

Carles Viñas, *Football in the Land of the Soviets* (London: Pluto Press 2022)

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How We Struggle does not possess many shortcomings, and Lazar's "methodological and political commitment to radical compassion for what people do in real life" is effective at unearthing the everyday efforts workers employ to better their lives and those they care about. One limitation of the book is that there appears to be an almost complete absence of consideration for sexually and gender non-conforming workers. Such an absence is surprising given the significant linkages between these social locations and the need to engage, for example, in patchwork living or platform labour. However, this limitation, as with all works offering rich contributions, provokes many questions and horizons for subsequent explorations.

Overall, Sian Lazar has produced a meticulous exploration of the global-local relationship between political economy, labour agency, gender, and family. A masterful contribution to the anthropology of labour, *How We Struggle* will be well received in undergraduate and graduate courses and among social activists and policymakers.

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Carles Viñas, *Football in the Land of the Soviets* (London: Pluto Press 2022)

IT IS ALWAYS pleasant to read new books on the yet understudied field of sports history, in particular European football history. This recent work is no exception. Dr. Carles Viñas offers up a journalistic account of Moscow and St. Petersburg football that is easy to comprehend and leaves the reader wanting more. Despite its stated claim to be a book on Soviet football, the actual focus of his study is primarily Imperial Russia and its football. The timeline ends roughly in the

1930s, with the 1920s and 1930s being covered briefly.

As for geographical scope, there is little information about important football activity that unfolded outside of Imperial Russia's political centres, Moscow and St. Petersburg. Cities farther afield, such as Odessa, Tbilisi, and Kyiv, among others, also played an integral part in the development of Soviet football. They produced a plethora of distinct playing styles (i.e., Georgia) and star players. For example, the absence of Kyiv in this work is a pity, considering the city's unique football beginnings, innovative football thinkers (i.e., Valeriy Lobanovskiy), three Ballon d'Or winners, and Dinamo Kyiv, the most successful team of the Soviet era. Consequently, the author perpetuates the misconception that the Soviet Union was Russia.

Nevertheless, this work is an excellent introduction to the early days of Moscow and St. Petersburg football for the uninitiated. The story begins with the introduction of football in Russia and how football reflected the modernization and industrialization drive of Tsarist Russia. In addition, the author clearly argues that the Imperial period is essential for understanding the development of Soviet football. The book is then organized into three sections: Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth.

Childhood centres on the individuals who brought football to Moscow and St. Petersburg, followed by an examination of the relatively affluent locals who eventually adopted the game. Dr. Viñas pays special attention to the individual actors who enthusiastically brought football from Britain to Russia, with helpful commentary in the footnotes providing a brief biography of the various actors. For example, there are the amusing difficulties faced by Henry and Clement Charnock, who introduced football to

their factory workers. The workers were not keen on the sport at first, scattering in fear after their first acquaintance with an English football (29–30). The story shifts from the early pioneers, mostly British expats, to the rise of the Morozov factory football team, which Dr. Viñas considers the first great team of Russia (34). In this section and the next, several pages are set aside for the Russian aristocrats, who challenge the dominance of expat teams in the local city leagues.

Boyhood begins with the Olympic Games of 1912 in Stockholm, Sweden, and ends with World War I. Russian football's first foray at a major international tournament ended in disgrace in 1912. A 1–2 loss against Finland was a political humiliation due to Finland raising its flag before the match despite being under the control of Russia at the time. This defeat was followed by a hiding at the feet of the Germans (49–50). Back on the home front, the workers fought against Tsarist authorities and the local bourgeois to form their own football teams, which were condemned to compete in separate “Wild” leagues at first due to barriers of entry into the official city competitions. World War I brought further changes, with Russian authorities finally keen to promote sport in an effort to produce soldiers with strong bodies for the battle against the empire's enemies on the battlefield (61–62).

Youth covers football's role in Russia during the Bolsheviks' rise and their early rule. Most of the former authorities of Russian football, the Europeans and the Russian bourgeois, were forced to leave Russia after Lenin's triumph and lost their former power in the sport. Thus, a new generation of Russians would finally not just play football but also dominate the administration of the clubs and the sport (85). Moreover, the Bolsheviks came to understand that perhaps they had been

mistaken to disregard this “bourgeois” sport and actively reshaped and “militarized” it (94). Pre-revolutionary clubs were either rebranded or forced to disappear, while new entities with closer ties to state institutions and the workers were formed (82). These alterations granted the majority of the populace wide-ranging access to the sport for the first time. Though the Soviet record-chasing and medal count mania is noted, Dr. Viñas also highlights the importance of other sporting movements, such as the hygienists and mass sport, in the early days of Soviet rule.

