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"After switching to a 13 percent income tax the gray zone has practically evaporated." Prime Minister **Dmitry Medvedev**

\$40

Reserve Fund depleted in 2017 if oil stays at this price.

2018

discussions about altering the income tax system could begin in this year.



Yegor Gaidar, prime minister in 1992 and author of Russia's economic reforms in the 1990s, was seen as the main lobbyist for a flat 13 percent income tax.

Flat Tax Spat

By **Matthew Kupfer** newsreporter@imedia.ru | Twitter: @Matthew_Kupfer

The downturn is putting pressure on Russia's 13 percent tax rate

A popular maxim states that only two things are certain in life: death and taxes. In Russia, the second has always been more of a question. On Nov. 22, Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets added further uncertainty by questioning the bedrock of Russia's tax system — its 13 percent flat income tax rate.

"Freeing those on the lowest income level from income taxes is one of the most important steps to overcoming poverty," she said.

So far, the Cabinet doesn't appear to be in a hurry to replace the flat tax with a new, progressive tax system. No major meetings have been held on the matter and Russia's tax policy for 2017-2019 contains no similar proposals.

But as Russia weathers an economic crisis, Golodets' announcement shows that one of the key neoliberal achievements of Vladimir Putin's first term as president now potentially finds itself on the chopping block. And it may be brought down by Russia's long tradition of economic populism.

"There is a clear desire to raise taxes after the 2018 presidential election," says economic analyst Boris Grozovsky. "Raising the income tax is a more popular idea than raising the value-added tax because it is easy to sell politically: a social measure to help the poor."

All three of Russia's pro-government opposition parties — the Communist Party, A Just Russia, and The Liberal Democratic Party — ran on parliamentary platforms that included instituting a progressive income tax and excusing Russia's poorest citizens altogether.

Recent data from Credit Suisse, which shows



So far, the Cabinet doesn't seem to be in a hurry to replace the flat tax with a new tax system.

the top tenth of Russian households accounting for 89 percent of all household wealth, suggest that the reform would also have a significant receptive audience across Russian society.

But the change would create challenges. Before 2001, Russia had a progressive income tax with a maximum tax rate of 30 percent. But many Russians did not pay taxes, and the state lacked the means to enforce the tax laws. To a large degree, the introduction of the low flat tax solved that problem.

"It boosted state revenues as taxpayers stopped hiding and brought their income in from the shadows," Grozovsky says.

It became a feature the authorities tried to promote abroad. The flat tax gained particular public attention in 2013, when French actor Gerard Depardieu sought and eventually received Russian citizenship to decrease his tax burden.

Today, however, the situation is different. Russia's Reserve Fund is expected to run dry by mid-2017. Meanwhile, since the 1990s, the state has built up a "repressive machine that can find non-tax paying citizens and punish them," Grozovsky says. A progressive income tax would be doable and could allow the government to extract more tax revenues from wealthy Russians while also helping the poor.

Still, Vladimir Nazarov, director of the state Research Institute of Finance, says reform remains unlikely. While freeing the poor from income taxes is "quite possible" — provided that economic growth resumes — Nazarov says there little sense in fundamentally altering the income tax.

"The flat tax is our competitive advantage," he says. "It would be foolish to get rid of it."

There are other reasons to question the re-introduction of a progressive income tax. First, Russia's richest citizens are likely to offshore their wealth should their tax burden increase significantly. In 2015, income taxes were the main source of budgetary income for Russia's regions — so Russia's poorest regions would lose out disproportionately.

But the issue is unlikely to disappear, given its political support among the pro-government opposition. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov admitted as much during a Nov. 17 meeting with the Communist Party.

"We think this issue can be re-examined after 2018, when the economic situation stabilizes and we improve the federal and regional budgets," Siluanov said. **TMT**



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TECH TALK

Russia Raises 'Potemkin Firewall' Against Global Social Networks

By **David Homak**
IT entrepreneur



On Nov. 17, Russian media watchdog Roskomnadzor issued an order to block the LinkedIn social network in Russia. Within a day, almost all of the country's Internet providers had complied.

The tech giant is the first network to fall victim to an absurd law requiring all companies that utilize the personal data of Russian citizens to store that data on servers located on Russian territory. Although the legislation ostensibly went into effect on Sept. 1, 2015, it has only now been enforced for the first time.

In the frenzy surrounding the first implementation of Russia's data localization law, it is tempting to predict Russia is headed in the direction of heavy-duty Internet censorship — the kind famously practiced in China. But this conclusion would be misguided. Russia is not China and Russia's censorship of the Internet is not the "Great Chinese Firewall."

The reason is two-fold. On the one hand, Russia's data localization law does not specify just how the social networks are supposed to identify the nationality of their users. On another, the authorities are not committed enough to enforcing the vague law.

The Communications and Mass Media Ministry has even issued a special clarification that essentially states that the law does not spell out the procedure for establishing a user's nationality and that government agencies would have to proceed at their own risk.

Roskomnadzor's attack on LinkedIn, the least popular West-

ern social network in Russia, was an attempt to prove the agency's relevance. As generally happens in Russia, the court dutifully upheld all of Roskomnadzor's claims against LinkedIn and ordered the site blocked.

Roskomnadzor employed its favorite tactic in this case, attacking a defenseless party for whom no one would rush to the rescue. The agency was confident that the millions of Russian LinkedIn users would not take to the streets in mass protest over the move. However, since the data localization law came into effect, Roskomnadzor has proven itself unable or unwilling to block the more popular Facebook, Twitter, or the online services of Apple, Microsoft, and Adobe. The agency still lacks the teeth to act against them now.

Roskomnadzor is essentially only a paper tiger. It can block a relatively limited number of social network or implement measures complicating life for a small number of citizens, but it would never even consider acting on its own authority to block an international giant such as Facebook.

Of course, if the Kremlin issues the order, Roskomnadzor will block Facebook within the hour. In the absence of such an order, however, the agency will maneuver quietly, out of the public eye, in order to achieve the next best thing: convincing the major social networks to come to the negotiating table.

"We'll pretend to scare you," they essentially say, "and you pretend to be scared." Nobody is even attempting to play by the rules for the simple reason that there are none.

These days, the so-called "Great Chinese Firewall" serves as the gold standard against which all Internet censorship is compared. Russia may want, eventually, to turn the Internet into an online replica of state-controlled television. But against the Chinese measure, its current system of censorship is a classic Potemkin Firewall — a flimsy façade with no substance or real stopping power.

Unlike Russia, the Chinese have kept their Internet closed off from unwanted outside influences from the very beginning. They commit tremendous resources to the effort because censorship is always an expensive luxury.

According to estimates, tens of thousands of people work at regulating the Chinese Internet, and the authorities use complicated, yet subtle techniques and technologies to remove offensive content: censoring keywords, blocking individual posts, and intentionally spreading pro-government information.

Additionally, the Chinese Firewall is there not only to censor, but to protect Chinese IT and business interests. The Russian authorities have shown little intent to use the Internet for economic protectionism.

By contrast, the Russian Internet has been wide open since the mid-1990s. This was never a state policy; rather, the state simply forgot about the Internet and only began devoting attention to it in earnest in 2012.

By Chinese standards, Russian efforts have been very weak. This late on, it will be difficult to close the floodgates. **TMT**

Who is responsible for an employee's future pension?



Over the past few months, several large Russian companies have announced the launch or expansion of corporate pension plans. What is the impetus for this burst of activity? Is this a new trend on the corporate benefits market?

Out of a workforce of 75 million in Russia at present, about 5.5 million Russians participate in private pension coverage, largely via corporate pension plans. Their number has grown steadily in recent years, slowing slightly in 2016. However, experts say, corporate pensions can expect a new surge of interest from employers. "Strong demand can be seen from international companies operating in Russia. They often want to provide benefits for employees of Russian divisions in line with headquarters and other offices, where the corporate pension plan is an integral part of employee benefits. In addition, socially responsible companies in major cities — factories and large industrial enterprises for which it is important to ensure a decent standard of living for their employees after retirement — are showing interest in these programs," said Ivan Sokolov, Head of Corporate Sales at SAFMAR pension fund.

