allies. He also gives frightening facts about the militarisation of

space, leading to unidentified 'accidents' to civil airlines.

This book is proof of the effects of US hegemony on countries like the Ukraine, leading to corruption, the rise of greedy oligarchs, civil wars and Fascism.

*Jean Turner*

### **Everyday Law in Russia**

**By Kathryn Hendley (Cornell University Press, February 2017, ISBN: 9781501705243, Hbk, 285 + xvi pp, £36)**

### **Republicanism in Russia: Community Before and After Communism**

**By Oleg Kharkhordin (Harvard University Press, November 2018, ISBN: 9780674976726, Hbk, 307pp, £39.95)**

Kathryn Hendley is American, Oleg Kharkhordin is Russian, and both are leading and highly respected analysts of contemporary Russia, sharing research training in leading American universities. But these two new books focus on quite different issues. Hendley deals with everyday life, while Kharkhordin addresses theoretical abstraction; but both have engaged in innovative fieldwork.

Hendley's research focuses on legal and economic reform in the former Soviet Union. Following in the University of Wisconsin's 'law in action' tradition, her research explores how ordinary Russians experience law. Her new book is based on participant-observation research in the restored Justice of the Peace Courts (*Мировой суд*), as well as on focus groups.

Kharkhordin graduated from the Economics Department of Leningrad University, and then studied at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences, with a PhD in political science from Berkeley in 1996. He taught at Yale and Harvard, and at Sciences Po in Paris, before becoming Chair of the Department of Political Science and Sociology of the European University of St Petersburg in 1998. He was elected Rector in 2009, and became the first Russian

university president with a US PhD. He has been a member of the Russian Presidential Council for Science and Education since 2012.

Starting with Hendley: the Justice of the Peace Court was introduced in the Russian Empire in 1864 as part of the Great Judicial Reforms of Alexander II. It was based, as was Trial by Jury established in the same year (along with the creation of an independent Bar), on the English Justices of the Peace (JPs). *Мировой судья* is a direct translation of 'Justice of the Peace'. It was replaced by other judicial mechanisms after the Russian Revolution, but was reintroduced formally in Russia by the 1996 Constitutional Law *On the Judicial System*. JP Courts handle criminal cases where imprisonment is for less than three years, such as petty hooliganism, public drunkenness and serious traffic violations of a non-criminal nature; minor civil cases such as simple divorces, some property cases, disputes over land, and some employment cases; as well as some federal administrative law cases. The judges are professionals, employed at the regional level, and paid a lower salary than federal judges in General Jurisdiction and Arbitrazh (Commercial) Courts.

Hendley attended JP Courts in Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Pskov, Velikie Luki, Petrozavodsk, Rostov-na-Donu, and Voronezh. In 2004, 2006 and 2012 she included questions about law on the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey – Higher School of Economics, which provided the basis for her analysis of Russian legal consciousness. She starts with the common perception of Russia as 'lawless'. However, she insists (p 14) that: "A comparative assessment of the actual data suggests that Russians are no more nihilistic when it comes to law than are others." And (p 55): "Today, for an increasing number of Russians, law matters."

Her case studies are absolutely fascinating and take us right into the lives of ordinary Russians. Chapter 2 is 'Dealing with Damage from Home Water Leaks'.

Everyone who has lived in Russia will know that this is a prominent feature of life in ageing tower blocks. Chapter 3 is 'Dealing with Auto Accidents', while Chapters 4 and 5 explore the view from the Benches and the Trenches, respectively, of JP Courts.

Hendley's conclusion, as to what she describes as "dualistic law", is worth citing in full (p 231): "On the one hand, ordinary Russians are able to access their legal system with relative ease. Though not perfect, the courts resolve most disputes efficiently, and, in doing so, the judges are guided by the written law... If assessed in terms of these mundane disputes, the Russian legal system would receive respectable scores on many elements of the rule of law. On the other hand... those who bring nonroutine disputes into the legal system (or have such cases brought against them) risk being swept back into the shadowy world of telephone law.<sup>1</sup> In such cases the written law takes a back seat to brute power..."

Kharkhordin starts from the premise that if Marxism was the apparent loser in the Cold War, it cannot be said that liberalism was the winner. He is not surprised that institutions of liberal democracy failed to take root after 1991. In this puzzling new book, he suggests that Russians can find a path to freedom by looking instead to the classical tradition of republican self-government and civic engagement already familiar from their history. He argues that republicanism, which he traces from Cicero by way of Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and more recently Hannah Arendt, has had a steadfast presence in Russia, in spite of Tsarist and Communist hostility. Republican ideas have long flowered in Russian literature, he says, and are part of a common understanding of freedom, dignity, and what constitutes a worthy life.

