Members are encouraged to provide feedback on the Forum Newsletter; to submit comments on, and provide proposals for, content and for the Forum’s events programme; and to correspond on issues likely to be of interest to the membership. All such contributions will be welcome at the address below. Please also advise omissions and errors; these will be rectified where possible.

Members who are willing to receive the newsletter electronically should let the editor know at the address below; hard copy will continue to be available to those who prefer it.

Forum Programme

There are no current meetings as the Society has its annual break; details of the autumn programme, including the AGM, will be despatched to members shortly.

Instead, more information about other events, particularly Edinburgh Festivals events, is included along with two excellent reviews of books of Soviet period and general interest (Lara Ryanozova-Clark and James Clapperton) and vivid news of research in a core area of interest for SRF: historic relations between Russia and Scotland (Anton Grizenko).

The promised review of 'Klop' will not now appear; however reviews of, or correspondence about, the numerous events of FSU interest coming up at Festival time, or of Shostakovich centenary events, or the astonishingly lavish provision of Russian opera and ballet shortly available in London will be welcome for future issues.

WHAT'S ON

An Islamic art exhibition, "Beyond the Palace Walls", timed to coincide with the 2006 Festival of Muslim Cultures across the UK, opens on 14 July at the Royal Museum in Edinburgh. The display showcases around 200 pieces from the State Hermitage Museum at the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, many of which have never been seen outside of Russia. The works of art come from as far afield as Egypt and China, and the pieces on show date from the eighth to the 19th centuries.

The exhibition, which costs £6 for an adult and £4 for children, runs until November 5 and is open daily from 10am to 5pm. PLEASE NOTE THE ENCLOSED ORDER FORM FOR PURCHASE OF THE ACCOMPANYING BOOK AT A SPECIAL PRICE TO MEMBERS.
**The Edinburgh Russian Conversation Group** is going from strength to strength and now has two groups:

The original group continue to meet on Saturdays at the French cafe "Le Marche Francais" at 9A West Maitland Street, near Haymarket station. The time of the meeting is usually 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. A second group has started meetings on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on the second floor of cafe Nero at 58 Rose Street (between Frederick St. and Hanover St.) There will be a holiday break from July 29th to September 1st. New conversationalists welcome. Further information - contact Irina Voloshina eileen@voloshinov.freeserve.co.uk

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**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

**Mazepa**, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
FESTIVAL THEATRE  
Staged production sung in Russian with English supertitles  
OPERA NATIONAL DE LYON  
Tue 22 & Thu 24 August 7.15pm

**Three Sisters**, Anton Chekhov  
KING'S THEATRE  
Performed in English  
AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE  
Tue 29 August - Sat 2 September 7.00pm  
Matinees Thu 31 August & Sat 2 September 1.00pm

**Long Life**  
THE HUB  
Wed 23 August - Sat 2 September  
7.30pm (except Tue 29 August)  
THE NEW RIGA THEATRE  
An extraordinary demonstration of virtuoso acting from this Latvian company. There is no dialogue in this tender, absorbing and life affirming play, which follows one day in the lives of elderly retired people living in a communal block in Riga. In these elderly people's world, objects are endowed with a soul; they communicate with each other through the material things that have been their lifelong companions. The actors created hundreds of sketches as the basis for this work and use as props objects which belonged to real people and still carry their life story and soul.

**Stravinsky Agon**  
EDINBURGH PLAYHOUSE  
Fri 18 & Sat 19 August 7.30pm  Sun 20 August 4.00pm  
Scottish Ballet  
ORCHESTRA OF SCOTTISH OPERA  
Nicholas Kok Conductor  
George Balanchine Choreography
Stravinsky The Rite of Spring
USHER HALL
Wed 23 August 8.00pm
Budapest Festival Orchestra
Iván Fischer Conductor
Richard Goode Piano
Bartók Rumanian Dances
Bartók Piano Concerto No 3

Stravinsky Petrushka (1947)
USHER HALL
Fri 25 August 8.00pm
Minnesota Orchestra
Osmo Vänskä Conductor
Llyr Williams Piano
Barber First Essay
Beethoven Piano Concerto No 3 in C minor