Small and medium businesses, especially companies of the new economy, think more about raising salaries as motivation than about introducing a pension program. However, they have yet to face the fight for talent, and the average age of their employees is still not so close to retirement that they are seriously tackling the issue of retirement savings.

In a survey of corporate pension program practices conducted by PwC, 39 percent of the 117 companies surveyed had already introduced a corporate pension program, and 9 percent planned to launch one in the near future. The

greatest demand for programs was noted in sectors such as metallurgy, consumer goods, financial services and energy.

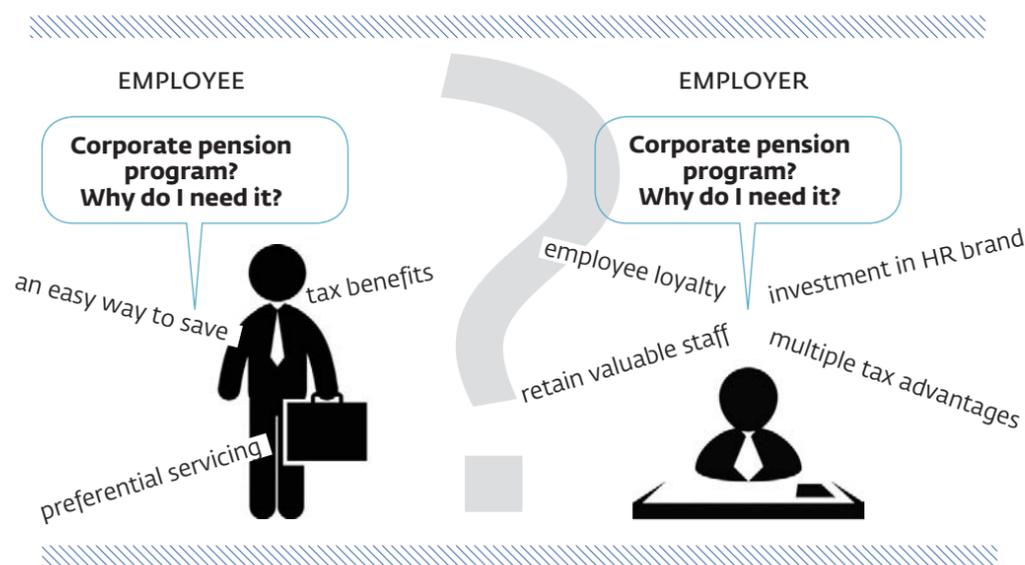
Employees are increasingly opting to accumulate pension savings together with their employers "If your employer introduces a corporate pension plan in the near future, will you personally join it?" sociologists from the Russian State Social University asked Russians in 2015. "Probably," answered 46 percent of respondents, and 15 percent said "yes." According to the same 2015 research, people were willing to contribute 7.4 percent of their salary to their savings account — 2.4 percent

more than a year earlier. More than half of respondents said corporate pensions should be part of the social package of every organization — it is the employer's social obligation.

Therefore, companies are increasingly considering the introduction of their own corporate pension programs. It is a tool to increase the value of their HR brand and a long-term motivation for employees — a weapon in the battle for talent. For employees, this type of program is a painless way to save up additional pension assets and increase confidence in their employer.

A corporate pension program is a comprehensive plan developed individually on the basis of a company's needs, capabilities and particular features. This program makes it possible to combine modern social policy, efficient financial and personnel management and tax optimization. A non-state pension fund acts as administrator of corporate pension plans in most cases.

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Collection of Project Brief and Tender Documents & Conditions:	Hong Kong Tourism Board Address: 11/F., Citicorp Centre, 18 Whitfield Road, North Point, Hong Kong Contact Person: Olivia Wan Telephone No: (852) 2807 6276 Fax No: (852) 2503 6276 Email: Olivia.Wan@hktb.com
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4 Looking Forward

The Moscow Times
No. 5782

"The Vostochny Cosmodrome needs an army of specialists to ensure it is working properly." MSU rector **Victor Sadovnichy**



45

average age of Roscosmos employee.

44,500 rubles

average monthly salary at Roscosmos.



At the height of the **Soviet space** program in 1989, over 1 million people were employed in the space sector.

From the Classroom to the Stars

By **Daria Litvinova** d.litvinova@imedia.ru | Twitter: @dashalitvinov

Moscow State University has announced ambitious plans to open its own space faculty. They are unlikely to solve the industry's longtime problems

Moscow State University (MSU), Russia's oldest and most prominent higher education facility has announced it plans to open its own space faculty.

"We have been discussing this for quite a while now, and, actually, in a matter of days, we are going to open such a faculty," the university's rector Victor Sadovnichy told the TASS news agency on Nov. 21. The faculty will start operating next year, teaching a new generation of "space research specialists," he said.

The ambition is to plug a hole in the Russian space industry that desperately needs young, world-leading specialists. In recent years, the industry has witnessed a growing number of embarrassing accidents and rocket failures. Last year, officials from Russia's Roscosmos space corporation said that the sector will need to recruit at least 110,000 university graduates in the next decade if it is to revive fortunes.

According to Sadovnichy, MSU is the perfect platform for uncovering the professionals the industry needs. At its height in 1989, the Soviet space program employed over one million specialists and accounted for 1.5 percent of Soviet gross domestic product. But the industry has suffered deeply over the past 25 years. Young people are not eager to work in the space program, and wages are low.

Education Not the Problem

Opening more educational facilities will not, on its own, stop the industry from going down, warns space industry analyst Pavel Luzin.

"We have a space academy in Siberia, several universities that specialize in technology all over the country have aerospace faculties," Luzin told The Moscow Times. "It is just that their graduates are not keen to build careers in Russian space industry."



YAN WICK / FLICKR

Space analysts say that opening more educational facilities, on its own, will not save the industry.

Monopolized by the state, the industry indeed has little to offer to young aspiring professionals.

First of all, there is little money: a young engineer can count on 20,000-30,000 rubles (\$311-\$467), which is not much even in remote Russian regions. Second, the job itself is not very challenging: the industry is mostly dealing with old technology (most of the new inventions are not successful.) Finally, the moment a young engineer starts working at an aerospace factory, he becomes privy to state secrets and is no longer allowed to travel outside of Russia.

"In other words, a promising 22 or 23-year-old specialist

turns into a serf from Imperial Russia," says Luzin. "It is a serious demotivator."

No to Private Initiatives

Private space projects and companies could, in theory, keep talented youth in the country, offering them decent salaries and challenging tasks. Such initiatives would also make the industry more competitive and contribute to the country's economy.

"Many services are only possible because of satellite technologies, like weather monitoring, Internet reception, geolocation," says the former State Duma deputy Dmitry Gudkov, who unsuccessfully lobbied a bill on private cosmonautics. "These services have become part of our economy, and they can and should be carried out by private companies."

But the Russian state isn't keen on private enterprise entering the aerospace industry, which is why Gudkov's bill on easing bureaucracy for private space projects never passed.

Just a Gesture

In such circumstances, the launch of a new space faculty is unlikely to change much. For the most part, it should be seen as a political gesture on MSU's part, says Luzin: "It's their way of showing that they're following the trends and are ready to serve to the Kremlin's needs, rather than representing a real strategy to revive the industry."

The new faculty has yet to offer real detail on what kind of specialists it plans to develop: will it be engineers, mathematicians or physicians? What would make its graduates different from similar ones from other faculties? A request for comment, sent by The Moscow Times, went unanswered by the time this article went to press. **TMT**

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РЕКЛАМА

BEAR MEAT

La dolce vita in the heart of Russia

The best Italian clinics have opened in Moscow



The economic crisis in Russia has had an unexpectedly beneficial impact on the market for medical services. Medical tourism is gaining even more momentum. With the advent of healthcare optimization reforms, Russians have become increasingly interested in treatment abroad. And, along with the traditional Israel, Germany and Canada, one of the favorite places for this kind of travel is Italy.