He finds contemporary Russian republicanism in movements defending architectural and cultural heritage (the 'Living City' movement in St Petersburg from 2006–9, p 105), in municipal participatory budgeting experiments (p 158),

and in shared governance in academic institutions.

His field work, in 2011 to 2013, was commissioned by the Rusnano corporation, headed by Anatoly Chubais, the architect of privatisation in Russia, who was "interested in whether there are common Russian cultural practices that must be relied upon if Russia were to try to develop high-tech entrepreneurship and technology-intensive production" (p 161). Kharkhordin and his team carried out more than 200 interviews in four regions of Russia.

Kharkhordin is very much impressed by American practices, especially (as in his previous publications) *Robert's Rules of Order* – on how to conduct meetings. The whole book is written at a high level of theoretical – especially French – sophistication and erudition. The conclusion has a characteristic sentence (p 253): "The hope for republicanism [in Russia] then would lie in abandoning euphoria and buzz, which are part of ecstatic communion." This is a book for specialists.

#### Footnote

<sup>1</sup> 'Telephone law' (also known as 'telephone justice') was the Soviet practice – still continuing – where the judge receives telephone instructions from above.

*Professor Bill Bowring*

### **Gregory Haimovsky: A Pianist's Odyssey to Freedom**

**By Marissa Silverman (University of Rochester Press / Boydell & Brewer, June 2018, ISBN 978-1-58046-931-9, Hbk, x + 256pp, £60, b/w illus)**

This book is a real mixture, part history of the Soviet Union, part passionate protest against Stalin's campaign against Soviet Jewry, part crusade for the acceptance of modern classical music in the USSR (in this case, Olivier Messiaen), part tribute to the life and work of Haimovsky, who fought for honesty and freedom in cultural life in the USSR and suffered for it.

Marissa Silverman starts with approval of Lenin's policies, up to his death in 1924, but

then recounts Stalin's campaign to eliminate political rivals, starting directly after Lenin's death. Haimovsky recalls a chilling story. His father Samuil had moved the family to Yenakievo (Ukraine) and was working as a pharmacist. One day the father announced a surprise, 'Anatoly' had arrived from Moscow to help him with his work. They all went bathing in the Donets and as usual the men bathed separately from the family. A few minutes later, Anatoly came running, crazily screaming "Samuil is missing!". His body was never found, and Anatoly disappeared. The family then recalled the death of Samuil's close friend Sklyansky four years earlier in 1925, in exactly similar circumstances. Sklyansky was a Jewish doctor, later Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Defence and a critic of Stalin.

During Haimovsky's musical rise to fame he offended some people, not a wise thing to do, especially in Russia where personal links are so important. He graduated third from top from the Moscow Conservatoire (Jews were not allowed to come top), after which came the dreaded Soviet *raspredelenie* (compulsory work placement). Haimovsky was first allocated to Makhachkala (!), but after special pleading eventually went to Kalinin. His treatment there resembled the treatment of intellectuals in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, although ordinary people in Kalinin were humane and made life bearable for him. In Kalinin he experienced the final stages of Stalin's insane Jew-hatred, i.e. the planned mass deportation to Siberia in early 1953. Mercifully, Stalin died on 4 March and things slowly returned to 'normal'. In Kalinin Haimovsky made friends with the city librarian who opened to him the hidden collection of Russian Silver Age literature; in another house as a music tutor he discovered the "miracles" (his word) of Debussy's music, which led him further to discover the music of Olivier Messiaen – and personal freedom, and spiritual renewal.

What Haimovsky makes clear is the sheer irrationality of anti-Jewish prejudice. His comments on Shostakovich's and Evtushenko's music and poetry on the

'Jewish question' express a new and different point of view (pp 77–86). He describes Shostakovich's *Symphony No 13 (Babi Yar)* as in part deeply moving, but calls the section beginning 'O my Russian people' self-delusional. He asks: "Why so many words addressed to the Russian people... and not to Germans?" And he objects to the triviality of some other sections of the symphony that detract from the main theme.

To conclude, here is one final quote from Haimovsky: "Shostakovich's excursus to the Jewish world not only irritated me, but sometimes drove me to despair bringing me to a state of rage. Why? During my provincial exile, during the last years of Stalin's life, I got used to going to and getting up from bed with one thought in mind: I belong to the caste of people whose native land denies them citizenship in all spheres of existence..."

**Note:** There is an associated website at [www.odysseytofreedom.com](http://www.odysseytofreedom.com) that includes a substantial encyclopaedia of Soviet culture, including links, under 'Glossary & Errata'.

*Andrew Jameson*

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