As a work of journalism for the curious sports fan, this is a timely, eloquent book about a topic that is shrouded in mystery for many residing outside of Eastern Europe. However, *Football in the Land of the Soviets* is limited by its sources. The author largely relies on English and Spanish secondary sources, but rarely uses primary sources or Soviet historiography. Except for a couple of online websites, Dr. Viñas cites no sources in Russian or in any other language native to the Soviet Union. The voices of numerous insightful football experts, including journalists and academics, from the former Soviet Union are largely absent from the book. Citations are also sparse, with long sections that clearly sprang from other secondary literature left without a corresponding footnote. There are also minor factual errors, such as the famous German 16–0 thrashing of the Russian national team at the Olympics of 1912 being noted as a 7–0 loss.

Notwithstanding these slight drawbacks, this well-written book is a welcome contribution, considering the potential mass appeal and resonance that it brings to a subject that deserves more attention. Dr. Viñas deserves praise for spreading the fascinating subject of Soviet football to new audiences. After all, he wrote

the original version in Catalan. A book that fosters interest in Moscow and St. Petersburg football history in a mecca of football, Cataluña, is always welcome, as is this excellent translation by Luke Stobart.

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Barbara C. Allen, éd., *The Workers' Opposition in the Russian Communist Party: Documents, 1919–30* (Chicago : Haymarket Books, 2022)

QUEL RÔLE LES SYNDICATS devraient-ils jouer dans la gestion d'une économie? Quelle devrait être la nature de leurs relations avec le Parti Communiste? Pour les membres de l'Opposition ouvrière en Russie soviétique – un pays dont l'économie a été récemment ravagée par la Grande Guerre de 1914–1918 et la guerre civile qui s'en est suivie –, la réponse à cette double question ne fait aucun doute : forts de leurs multiples expériences, seuls les syndicats – et en particulier ceux représentant les métallurgistes – doivent assumer la lourde responsabilité de remettre l'économie sur ses rails. Un scénario contraire, estiment-ils sans compromission aucune, donnera à un nombre grandissant de bureaucrates (pour plusieurs, ambitieux carriéristes et petits-bourgeois tout récemment admis au sein du parti) un pouvoir décisionnel qu'ils ne méritent tout simplement pas. Les leaders du Parti Communiste (Lénine, Zinoviev, Trotsky, et Boukharine), toutefois, ne partagent pas une telle opinion. Ces derniers accusent donc l'Opposition ouvrière de promouvoir le syndicalisme et l'anarchisme et, conséquemment, de diviser le parti. Pour Lénine, en particulier, les ouvriers et leurs représentants syndicaux ne sont pas prêts, en raison de leur manque d'éducation, à gérer la relance de l'économie soviétique. Il préfère plutôt

confier cette tâche à des fonctionnaires possédant de solides connaissances, tant théoriques que pratiques, en matière de fonctionnement d'une économie. L'enjeu est de taille, et les deux camps en sont fort conscients : « worker mastery over production » ou « worker subordination to production » (3). Bien que défaits et censurés au dixième congrès du Parti Communiste en mars 1921 (au cours duquel, incidemment, Lénine introduit, puis impose la Nouvelle politique économique – la NEP – qui fait une place importante à l'entreprise privée, tant à la ville qu'à la campagne), les leaders de l'Opposition ouvrière (Shliapnikov, Medvedev, et d'autres) n'en continuent pas moins à défendre leurs points de vue – une opération risquée, en raison de la condamnation formelle de tout factionnalisme à l'intérieur du parti à ce même congrès.

Barbara C. Allen (La Salle University), l'auteure d'une remarquable biographie d'Aleksandr G. Shliapnikov parue en 2015, mérite de chaleureuses félicitations pour l'indéniable qualité de ses traductions du russe à l'anglais – un exercice qui requiert une somme de travail absolument colossale et pour lequel étudiants et enseignants au niveau universitaire lui seront grandement redevables. Le plus grand mérite de cette collection de documents est de faire partager aux lecteurs les convictions, voire même la passion viscérale de ces opposants, en particulier leurs véritables cris du cœur en faveur de l'urgente nécessité de donner aux ouvriers un rôle prédominant dans les multiples comités du parti, d'introduire davantage de démocratie et de débats à l'intérieur d'un parti démoralisé et devenu languissant, de recentrer ce dernier sur l'essentiel – « We should conquer all difficulties only through the masses and together with them. All other paths lead to bankruptcy » (33 – A. G. Shliapnikov, 27 mars 1919) –,