RUSSIAN / UKRAINIAN) FRINGE 2006
http://www.edfringe.com for dates, times, availability and prices. The Book Festival programme is at (http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/) and the Film Festival at (http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk/)

The Family – Semianyki
Join the craziest, funniest family you’ve ever seen! Children and adults alike will be enthralled, delighted and surprised as one of the world’s greatest physical theatre companies turns the ancient art of clowning on its head!
venue: Assembly @ St George’s West
group: Teatr Licedei
related link:http://www.passashok.com

MUSIC

A Cossack on the Danube
Real historical background, a romantic story, rich national humour, costumes, folk songs and dances. Enjoy the unique culture of the Ukraine.
venue: Greenside
group: Lviv National Opera House

Mazaika
Virtuoso duo, Igor (accordian/tenor) and Sarah (violin), spice up their dazzling mix of Russian songs, Gypsy fiddling, Tangos, Operatic arias, Jazz and evocative originals with a touch of comedy and drama. 'Stirring, passionate and highly entertaining' ***** Three Weeks.
venue: C
group: Igor Outkine & Sarah Harrison
related link: www.mazaika-music.com
Petra Casén - Piano
venue: St Andrew's & St George's Church
group: Petra Casén

Rachmaninov - Vespers
As dusk falls, listen to Rachmaninov's evocative, richly scored setting of the Evening Prayer Service of the Russian Orthodox Church. Atmospheric surroundings, generous acoustics and sonorous Russian chant, with the acclaimed Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus.
venue: St Cuthbert's Parish Church
group: SCO Chorus, conductor Mark Hindley

Songs from the Russian Soul
Come discover the bright, fascinating world of traditional Russian folk music and dance. With beautiful costumes and traditional instruments we bring you a real Russian holiday atmosphere. You can also join in the fun!
venue: Sweet ECA
group: Koleso Folk-Show Group, St Petersburg
related link: www.folk-show.ru

The Spirit of Russian Music
The premiere Russian string quartet perform masterworks by Tchaikovsky and Borodin on this their second visit to Edinburgh. Superb classical music played by virtuoso musicians, separate performances of Borodin-Quartet No.2, D-Major (1881) and Tchaikovsky-Quartet No.3, Op.30, Eflat-Minor (1876).
venue: St Mark's artSpace
group: The Tchaikovsky State String Quartet

THEATRE

A Letter that Never Reached Russia
The spectacular stories of Vladimir Nabokov. Fairytale fantasies of a writer's dreams, sumptuous tales of his seductions, the claustrophobic horror of his loss. Drama, puppetry, mime and physical theatre sculpt the tangled shades of the imagination.
venue: C cubed
group: First Theatre Productions
related link: www.first-theatre.com

Crime and Punishment
Dostoevsky's masterpiece presents a classic dilemma: is it possible for a young, talented man to kill an old, disgusting pawn broker and be morally absolved? Acclaimed Russian director Victor Sobchak's production fuses physical and psychological theatre.
venue: C central
group: Act Provocateur International
www.actprovocateur.net

Ketzal
Dazzling new theatre event from multi-award winning St. Petersburg troupe. We enter the world naked and we leave it naked. In between is Life.
venue: Aurora Nova @ St Stephen's
group: www.derevo.org/
related link:www.auroranova.org
Netochka Nezvanova - Nameless Nobody
Award-winning Russian theatre's adaptation of Dostoyevsky's little-known masterpiece. Netochka tells the story of her extraordinary stepfather - a drinker, dreamer and gifted violinist, who exploited yet transformed her and destroyed her mother in his descent into insanity.
venue: Smirnoff Baby Belly
group: Russkiye Notchi - Russian Nights

No Oranges for the Accordion
A hilarious summer comedy with dreamy accordion music and Russian folk songs. Three desperate Ukrainians leave their home country for Vienna. In a pathetic tavern, they perform the 'Odessa Revue'. A nightmare... But so much fun!!!
venue: Greyfriars Kirk House
group: WinterWind