On the other hand, tourism has become expensive for many, and foreign medical companies now consider the Russian market one of their priorities. Among these, for example, is GVM Care & Research, one of the largest Italian companies. Advanced technologies, medical innovations and highly qualified doctors are already available in an Italian clinic in central Moscow. In addition, the government considers attracting foreigners to Russia for medical tourism a priority, and GVM Care & Research meets this requirement fully — their diagnostic center is one of the few, if not the only one, in the country where foreigners can receive support in English and Italian.

From nursing home to international corporation

The global medical tourism industry is estimated by experts at \$439 billion, and by 2025 this figure could rise to \$3 trillion. These data come from a joint study by Visa

and Oxford Economics called the Global 2016 Medical Tourism Index (MTI). Italy, according to the study, is among the top ten most attractive countries for medical tourism. Italy is also in the top ten in the Bloomberg ranking of medical care. The World Health Organization, which makes the most comprehensive global estimates of the health system, ranks Italy second on the entire planet. That is why the country that has long been a Mecca for health pilgrimage from all over the world.

In this context, it is remarkable that, for decades, Italian medicine has developed mainly within the country, and only recently has it been actively promoted on foreign markets. GVM began its ascent in 1973, with the opening of a nursing home in the province of Ravenna, in Cotignola. Today the holding company has a leading place in the country in the fields of health, thermal therapy and medical and scientific research. GVM Care & Research is a network of 23 hospitals and five clinics in Italy and seven clinical centers in France, Poland and Albania. In total, the company has more than 30 GVM Care & Research medical institutions and private medical institutions, with 5000 employees, among whom are 2000 physicians serving patients from all over the world.

The healing sun of Italy

Why is Italy so attractive for foreign tourists? This question has three answers. The

first is advanced technology. GVM Care & Research invests most of its revenue each year in innovation. Therefore, for example, the Institute of Clinical Cardiology in Rome is famous throughout the world for its technology and procedures in interventional cardiology, hemodynamics, electrophysiology, cardiothoracic and vascular surgery. The distinction here is that the institution guarantees the so-called cardiac cycle, providing full and comprehensive care.

The second reason for the attractiveness of Italian clinics is their highly qualified specialists. For example, Maria Cecilia Hospital is proud of its arrhythmology and electrophysiology center. It is also one of the leading centers in the world for treatment of diabetic foot and for thoracic surgery and neurosurgery, for which they prefer to use noninvasive techniques such as the gamma knife (for stereotactic radiosurgery of brain pathologies).

The third, and perhaps most attractive, reason is called wellness tourism. This is integral restoration — both physical and mental. Anywhere in Italy, you can enjoy the sun and spas, take a break from the stress of work, urban living and cold weather, rid yourself of bad habits and recover your fitness. Along with Austria, Germany and Spain, Italy is considered a leader in wellness tourism. Mud baths, balneotherapy, inhalation, gynecological treatments with thermal water and mud, hydrotherapy — you can enjoy all of this,

particularly at the Terme di Castrocaro wellness clinic. Its main objective is the elimination of risk factors in order to improve the quality and length of life.

From Italy with love

Russia, unfortunately, cannot boast of a high position in rankings. According to Bloomberg, it is the penultimate, 54th place for the quality of medical services (Brazil is last). The MTI index places it 34th out of 41. WHO calculations put Russia in 130th place, even behind most of the former Soviet republics. And the economic crisis and optimization of medical services do not foster optimism.

However, it is the crisis that stimulated and attracted foreign investment in the medical field. One of the new priorities for investment for GVM Care & Research is the Russian market. Medical and health treatment abroad is beyond the means of many people, but a little bit of Italy, a taste of la dolce vita, can be enjoyed right in the center of Moscow. GVM has opened a clinic on Smolensky Pereulok. Advanced technology, highly qualified doctors in a number of fields (gynecology, urology, nephrology, neurology, cardiology, ophthalmology) and MRI diagnostics are all provided at budget prices. The Italians see the GVM diagnostic center in Moscow as their calling card and they intend to expand its network to Russian regions.



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"Russia has nothing, no successful politics or economy. All they have is this [aggression]." German Chancellor **Angela Merkel**

The Moscow Times
No. 5782

400

new staff for German intelligence service by 2022.

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pro-Russian CyberBerkut group hacked German government servers.



Reichsbürger — a political movement that adheres to laws of the old German Reich, and believes the modern federal state is a CIA-controlled colony.



The Battle for Berlin

By **Bradley Jardine** newsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Evgeny Tonkonogy**

Germany's beleaguered chancellor is facing threats from all corners

Democracy is "hard work and should not be taken for granted," U.S. President Barack Obama warned during his farewell visit to Europe. He had reason to be worried. After populist insurrections overturned orthodoxies in Britain and the U.S., and now threaten to surge across Europe in the coming months, the continent's political union may well be at threat.

In the face of this coming storm, Germany's normally reserved Angela Merkel, has become an unlikely hero for the liberal order. But after 11 years in power, the chancellor is vulnerable and under attack from all directions, not least from the East.

For the past two years, Merkel has forged strong positions on Russia, and played a central role in ensuring continent-wide agreement on a sanctions regime. By doing so, she went against German business interests and upset the country's political and economic establishment. Merkel managed to win over her critics, but amid the Syrian refugee crisis, divisions have re-emerged and grown.

Russia is desperate to exploit this situation, and Merkel has acknowledged that the propaganda campaign is already under way: "We are already, even now, dealing with Russian disinformation," Merkel said at a recent press conference. "This could play a role [in Germany's upcoming parliamentary] election campaign."

Anti-Americanism

Russian propaganda falls on fertile soil in Germany, where 44 percent of the population distrust politicians and the media. Many in populist opposition movements criticize the mainstream press, dismissing it using the Nazi term "lügenpresse" (lying press). "Germans are also very prone to conspiracy theories," Nikolai Klimeniouk, a German media correspondent for the FAZ newspaper told The Moscow Times.

The Kremlin's narrative finds an "unjustifiably sympathetic" ear in Germany, says Klimeniouk. "Anti-American attitudes often blind people to Russian misdemeanors."

There is a clear inconsistency in German perspectives on the U.S. and Russia. For example, the National Security Agency (NSA) scandal, in which Washington had been recording Merkel's cell-phone calls for a decade, sparked public outrage. In contrast, last year's hacker attack on 14 Bundestag servers, attributed to a Russian military intelligence agency, attracted

"very little public attention or interest" says Klimeniouk.

The U.S. spying scandals have also triggered another of Germany's deep-rooted, post-war political sentiments: hostility toward the NATO alliance. Germans are very opposed to militarism, though their relationship toward international security is more complex. "The German political class are very uncomfortable in their new role as a major global player," says Klimeniouk. "They wish to push all conflict and risks aside."

Such concerns enhance the public's receptivity toward appeasing their neighbor to the east.

Ignorance Is Strength

Experts refer to Russia's military strategy as "hybrid warfare" — war without formal declarations, rules or borders. Instead of weapons, belligerents scuffle using propaganda.

Moscow's flagship German strategy was the launch of a German-language version of the Kremlin-funded propaganda TV network, RT. Russia is also trying to gain influence on German radio. For instance, last August, German radio stations received an offer to buy several news segments. Behind the offer was Sputnik, a sister network to RT, which now receives 10 percent of its global traffic from Germany.

Following Merkel's decision to provide refuge to 1 million Syrians, Russian propaganda has made audacious attempts to influence the news agenda.