Past Half Remembered
A madcap journey through the epic sweep of Russian history. The Reds and the Whites do battle, the Germans invade, tea is served from a samovar and there is a very big wedding.
venue: Pleasance Courtyard
group: NIE (New International Encounter)
related link: www.nie.cz

ROSE
Martin Sherman's powerful account of one feisty Jewish woman's journey from Russia, through the Warsaw ghettos, to the Atlantic City boardwalks, the Arizona canyons and Miami Beach, receives a stunning tour de force performance from the wonderful Fiona York.
venue: ClubWEST @ Edinburgh Theosophical Society
group: Fiona York

The Government Inspector
A sleepy Russian town! A pompous mayor! Suddenly... a rumour! The Government Inspector's coming! Don't panic! Stylishly acted and inventive new physical theatre adaptation of Gogol's rich and sparkling comedy.
venue: C
group: Greene Shoots Theatre

The Trial
Moscow 1905: plottings to assassinate a Duke and overthrow Tsarism. A man is murdered and two lovers torn apart in the battle to free Russia. Terrorists, spies, the secret police. One of Albert Camus's greatest works.
venue: C cubed
group: Cambridge University ADC

OTHER
Moscow State Circus
The world famous Moscow State Circus triumphantly returns to Edinburgh, bringing a huge cast of Russia's greatest and most flexible circus performers. Packed with award-winning acts that push the boundaries of human physical ingenuity to its limits.
venue: Meadows Theatre Big Tops
group: Moscow State Circus
related link: www.moscowstatecircus.com
BOOK FESTIVAL

Tue 15/8/2006 Time: 10:15 AM
Tom Bissell & Peter Hobbs
WAKE UP TO WORDS
Venue:HIGHLAND PARK SPIEGELTENT
Appearing: **Tom Bissell, Peter Hobbs**
Our morning short story series continues with two unusually talented creators of compelling tales. Tom Bissell's "God Lives In St Petersburg" is a remarkable and haunting collection set in Russia and Eastern Europe; while Peter Hobbs, acclaimed for his beautiful debut novel The Short Day Dying, shows himself a master of the short form too. Free coffee and pastries.

Wed 16/8/2006 Time: 2:30 PM
Rodric Braithwaite & Catherine Merridale
HISTORY: RUSSIA
Venue:PEPPERS THEATRE
Appearing: **Rodric Braithwaite, *NOTE REVIEW IN THIS ISSUE**

Steven Gale, Catherine Merridale Two leading experts on Russia examine the Red Army during the years of the Second World War and the grim year of 1941 in Moscow. The fates and suffering of ordinary people and soldiers come vividly to life in these in-depth examinations, full of new insight.

Thu 17/8/2006 Time: 12:00 PM
Jon Lee Anderson & Askold Krushelnycky
NATIONS UNLIMITED
Venue:SCOTTISHPOWER STUDIO THEATRE
Appearing: **Jon Lee Anderson, Askold Krushelnycky**
Ukraine’s Orange Revolution was a defining moment for Europe. Askold Krushelnycky provides a remarkable, personal inside account.

Fri 18/8/2006 Time: 8:30 PM
Hamid Ismailov
LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION
Venue:PEPPERS THEATRE
Appearing: **Robert Chandler, Hamid Ismailov**
Uzbekistan, its central Asian steppes and its little documented mixture of ethnicities, inhabit the delightfully surreal storytelling of Hamid Ismailov - who was forced to flee his homeland and was subsequently recruited by the BBC. The Railway tells of transport, and changes, coming to an isolated land. With the leading translator, Robert Chandler. In association with the British Centre for Literary Translation

Wed 23/8/2006 Time: 12:00 PM
Lesley Chamberlain & Stefan Collini
MATTERS OF THE MIND
Venue:SCOTTISHPOWER STUDIO THEATRE
Appearing: **Lesley Chamberlain, Stefan Collini**
How do different nations react to their intellectuals? In Lenin's Russia, they were shipped off into exile; in Britain we arguably just ignore them. Lesley Chamberlain's enthralling The Philosophy Steamer tells of the 'dangerous' thinkers thrown out of the new Soviet state. Stefan Collini studies the curious and neglected phenomenon of the British intellectual.
Sun 27/8/2006 Time: 7:30 PM
Petr Borkovec, Jerzy Jarniewicz & Gregor Podlogar
LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION
Venue: WRITER’S RETREAT
Appearing: Petr Borkovec, Jerzy Jarniewicz, Gregor Podlogar
A rare and special chance to hear three acclaimed poets from Eastern Europe. Respectively from the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia, these are outstanding literary figures who have been widely translated but who have never before read in Scotland. In association with Literature Across Frontiers and the Scottish Poetry Library