According to a Jan. 16 report on Russia's Channel One, a 13 year-old girl named Lisa, whose family emigrated to Germany from Russia, disappeared on Jan. 11 and did not resurface for 30 hours. The presenter stated gravely: "Evidence has emerged that migrants in Germany have started raping children."

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov gleefully broke with diplomatic convention to suggest that German politicians were "whitewashing the reality" of Lisa's disappearance to make it "politically correct."

However, investigators determined that she'd spent the night with a male friend because of problems at school, but it was already too late. RT and Sputnik were already at work mobilizing Germany's Russian-speaking community, whose Berlin demonstrations were a prelude to a wave of protests that followed.

The "Spataussiedler" (late repatriates) — ethnic Germans who left Russia in the 1990s — number 2.5 million and are a

major electoral factor. "Before, perhaps 70 percent were loyal to Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party as gratitude for its repatriation policy in the 1990s," says Klimeniouk. But there has been a shift toward the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

AfD has actively courted this demographic, particularly in the state of Baden-Wurtemberg, where the AfD garnered 52 percent of the vote in Wertheim, a city that is home to a large Russian-speaking community. The party is now in 10 of the country's 16 state parliaments and seems certain to win seats in next year's federal elections.

Haus of Cards

Germany's parliamentary system, although more resilient to populism than its Anglo-Saxon counterparts, is still at threat from a breakdown in the traditional coalition structures.

"A bad coalition would be the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens, and Die Linke" says Klimeniouk. The latter party is not only pro-Russian, but pro-Putin. During the Ukrainian crisis, Die Linke delivered "humanitarian aid" to the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, and one of its politicians recently declared Crimea to be Russian territory.

The Social Democrats could also pose a problem for the sanctions regime as they remain committed to their Cold War policy of Ostpolitik, a form of appeasement. "The party leadership are also Schröderites" adds Klimeniouk referring to Gerhard Schröder, the former SPD Chancellor known for his close ties to Russian lobbyists. The party would undermine Berlin's role as a major player against Russian aggression, says Klimeniouk.

The Kremlin could establish a pro-Russian coalition by boosting the AfD's campaign, which is attracting CDU voters and weakening Merkel's position. Putin is also hard at work courting Horst Seehofer, the head of the CDU's Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, and recently met him. The Kremlin is hoping to encourage division between Bavaria's ruling conservatives and the CDU over the issue of Merkel's refugee policy.

While Merkel's popularity still hovers above 45 percent, it is at its lowest since 2011. After Brexit and Trump, nothing is certain.

"This election will be difficult — like no other election since reunification," Merkel said after confirming that she would be standing for a fourth political term. **TMT**

Out & About



Weekly round-up of all that's new, delicious and fun in Moscow.



OBRATNAYA TYAGA



The owner of Obratnaya Tyaga operates on a "no fuss, no frills" principle. The menu is limited, but the chef promises dishes will change regularly.

Obratnaya Tyaga: A Labor of Love

By **Andrei Muchnik** artsreporter@imedia.ru

Food writer Alexander Ilyin opens a simple bistro with quality dishes

Obratnaya Tyaga is the project of longtime Afisha restaurant critic and all-round Moscow foodie Alexander Ilyin. After years of sampling the best bites in the city, Ilyin has taken the plunge and opened his own eatery on one of the lanes branching off from historical Sretenka Ulitsa.

A firefighting term, it's ambiguous whether Obratnaya Tyaga (backdraft) is named after a nearby fire station or the eponymous 1990s film with Robert De Niro. The menu is modest, but the owners promise that dishes will change often. Ilyin focuses on a no frills, no fuss principle. "The res-

taurant has to feed the people first, and search for new meanings second," he said in a statement to the press about the new eatery.

The journalist-turned-restaurateur is no stranger to the kitchen, having earlier tried his hand as a chef at Noor Electro, where he developed the breakfast menu, and Saperavi Cafe.

Start with the zucchini draniki (Belarusian potato pancakes) with sour cream mixed with Serbian bryndza cheese and pike roe (250 rubles). Move on to the duck, which has been baked for 10 hours at a low temperature to tender, mouth-watering effect. The bird in question is served with

walnut sauce, pickled apples and black rye bread, which acts as a kind of Russified bruschetta (350 rubles). Alternatively, opt for the pork neck with Gurian cabbage — Georgian style cabbage pickled with beets and cumin — which offers a dash of bright red color to your dining table (350 rubles).

Obratnaya Tyaga also offers a new take on the millennial Moscow classics — Caesar salad and pasta carbonara. The former is pared down to its base components of salad, anchovies, croutons and dressing, with no chicken in sight. The carbonara includes grilled bacon, but without the traditional creamy sauce (500 rubles). The bargain

of the menu is the filet mignon steak with baked parsnip, carrots and zucchini which for 1,100 rubles is a veritable steal in Moscow.

Pair your meal with a signature cocktail from skilled mixologist Vasily Zheglov. The barman adds a dash of the unexpected to his drinks, such as a Bangkok sour (460 rubles) based on bourbon infused with coconut cream and a margarita with smoked pear infused tequila (560 rubles). **TMT**

+7 (926) 964 6323
facebook.com/obratnatyaga
1 Pereulok Rybnikov
Metro Turgenevskaya, Sukharevskaya

NEWS & OPENINGS



U SLAVIKA / INSTAGRAM

U Slavika

The secret is out

U Slavika, once a hole-in-the-wall secret sandwich joint, has become a little more official with a proper dining space on Tverskaya Ulitsa. Think craft beer, a short burger menu (all 350 rubles) and a Facebook page created by a dedicated group of fans. The cracked pepper and salted french fries (150 rubles) are positively addictive.

+7 (499) 990 0272
27 Tverskaya Ulitsa Bldg 2
Second Floor
Metro Mayakovskaya



CORNER CAFE & KITCHEN

Corner Cafe & Kitchen

Asian food to suit all tastes

Can't decide whether you want Chinese, Japanese or Vietnamese? Bring a group of friends and order a pile of chicken gyozas, crispy Peking duck and Vietnamese beef pho to kick-start your evening. For a quick, delicious lunch you can't go wrong with the miso ramen (430 rubles): a hearty bowl of noodle soup, pork, egg, bean sprouts and a touch of seaweed.

+7 (495) 544 3057
facebook.com/cornercafekitchen
17 Kompozitorskaya Ulitsa
Metro Smolenskaya



45°/60°

45°/60°

A grill by real experts

45°/60° is a new grill restaurant from the owner of the Goodman steak-house chain, just a five minute walk from Prospekt Mira metro station. The name refers to the minimum and maximum temperature when cooking a steak. Steaks are from 650 rubles, with ribeye from 1750 rubles. Alternatively opt for the grilled lamb (680 rubles) with Spanish style baked peppers.

+7 (495) 645 4560
45-60.ru
31 Ulitsa Shchepkina
Metro Prospekt Mira



VILLA SUMOSAN

Villa Sumosan

Upmarket Japanese-Israeli cuisine

Villa Sumosan is the newest addition to the Sumosan family, which, aside from the namesake nouveau riche restaurant with branches in Dubai and London, has a liberally priced sushi place called Buba. Villa is not so affordable, with a tiny portion of gyoza dumplings costing 460 rubles and what might possibly be the most expensive shawarma in the city for 990 rubles.

+7 (495) 236 6953
facebook.com/villasumosan
3 Ulitsa Burdenko
Metro Park Kultury

Take it and go!

Four pages packed with the best places in Moscow to eat, drink, walk, shop, listen, watch, dance and sightsee. A new walking route and listings every week! **Take it, use it, save it!**

On and Around Myasnitskaya From a Butcher's Street to Modern Chic

By **Michele A. Berdy** m.berdy@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Ilya Kutoboy**

Wander the back streets near Myasnitskaya and discover a horror film set, a quirky museum, and the site of a momentous literary event

6. Venevitinov House

Double back to Krivokolenny Pereulok and turn left. Just before the bend in the road stands a small classical style house on the left. Built in the late 1790s, it was purchased by the Venevitinov family in 1805 and remained in the family until the 1840s. The family's son, Dmitry, was a poet and philosopher of some talent, but his talent for friendship and hospitality seem to have been greater. On Oct. 12, 1826 he invited a group of friends to a gathering where the poet Alexander Pushkin read his play "Boris Godunov" for the first time. The Venevitinov family and Pushkin's visit are noted on well-preserved plaques on the façade. Unfortunately the rest of the house seems to be falling apart despite its status as both an architectural marvel — how many lovely little 18th century manor houses are still standing in Moscow? — and as the site of an important literary event. After a moment to ponder the house's beauty and sad fate, continue on until you come out on Myasnitskaya Ulitsa, where you come back to this century in any one of a dozen excellent bars and eateries.

4 Krivokolenny Pereulok



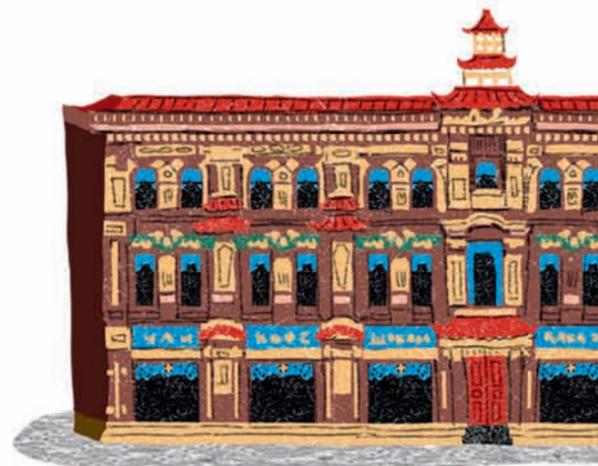
Krivokolenny Pereulok

6

2. Perlov Tea Shop

The next building is hard to miss and even harder to misidentify — it's the Perlov Tea Shop. It didn't always look like a Chinese pagoda. The original building for two Perlov brothers, who had a tea trading company, was in the Renaissance style. But when one of the brothers, Sergei, learned that Li Hongzhang, the representative of the Qing Dynasty, was coming for the coronation of Nicholas II in 1896, he pulled out of the partnership and decided to redo the shop in honor of the Chinese ambassador's arrival. Hoping to flatter him into a beneficial trade agreement, he commissioned Karl Gippius to create a Chinese pagoda for their meeting. Unfortunately, Sergei Perlov's efforts were for naught; the Chinese ambassador visited his brother Semyon's shop instead. But the lavishly decorated shop remains and is still a terrific tea and coffee shop.

19 Myasnitskaya Ulitsa



3

4. Golitsyn Manor House

Turn left on Bankovskaya Ulitsa, a narrow street that stood here in the 17th century. At the end of it, stop and look to the right. There is a building of the Church of Archangel Michael (the charmingly named Golitsyn House, so called because of its ornate knees). Across the street is a building in total dilapidation looking like a horror film set. Perhaps there is an ancient atmospheric house dating from the 17th century when it was owned by a noble family. It was sold several times and for some reason it now stands as a little kiddie park and building.

10 Krivokolenny Pereulok



4

5

Armyansky Pereulok



Around Myasnit'skaya

3-hour walk



Metro Chistiye Prudy

1



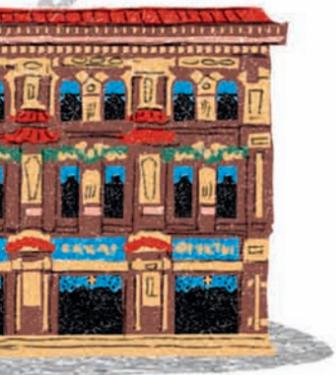
1. Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture

To begin this walk, take the metro to the Turgenevskaya or Chistiye Prudy stations and then exit to Myasnit'skaya Ulitsa (Butcher's Street). Now there isn't a meat cleaver in sight on this upscale street. On the left, you'll see the post office all wrapped up for Christmas (or repairs). On the right at the corner you'll see an imposing yellow and white classical style building. This is now the Ilya Glazunov Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, but once it vied with the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts to be the best art school in the country. Built in the late 18th century, over the years it welcomed and taught such brilliant artists as Isaac Levitan, Mikhail Nesterov and Anna Golubkina. Inside there is a spectacular exhibition hall. And the heady scent of history.

21 Myasnit'skaya Ulitsa

Myasnit'skaya Ulitsa

2



3. Shekhtel House

As you walk along the street your eye is drawn to the pretty pink and white house on the right (built as part of an almshouse in 1876); and the famous pale blue Lion's Head house next to it, built in 1910; or the decorated house No. 24, Bldg. 2, which once served as a museum for the Stroganov crafts and art institute. Among all this flamboyant beauty, you might overlook the plain brick building on the corner of Myasnit'skaya and Bankovskiy Pereulok. Stop on the right side of the street and look up. See them? Magnificent style modern ceramic panels done by the artist Fyodor Fedorovsky. The building was designed by the architect Fyodor Shekhtel in 1906.

24/1 Myasnit'skaya Ulitsa



house

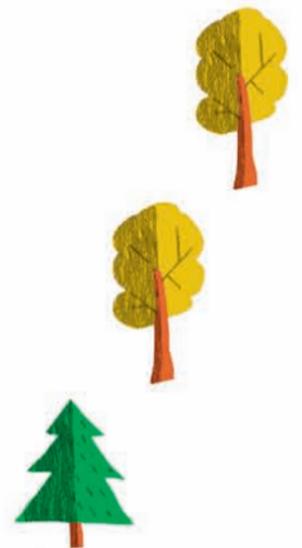
by Pereulok, a street that is a mere 74 meters wide, named after the currency exchange bank built in the 18th century. When you get to the end of the street, turn left at the lovely salmon-pink spire of the Angel Gabriel, and then turn right on to Krivokolenny Pereulok (Bent Knee Alley). At the first of its two sharp turns, like bended knees, you'll see a manor house in a state of near ruin. Is it a set for a horror movie. Or perhaps a museum? Countless still living inside? The very street dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, when it belonged to the princely Golitsyn family. After being abandoned and rented out for over a century, for decades unloved and unwanted, but with a little renovation and a book exchange out front.



5. Moscow Lights Museum

Continue to the right, contemplating the mysteries of the Moscow real estate market, and then turn left on Armiyansky Pereulok, named for the Armenians who settled here and who still have their Embassy here. On the left is a small building with what seem to be an inordinate number of streetlights outside. This is the museum Ogni Moskvy (Moscow Lights), a quirky little museum that charts the history of lighting in the city. Candles, kerosene lamps, more kinds of lightbulbs than you dreamed of (including with filaments in the shape of Scotch terriers); street lamps, electrical grids, and nifty iron grippers to let you climb up utility poles. Oddly fascinating. Beware the high concentration of excited children doing all kind of hands-on activities on weekend afternoons. The museum also runs dozens of programs for kids and adults, including a trip around town to see all the lights at night. Stop in.

3-5 Armiyansky Pereulok, Bldg. 1





Jim Alger, educational consultant at EED Learning

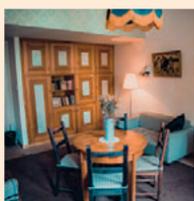
"The business lunch at **Brisket BBQ** is absolutely off the chain. 500 rubles for Texas style soup, refried beans, a delicious pulled pork burger with fries and a massive glass of homemade lemonade. No dill in sight."



VODKA HISTORY MUSEUM / FACEBOOK

Winter Warmers: The Best Drinks of the Season

The humble coffee — or mulled wine — break has grown more essential than ever during these long, dark winter months. From spiced lattes to cinnamon cocktails, these hearty winter warmers will restore the pink to your cheeks and help melt that chill from head to toe.