OTHER NEWS AND LINKS
Members will have noted the ongoing saga of Heart of Midlothian Football Club and its owner, Vladimir Romanov, including the visit of Russian submariners (Mr Romanov having himself been a submariner) to the Scottish Cup Final at his invitation, and a fascinating BBC 2 Scotland programme about Mr Romanov on 6 June.

Another one to watch out for, providing balance to our Newsletter, is Gary O’Connor, formerly of Hibs, now playing for Lokomotiv Moscow.

The following Glasgow Community Libraries have small collections of Russian material:

Pollokshaws Library and Learning Centre
50/60 Shawbridge Street, Glasgow G43 1RW
Phone: 0141 632 3544

Knightswood Library and Learning Centre
27 Dunterlie Ave, Glasgow G13 3BB
Phone: 0141 959 2041

Woodside Library and Learning Centre
343 St George’s Road, Glasgow G3 6JQ
Phone: 0141 332 1808

Work continues on the development of a new website for the SRF and identification of sources of sponsorship.
EXTERNAL LANGUAGE LINKS OF INTEREST:

http://www.linguanet-europa.org   Extensive resource, with access to many others. Can be navigated in English or Russian, or other languages.

www.bbc.co.uk/languages   A small amount of Russian MP3 and print resources, also a Newsletter with more general information. The current issue has Russian language resources; you have to sign up to recieve it.

http://www.uni.edu/becker/Russian2.html#art   A portal with references to a wide range of Russian resources.

ARTICLES

An introduction to Anton Grizenko and his research

Born in the UK I lived for years nearby Karass/Shotlandka (Scottish Colony) which is now Inozemtsevo, North Caucasus, Russia. My keen interest in UK-Russian ties has led me to study the XIX century Scottish missionaries and colonists in that region.

The aim is continuing research, including expeditions to locations, into various aspects of their daily lives and activities, legacy in translation work, printing activities, study of languages, ethnographical descriptions, written memories, in Russian literature. No less interesting are missionary issues and religious discussions they were involved in.

I intend to write a series of articles, possibly a book, etc as well as deliver lectures, on their lives and activities, notably, on their ties with the peoples they lived among, on the noble efforts of all those involved to build bridges of understanding and to find ways to resolve issues some of which are so evident even today.

I would be glad to hear from anyone interested in these matters and grateful for any contributions or assistance in my work:

Mr Anton Grizenko, FRGS
78 Linden Road, Reading, Berkshire, UK - RG2 7EH
Tel/Fax: 01189 874014
Email: primaxim@hotmail.com

Little Scotland in North Caucasus
by Anton Grizenko, Fellow RGS

Sunrays barely penetrate trees and untamed lilac bushes covering a small hill in Karass or Shotlandka (Scottish colony) now Inozemtsevo in North Caucasus, Russia. There I stand again on its steep north slope and look at the grave of the XIX century Scottish missionary, Alexander Paterson, and recall words I read at St Andrew's University “But who shall venture to say that they are forgotten, or that they died in vain?”

By fate or fortune, born in the UK I lived for years near Karass. Keen interest in UK-Russian ties led me to become fascinated with the XIX century Scottish colony. It was extraordinary to find Scots living there though the region has always been at the crossroads of migration and settlement of many ethnic groups.
Further research revealed they came from the Edinburgh (Scottish) Missionary Society. Many sources, though, make sad reading, something like - In 1802 Scottish missionaries arrived at Karass in North Caucasus with permission from Tsar Alexander I “to propagate Christianity to the tribes” in the region. In this, they enjoyed little success. In 1835 Tsar Nicholas I suppressed their activities altogether...
It seems they are destined for a minor footnote in history, at best, a blip in today’s information age.

Yet, the true value of their legacy is still to be discovered and this understanding has only just begun. Apparently, so many questions are waiting to be answered, errors set right and a few mysteries unravelled for the Scots in Karass and their families to occupy the rightful place they truly deserve. The time has come to celebrate their lives and heritage.

The first to mention is Reverend Henry Brunton. He died in 1813 in Karass after finishing translation of the “Tartar-Turkish” New Testament. Popular among the locals, many came to listen to him impressed with his excellent knowledge of the Arab language. Dr. Rogerson spoke of his talents “with admiration.” An exceptional linguist he also learnt Persian, Hebrew and other languages, including Susoo (during his stay in Africa), publishing several works. He was portrayed by William Glen, a fellow countryman, as “a man of most vigorous understanding, … endowed with a singular capacity for acquiring a knowledge of dead and living languages, of a shrewd, active, enterprising turn of mind.”

Henry Brunton intended to develop a new alphabet and grammar for the Kabardinian language (Adig ethnic group). The famous scientist Julius von Klaproth found it necessary to spend a day with him discussing languages and translations, and called him “a worthy old man.” Henry Brunton also began publishing books - the first for the whole region - on a printing press which “Arabic-Tartar types rival the beauty those of the first-rate establishments in Europe,” as noted by Klaproth.

No less interesting is the extraordinary life of James Galloway, who arrived in Karass in 1805 as a missionary and... a tradesman - a weaver. In the early 1830s, he requested permission to stay as an honorary missionary. He actually did stay on and was still there in 1856 around 80 years old and a much respected man. Not surprising to anyone who knows the life of the region well, his - what today we call - communication skills won him friends and deep respect among people with so different ethnic, social, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

His family enhanced James Galloway’s ties with Karass. His first wife was a Kabardinian, dearly loved by all who knew her, and who sadly died at childbirth. Three of his daughters married German pastors. As for what he called “trips” in distributing scriptures, some were more like full-blown expeditions. One such journey took him through the vast steppes onto Orenburg and Kazan, travelling by boat, horse-and-cart, on horseback and many, many miles on foot.

Karass attracted many people, including those who came to discuss religious matters. Among them was Shora Nogma, an Adig, a “noble mind”, noted for “his powerful mode of reasoning”, who knew several languages and took part in the printing activities there. One such discussion in 1822 with James Galloway and William Glen would be relevant even today as an example of an open dialogue on religion based on genuine mutual respect.

Shora Nogma was one of the locals who helped the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin with the ethnography of the region. Alexander Pushkin, without doubt, also visited Karass, a popular picnic area amongst those receiving treatment at nearby Pyatigorsk. An exciting opinion exists about Pushkin’s intention to write a poem with a chapter devoted to missionaries and
that Karass played a role in this. The writer Petr Vyazemskiy advised Pushkin to write about the Karass missionaries.

Another Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov could not miss thinking about his own Scottish ancestor George Learmont and the Scottish missionaries when visiting Karass on many occasions. He also made a drawing of Karass at the foot of mt. Beshtau (see below) with the characteristic stream trickling down the centre of the colony. Moreover, he spent the last hours of his life in Karass before he fell at a duel nearby.

(Mikhail Lermontov’s drawing of Karass)

At present, not much is known about many aspects of the lives of the Scottish missionaries in Karass and even less of their families. However, the hidden memory of Karass reveals to us that Henry Brunton’s sister, Mr Alexander Paterson’s first wife, Mr Douglas Cousin, Mr and Mrs Hardie, Mr Andrew Hay, Mrs Amelia McAlpine, Mrs Jean Fraser and Mrs Cairns were all buried there.

Any story of Karass would not be full without Mr Alexander Paterson, who came there in 1802 with Henry Brunton. Paterson ran the colony’s administration after Henry Brunton died. He had to deal with the authorities and, possessing the best command of German, also with the German colonists settled nearby. Paterson is said to disappear from view in mid-1830s. Yet, I have established that he died on 9th January 1844; his son Edward, born 1817 in Karass, rose to rank of captain; one of his daughters died in 1874 – are all buried in Karass. The story continues...