TSIFERBLAT

Tsiferblat

Taking your time over tea

As the days get shorter, coffee breaks incrementally grow longer. The last thing you want to do once you have settled down in a comfy chair and are finally able to feel your fingers again is to venture back outside into the cold. However, sitting around in a cafe for more than 20 minutes can prove difficult when you have a waiter glaring at you as you have only ordered an Americano in the two hours you have been there. At the Tsiferblat anti-cafe, you are invited to spend as long as you want lounging about, paying for the amount of time you are there rather than the unlimited tea, coffee and snacks. It's nothing fancy, but the staff use a proper barista-style coffee machine

and the free WiFi makes it the perfect spot to work or while away the hours on a snowy weekend.

+7 (965) 447 6299

pushkin.ziferblat.net
12 Tverskaya Ulitsa, Bldg.1
Metro Pushkinskaya



DABLBI / FACEBOOK

Dablbi

Sugar, spice and everything nice

The popular chain Dablbi has released a winter menu full of festive treats to help fend off the cold, all of which are priced at 350 rubles. For those with a sweet tooth the cherry latte is a must, while chocolate lovers can get their fix from the raf mocha. There's also an interesting "coffee tea," a herbal brew made from the non-coffee

bean parts of the plant, and an invigorating blackberry tea, which works wonders at soothing a sore throat.

double-b.ru

Various locations



GARAGE CAFE

Garage Cafe

Warm up after a winter wander

If you're brave enough to lace up your boots and make the trek out to Gorky Park then reward yourself by taking shelter from the elements in the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. After wandering around the season's exhibitions, head to the charming onsite cafe for a cup of currant punch (250 rubles), a spiced chai latte (250 rubles) or an Ivan Chai herbal tea (250 rubles) to help your circulation get back up to speed.

+7 (495) 645 0520

garagemca.org/en/visit/cafe
9/32 Krymsky Val Ulitsa
Metro Park Kultury,
Oktyabrskaya



STRELKA / FACEBOOK

Strelka

Cocktails to warm the soul

Add a bit of Christmas spirit to your post-work drinks and head over to Strelka for

delicious winter cocktails and a stylish Scandinavia meets Art Deco interior. Spice up your usual wine order by replacing it with a fragrant mulled wine (450 rubles) or to see the talented bartenders work their magic, try a "Hot Gold" — a decadent concoction of orange juice, amaretto and cinnamon. Those wanting to keep a clear head can try the deeply flavored bilberry punch or piping hot rooibos cappuccino — a tea cleverly disguised as a coffee.

+7 (495) 771 7416

strelka.com/bar

14 Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya
Metro Kropotkinskaya



VODKA HISTORY MUSEUM

Vodka History Museum

When in Russia...

Nothing warms up your insides quite like a shot of vodka, and as the mercury drops, you have the perfect excuse to learn a little more about Russia's favorite beverage and stay in the warm. At Moscow's Vodka History Museum you can learn more about the potent tippie before heading to the onsite cozy underground restaurant "Traktir," where you can sample an array of different types of vodka while enjoying Russian specialties prepared according to a cookbook published in 1887. The museum is small, but if you're headed to Izmailovo market to buy souvenirs it's worth a visit.

+7 (499) 166 5097

vodkamuseum.ru

73 Izmailovskoye Shosse
Metro Partizanskaya

The Moscow Times CONFERENCES

DECEMBER 13

MARRIOTT ROYAL AURORA

TOP 10 CIVIL DISPUTES: PAST AND PRESENT PRACTICES

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the company, "Gorodis-
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Ilya Ulyanenko
Director of court and
claim settlement depart-
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KEY TOPICS

- What's new in arbitration record management.
- The best practices of labor disputes.
- Intellectual property and patent rights. Workshop on the most talked-about judicial disputes.
- New labor disputes: what did 2016 bring us?
- Legal entity bankruptcy — a review of judicial practice.
- Review of anti-monopoly and civil law judicial practices.



“One elderly man waited for his sentence for 4 years in Butyrka.”
Anna Karetnikova, prisoners rights campaigner.

2,000

the number of prisoners currently held in Butyrka.



Moscow's Butyrka fortress dates back to the 17th century, but the prison building was erected under Catherine the Great in 1879.

8

the number of detention centers in Moscow, one of which belongs to the FSB.



ALEXANDRA MUDRATS / TASS

Independent activists estimate that Moscow's Butyrka prison is overcrowded by 30-40 percent.

Crime and Punishment

By **Ola Cichowlas** o.cichowlas@imedia.ru | Twitter: @olacicho

Crumbling and overcrowded, Moscow's prisons are in need of a fundamental overhaul

A desperate letter from an Arctic prison colony this month has put the spotlight back on Russia's notorious penal system. Ildar Dadin, an opposition activist serving two and a half years in jail for taking part in anti-government protests last year, told his lawyers that he was tortured by his prison guards.

Dadin's allegations, described in a chillingly detailed letter written by his lawyer, shocked Russia. When the news reached Moscow, activists urged the capital's prison service to look into the conditions in their own backyard: the city's detention centers.

Moscow's pre-trial detention centers house inmates waiting for a court ruling on their case, which, in Russia, can turn into a long wait. Today, there are eight functioning centers in the Russian capital. Seven belong to Russia's Federal Prison Service and the other, Lefortovo, to the Federal Security Service (FSB).

A Fortress With a Story

The most famous of these is Butyrka, a red-bricked medieval fortress in northern Moscow. Indeed, this is where Dadin was held, before being transported to a prison camp in Russia's Far North. Built under Catherine the Great, Butyrka has housed Russia's most famous political prisoners since the 18th century. Bolsheviks, including Cheka founder Felix Dzerzhinsky, occupied Butyrka's cells under the tsars, before filling its dungeons with their opponents — from Mandelstam to Solzhenitsyn.

In 2009, Butyrka made global headlines after the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky. Magnitsky had been held in appalling conditions, repeatedly denied proper medical attention. His former boss, the exiled fund manager Bill Browder, led a campaign against those responsible for his death. The result was new legislation passed by the U.S. Congress and President Barack Obama imposing visa and financial restrictions against a dozen Russian officials.

Following Magnitsky's death, prison authorities were forced to make improvements to the living conditions inside Butyrka. One of the first areas that was significantly improved was the prison's medical department. But there are two things prison authorities have not been able to change: the crumbling state of the 18th century building and overcrowding.

Lawyer Sergei Panchenko, who visits Butyrka regularly, says the overcrowding puts a strain on all services. “Lawyers queue for hours to be able to speak to their clients,” he says. Inmates are often denied the possibility to see their relatives, as a means to pressure them into admitting their guilt.

The situation is the worst in the FSB's isolation centre in Lefortovo, Panchenko says. Here, prisoners have received the right

to see their lawyer or relatives based on a lottery system. Living conditions for prisoners are dire. Officially, they have the right to at least one shower a week, but Lefortovo has no hot water.

Moscow's prisons are so full that — for the first time in a decade — prison authorities are considering building two new isolation centers on the outskirts of the capital. According to Sergei Tsygankov, the Federal Prison Service's Moscow director, detention centers are currently overpopulated by 23 percent, meaning that there are 2,000 prisoners too many in the city's prisons.

Independent activists estimate that the real figure is actually higher. Butyrka, Karetnikova says, is overcrowded “by 30-40 percent.” Officially, each prisoner has the right to four square meters of living space and his or her own bed. But in Butyrka, prisoners often have to take turns to sleep on the floor.

The construction of new detention centers is unlikely to solve the problem of overcrowding alone. “The authorities simply want to lock as many people up as they can,” says Karetnikova. “Courts delay rulings as a matter of course, guaranteeing full capacity. One elderly man waited for his sentence for four years in Butyrka. Four years!”

Uncertain Future

When Russian media tycoon Vladimir Gusinsky was arrested and briefly sent to Butyrka in 2000, he was so horrified by the conditions that he fixed the roof with his own money, and bought new bedding for all the prison's inmates.