Not least, Karass enjoyed the company of many other visitors including Sir Gore Ouseley (British Ambassador to Persia, 1811-1814), William Wilbraham and another Scot Sir Mackenzie Wallace (member of Imperial Russian Geographical Society, who arrived in Russia for a few months and stayed for 6 years).

Sir Wallace Mackenzie tells an amazing traveller’s tale. Finding Shotlandskaya Koloniya (Scottish Colony) on his map, he was determined to visit Karass. To his utter surprise, he met Mr John Abercrombie (a well-known Edinburgh doctor) - in reality Teoona, a “Circassian Scotsman” brought up in Karass. The remarkable person spoke several languages, including “genuine Scotch”, English, Russian, German, Persian as well as his own tongue, and became a printer. His story continues with travels to Shusha in Transcaucasus and to Siberia to work with the London Missionary Society.

Weel, weel, there are definitely many a story to tell about the Scots at Karass. Ay, they have left us quite some legacy in translation work, printing activities, language studies, ethnographical and geographical descriptions, written memories, Russian literature and in religious discussions... just to mention a few.
Truly, they have certainly become part of the heritage of many cultures and remain forever - Little Scotland in North Caucasus. The real journey of discovery of the Scots in Karass has just begun!

REVIEWS


There are fewer events in Soviet history so well known and at the same time so obscure as the story of the death of Pavlik Morozov. Pavel, or traditionally called by the endearing diminutive Pavlik, Morozov has been famous as a pioneer hero of 1930s and since his murder was placed in the Soviet pantheon of martyrs. Millions of Soviet children, myself among them, grew up with the instilled veneration of Pavlik: his statues in summer pioneer camps, his face looking out from the any pioneer propaganda board at schools. Pavlik was revered for denunciation: at the time of Collectivization his heroism was in reporting his father to the authorities for supplying fake documents to the kulaks exiled to their village. Thus, he put the loyalty to the Communist cause above his family ties. For that act of heroism, Pavlik was stabbed to death by the band of his ‘kulak’ relatives, led by his own grand-father.

Cartiona Kelly’s book belongs to a new kind of genre, the investigative cultural studies. She sets on to unravel the real history and the myth behind Pavlik’s story as well as its reverberations throughout Soviet cultural discourse. The thoroughness of her investigation and the pure scope of material researched are outstanding: the latter include the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service, where few foreign scholars were allowed before; State Archive of Sverdlovsk (now Ekaterinburg) province, and of Tadva’s local newspaper and the oral history of the village of Gerasimovka, where all the Morozov’s family lived.

Reconstructing the events and deconstructing the myth, Catriona Kelly comes up with no counter-story. Almost everything about Pavlik turns out to be unreliable, there is not one but several version of events. It is not clear whether Pavlik really denounced his father – by the time the mythological act of denunciation took place, his father had left his wife for another woman - and the village.
Whether Pavlik was a pioneer is another uncertainty. As Kelly shows there was no formal Pioneer organization in the village of Tavda. It is also unlikely however that the boy was murdered by the secret police (the OGPU), the claim that Iurii Druzhnikov makes in his earlier book on the Morozov’s case, *Denouncer No.001* (1995). The truth might well have been that Pavel was indeed murdered by members of his own family out of resentment towards his denunciations but also it might have been a result of a squabble with his grandfather over some property, most likely a horse harness. Contrary to his mythological image, Pavlik – or Pasha as in reality he was called by people who knew him - was disliked in the village, a stinking boy with a head full of lice and who enjoyed snitching.

What I especially enjoyed in Kelly’s book is her analysis of the Pavlik Morozov myth built and evolved in the Soviet Union. Maxim Gorky was possibly the founder of the cult of Pavlik when in 1933, speaking to a rally of the Komsomol, said that Morozov was “the boy who understood that a person who is a relative by blood may well be an enemy of the spirit” (Kelly, p.144). Gorky’s conviction that the “little hero deserves a monument” (ibid) was the start of thousands monuments up and down the country. As the theme of father and son conflict receded from that myth, the other narrative – that of self sacrifice for the ideas of communism – took over, and blossomed.

As Kelly summarises, “the Morozov legend was created to represent Soviet society as it wanted to show itself and see itself.” (p.xxxii) Truly, she demonstrates, in the drop of Pavlik Morozov’s story, the whole ocean of Soviet cultural mythology. The book is extremely well researched and written in a lucid style; it is profoundly academic but also has a detective twist, which make's it such fun to read.

**Lara Ryazanova-Clarke**

*Moscow 1941: A City and its People at War. By Rodric Braithwaite (Profile Books, 2006, 358 pp. £20.00).*

Towards the end of his impressive account of the battle of Moscow Rodric Braithwaite poses a timely question. Why had the Soviet people fought with such fortitude and tenacity when the regime they were defending had imposed such hardships upon them?

Were they inspired by patriotic fervour or simply by fear of retribution from their own side? Braithwaite states that even Stalin himself acknowledged that the Soviet people were fighting for their country and not the regime. Nevertheless, he also identifies Stalin’s ruthless willpower as a crucial factor in determining the outcome of the campaign. The battle cry *Za Stalina! Za Rodinu!* (For Stalin! For the Motherland!) was no empty slogan. The author regards the Orthodox faith, the Russian landscape and heroic epics from the past as key motivators behind a burgeoning sense of patriotism. On the other hand, contemporary testimonies by veterans themselves tend to pass over these themes. They prefer to focus upon their own experiences and in doing so often express feelings of nostalgia towards the Stalinist era. Many veterans regard the deprivations they suffered during wartime as more tolerable than the indignities that many elderly Russians face today.

Through reference to various testimonies by participants Braithwaite manages to address the concerns of those who took part in the defence of Moscow. It is to his credit that he presents their experiences in a balanced and sympathetic manner. He also underlines both the strengths and failings of the Soviet regime’s handling of the crisis of 1941. In doing so, he achieves the central aims behind his research. Namely, to present a reappraisal of Moscow’s defence as ‘the greatest battle in history’. In addition, he debunks some of
the myths surrounding the battle of Moscow as a campaign characterised by ineptitude and chaos. For example, he is careful to underline the fact that operational difficulties arose simply because so many Muscovites volunteered immediately for active service. Though the staggering mortality rate of defence volunteers remains a subject of controversy Braithwaite nevertheless admires their bravery. He also contrasts their patriotic fervour with the French appetite for surrender, and questions whether Britain’s ‘Dad’s Army’ would have passed the test of meeting the Germans in battle.

Though the first part of this book covers much material which will already be familiar to seasoned readers of historical accounts of the Great Patriotic War it is presented in a highly engaging manner. Most illuminating are the subsequent references made to personal experiences and also to NKVD documents recently released which record anti-Soviet statements made by citizens during the lead up to the conflict. Nevertheless, a surprisingly small number of Muscovites were arrested for making such complaints. Individual stories also highlight the inflexibility of Soviet justice. One lathe worker was foolish enough to pick up a German pamphlet which had landed in front of the Lubianka prison. He received a sentence of ten years for his curiosity. A tank driver whose tank was collected by a repair team was subsequently arrested for sabotage after it was assumed he had somehow mislaid it.

On the other hand Braithwaite asserts that the draconian character of Soviet rule was in fact an advantage during wartime. As the city teetered on the brink of chaos during October 1941 Stalin issued a stern decree calling for order to be restored. Braithwaite states that the situation was transformed overnight as bakeries reopened, taxis began to work again and work in the factories resumed ‘an orderly rhythm’.

Though the heroic battles of Kursk and Stalingrad have tended to obscure our knowledge of the Moscow campaign through the years Braithwaite manages to refocus our attention upon this crucial early period of the war. As Catherine Merridale notes in *Ivan’s War* the experiences of Ivan the rifleman remain largely unfamiliar to western readers as compared with the British Tommy or the German Fritz. Through reference to personal accounts Braithwaite has made a significant contribution in redressing this injustice. For each Briton who died in the war eighty-five Russians perished.

As Braithwaite states: ‘About the order of magnitude there can be no doubt. No wonder the Russians believe that it was they who won the war’.

*James Clapperton*