Sixteen years later, little has changed.

28 year-old Ilya Gushin was sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment for his role in the 2012 anti-government Bolotnaya protests. He spent the first ten months awaiting sentencing in Butyrka, and confirms that conditions there remain dire.

“The heating system was so old it would regularly break down,” he told The Moscow Times. One saving grace about the antiquity of the prison, however, was that it had high ceilings — “you felt there was more breathing space.”

Even if authorities had the desire to do so, modernizing the crumbling facilities at Butyrka would not be easy. “Renovation would be a waste of money,” says Karetnikova. Other prisoners' rights campaigners agree the building would serve the city better as a museum rather than a functioning prison.

Just a few years ago, there were indeed plans to close the prison and turn it into a museum. City authorities expressed support for these plans. In 2011, Moscow's former Culture Minister Sergei Kapkov said that both the city and prisoners would benefit from Butyrka finally shutting its doors.

“Moscow would gain an interesting museum and the prisoners would receive better living conditions.”

With no plan of what to do with the 2,000 prisoners, the Butyrka Museum never came into existence. Instead, prison authorities opened a limited exhibition in one of the building's four towers. One day, campaigners hope, Butyrka will finally open all its doors to the public. But for now, its centuries-old cells continue to be filled with inmates, some inmates waiting for years for a court to decide whether they are guilty or not. **TMT**



18+

pekrana

"This is just an urban planning conflict, and yet we're being branded traitors." **Viktoriya Mironova**, activist



38/200

churches completed.

2013

Russia criminalizes "insulting the feelings of religious believers."



The 40x40 movement was set up in response to the "information attacks" on the Orthodox Church, including a punk performance by Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow.



KATERINA LOBANOVA

The Wrong Church to Cross

By [Eva Hartog](#) e.hartog@imedia.ru | Twitter: @EvaHartog

Russian Orthodox Church turns up the heat on Muscovites opposing new church construction in local park

On the edge of a park in a sleepy neighborhood in northern Moscow, a Russian Orthodox priest is giving an outdoor sermon to a small congregation, which is huddled together in the November cold. Facing them on the opposite side of a flimsy wire fence, is an altogether angrier gathering of about 100 protesters.

"Get out of our park," they chant. "Out!"

The standoff between the group of believers and protesters has become a weekly fixture on Sunday mornings at Torfyanka Park. At stake is the proposed construction of an Orthodox church. The protesters say they are defending their local park from an illegal land grab. The Orthodox Church has branded them "church and cross haters."

More than a year and a half after the protest began, the conflict is no nearer to resolution. In fact, this month the fight seems to be escalating to new heights after protesters' homes were raided by riot police. It was a lesson to grassroots protesters throughout Russia: When you take up an adversary as powerful as the Russian Orthodox Church, you should get ready for a long and difficult fight.

Morning Call

"It was around 6 a.m. when our doorbell rang over and over again, rrrring, rrrring, rrrring!" says pensioner Alexandra Trofimovna, 68, gesturing emotionally. "We kept asking: who is it? There was no answer. And then they forced the door open with an angle grinder, and a group of officers stormed in."

Trofimovna's family was among roughly a dozen Torfyanka protesters who received unannounced visits from masked riot police on Nov. 14. During the raids, phones and comput-

ers were confiscated and searched. "They kept asking: where is the money? They think we're being paid by the U.S. State Department or the British intelligence service," she says.

Her daughter played an active role in the Torfyanka protest and law enforcement now consider her "an instigator," Trofimovna says. "But there is no organizer. People come themselves, they want their park."

The protesters have been called as "witnesses" in a criminal case on charges of "insulting the feelings of religious

believers," in which as of yet no one has been charged. According to media reports, prosecutors opened the case after receiving complaints from various religious figures and Orthodox activists, who claim the Torfyanka protesters are violating their religious rights.

When asked about that accusation, a middle-aged woman at Torfyanka reacts with a mix of offense and incredulity, befitting of a country where about 70 percent of people identify as Russian Orthodox. "We are all believers here!" she says.

200 Churches

The protest over Torfyanka stretches back to early summer 2015, when construction of a new Orthodox Church began on the edge of the park.

The future place of worship was part of the "200 churches" program, launched in 2010 by former mayor Yury Luzhkov and Patriarch Kirill. The plan was as simple as it was ambitious: to bring Moscow closer to the national average of one Orthodox church per 11,000 people. Upon completion, Luzhkov said, Moscow would be a city where there would "not be a place without God's church within walking distance."

Many Muscovites, however, have not welcomed the Church's expansion boom, especially when it came at the expense of local parks and squares. In many cases, residents were presented with a fait accompli.

"They started building in the middle of the night, like thieves," says Viktoriya Mironova, a Torfyanka local. "It came as a complete shock."

Over the past years, various local protest movements have sprung up around the capital — some pushing for new



ARTUR NOVOSILITSEV / TASS

Many Muscovites have not welcomed the Church's expansion boom, especially in parks.



“We can’t take our cue from people who for ideological reasons hate the symbol of the Lord’s cross.”
Patriarch Kirill

90 Mln rubles
cost of building a small church, according to RBC.



According to the Church, an additional **591 churches** would have to be built to bring Moscow up to the national average of one church per 11,000 people.

56 %
of Russians agree with degree of Church’s influence.



Protesters gather in the park in northern Moscow and one protester holds a placard describing local priest Oleg Shalimov as a ‘snitch.’

THE WORD’S WORTH

A Prince By Any Other Name

Сударь: My good sir

By **Michele A. Berdy**
Moscow-based translator and interpreter, author of “The Russian Word’s Worth” (Glas), a collection of her columns.



YEVEGENY PARYONOV

locations, others questioning the need for more Orthodox churches in a multi-faith city. At least 27 planned churches had been forced to find a new location after meeting a wall of local resistance, according to the Vedomosti business daily.

After several months of confrontation at Torfyanka, the Church announced in August last year that it was willing to move. It had reason to compromise. Clashes between local residents and ultra-orthodox activists of the “40x40” movement — a vigilante group whose name refers to the supposed 1,600 churches that existed in pre-revolution Moscow — had resulted in various broken bones and much negative publicity. Under public pressure, prosecutors had also started a probe into the legality of the construction plans.

After a majority of residents backed relocation in an online vote on the authorities’ Aktivny Grazhdanin platform, the church was offered a different plot nearby. In April, a new church opened its doors two kilometers away — but conflict never left Torfyanka.

Information War

At the center of current tensions is a symbolic two-meter-high Orthodox cross, left behind in the park on a plot surrounded by a wire fence. Here, a small congregation of activists continues to hold a weekly service. In the eyes of the residents, it is a deliberate provocation. “Why can’t they just leave the park?” asks Mironova, adding that she, an Orthodox believer, was refused admission to the service for being a “church hater.”

Protesters complain of intimidation from state media. A camera crew belonging to the Kremlin-sympathetic NTV television station filmed the early morning raids by law enforcement — much to the residents’ surprise and annoyance — and aired the segment under the heading: “Raids on neopagans.”

The pro-Kremlin Life.ru tabloid has also recently run stories branding the protesters as “extremists.”

Some residents blame the wave of negative coverage on Patriarch Kirill, whose public statement last month put an end to their hopes of peaceful reconciliation.

“Today, the cross is being fought with the same fury as the construction of the church. Maybe it wasn’t about the defense of the park from the start, but a battle against the cross, a symbol of Christianity?” he said at a religious forum. “We can’t take our cue from people who have an ideological hatred of the Lord’s cross.”

He also dismissed the Torfyanka movement as consisting of “representatives of sects and pagan communities” and opposition politicians.

As the Torfyanka protest has grown, it has become a rallying point for those who oppose the growing influence of the Orthodox Church on society, such as the introduction of a 2013 law criminalizing “offending the feelings of believers.”

“The authorities could solve this problem in ten minutes if they wanted to,” the leader of the Moscow branch of the opposition Yabloko party, Sergei Mitrokhin, said at the Sun-

day protest. “But in today’s Russia, the Patriarch calls the shots and authorities fear him.”

Though many of the protesters welcome any support they can get, they are keen to emphasize the initial apolitical nature of the conflict. “This started as a peaceful, civilian protest, it’s a conflict over urban planning,” says Mironova. “Many of us are believers, too, but we’re being branded traitors!”

Analyst Yekaterina Schulmann says the religious rhetoric acts as a smokescreen for the vested financial interests of developers’ plans to exploit valuable Moscow land.

“This is not so much about the church as about the Moscow developers industry,” she says. “The church is in it, too, of course, but mostly for PR-support: Haters of the Cross sounds better than enemies of developers.”



SERGEI SHAHIDZHANYAN / TASS

The protest is a rallying point for those who oppose the growing influence of the Church.

No End

Without mediation, however, the conflict at Torfyanka looks set to escalate. At the most recent Sunday service, a busload of police officers was forced to intervene as angry protesters tried to stop a priest from driving away from the scene.

“It only needs a spark to set off this barrel of gunpowder,” a Torfyanka activist warned earlier this month at an urban forum in the capital. “The two sides are prepared to kill each other.”

Such local anger is unlikely to faze the religious activists. They see the protest as an attack on religion itself and categorically deny there are believers and local residents among the protesters. “No believer would ever resist a church or a cross,” says 40x40 member Yury Shubin.

“In the past Russian Orthodox believers have been thrown to the lions, Christians have been burned alive and yet we did not deny our faith,” he adds.

“If the Patriarch wants a cross at Torfyanka, we will defend it to the end. Even if they start tearing us to pieces.” **TMT**

Foreign readers of Russian literature always have trouble with the names — last names that change depending on gender; first names and patronymics; pet names that depend on the speaker, the speaker’s mood, and the age and behavior of the person being discussed. Particularly annoying are the nicknames that seem to have no connection with the full name, such as Шура for Александр. And then there are all those titles, which seem to change all the time and have a handful of translations.

Russian nobility is slightly confusing, but mostly because it changed over time. Here’s a little primer for all you secret monarchists out there.

Once upon a time there was князь, which is translated as prince but really meant king, as you can tell by the linguistic similarity. The wife of the князь or female leader was княгиня. The daughter of the князь was княжна. Aren’t you happy to finally know that?

A long, long time ago, князь (prince) was the ruler of княжество (principality), but starting in the 10th century the ruler of what we call a city state or principality became called Великий князь (great or grand prince). Moscow had one, as did Tver, Smolensk and other important places. But as you probably know from history books, the московские великие князи (Moscow grand princes) began fighting, defeating, and co-opting the other grand princes. And then, in 1547 Великий князь Иван IV — aka Иван Грозный (Ivan the Terrible, Awesome, Majestic, Really Cool Although With Certain Mental Health Issues, depending on your point of view and preferred translation) — decided that since he was now the ruler of великие князи, he needed a title that put him above them. So he Russified Caesar into царь (tsar), and crowned himself. The leader of всяя Руси (all the Russias, meaning Russia, Ukraine — “Little Russia” — and Belarus — “White Russia”) was the царь until 1721, when Peter the Great decided that Император (Emperor) was a more appropriate title and tacked that on, too.

The confusing bit with the великие князи is this: in the late 19th century, Alexander III decided to call all the children and grandchildren (through the sons) of the царь/император either великий князь or великая княжна, which should be Grand Prince and Grand Princess but is generally translated as Grand Duke and Grand Duchess. Because княжна is a daughter and княгиня is a contemporary of the князь, the wife of a Grand Duke is великая княгиня.

Other than that, Russia had only two additional noble titles, both added under Peter the Great: граф и графиня (Count and Countess) and барон и баронесса (Baron and Baroness). All the other noble titles you come across in 19th century Russian literature are Russian translations of European titles, like маркиз (Marquis) and герцог (Duke).

Sometimes барон is used to mean “the boss man” as in как барон хочет (whatever he wants — he’s the boss). It’s also used as a calque from English: oil barons are нефтяные бароны.

At the bottom of the nobility chart — or actually under it — are сударь and сударыня: once polite ways of addressing people in the upper classes, now pretentious ways of addressing diners in Ye Olde Russkie Restaurants. Always difficult to translate. Ma’am and Sir are too modern and not quite sycophantic enough. I’d go with “my good sir” and “my dear lady” — if I ran Ye Olde Russkie Restaurant, that is. **TMT**

"Richter is much more than a painter."
Paul Moorhouse, curator at the
National Portrait Gallery London.



84

at this age Richter
is still an active painter.

\$34 million

was paid for a Richter
"squeegee abstract" in 2012
at auction.



"You want to understand what you
see and you try to make a picture out
of it. Later you realize that you can't
represent reality." **Gerhard Richter**

Representing the Unimaginable

By **Andrei Muchnik** artsreporter@imedia.ru

Gerhard Richter's new exhibition explores how art can respond to the horrors of the 20th century

Gerhard Richter has produced works ranging from photorealism to abstract-impressionism since he left East Germany in 1961, shortly before the construction of the Berlin wall. Now, at 84-years old, Richter is widely regarded as the world's greatest living artist.

His engagement with the titanic events of the 20th century is at the heart of his current exhibition at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, the first major solo exhibition of the artist's career in Russia.

The centerpiece of the show, "Abstraction and Appearance," is an abstract series dedicated to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Curated by Paul Moorhouse, senior curator at the National Portrait Gallery in London, the exhibition explores if and how art can represent a monumental human tragedy of such magnitude.

A Response to the Holocaust

The exhibition surveys Richter's major works from 1973 to 2016, particularly focussing on the artist's use of abstraction. But as Moorhouse was keen to point out, this is just a facet of his oeuvre.

"He's famously an artist who works in a range of different styles, some of which appear contradictory — they seem almost opposed. As a painter, he is famous for working in a way that both figurative and at the same time abstract. These two things which have been opposed for so much of the 20th century are united in Richter's work."

This union of opposing styles is most tangible in "Birkenau" (2014), a series of four large-format abstract paintings based on photographs taken by a Jewish Sonderkommando at the Auschwitz-Birkenau



The exhibition surveys Richter's major works from 1973-2016, particularly his use of abstraction.

concentration camp in August 1944. The atrocities depicted in the photographs are not visible in the paintings, and instead layered over with gray, black, red and green hues.

These are accompanied by the original photographs and 93 photographic details of Richter's abstract works, with the aim of exploring the role of replication in our experience of reality and appearance.

For Moorhouse the question posed in "Birkenau" is about how we react to reality with art: "How do we

represent an event which was entirely real, but none of us here experienced it? We have to find way to describe it."

Found Photographs and Photorealism

In 1962 Richter began making paintings that were based on photographs. Using images taken from magazines and family albums, he would turn them into incredible photorealistic painted portraits, landscapes, and still lifes. In some works he went on to incorporate a signature "blur" to the image on the final canvas.

In 1966 he surprised everybody by completely changing direction and began making abstract paintings. First, as Moorhouse puts it, they were just "random permutations of color," but by 1976 he was making the "extraordinary painterly abstractions" he is now most famous for.

Speaking of his art, Richter has said: "I don't mistrust reality, of which I know next to nothing. I mistrust the picture of reality conveyed to us by our senses, which are imperfect and circumscribed."

This is particularly tangible in his "overpainted photographs," a style in which photographic and abstract elements of his work come together, such as the special project "Museum Visits," which includes a selection of 24 works on show at the current exhibition.

Moorhouse is firm that "Abstraction and Appearance" is not a retrospective. "Although it is the first time Richter's work is shown in Russia, we didn't want to do a kind of introduction. What we wanted to do was to create an exhibition that would have a relationship with this museum and with Jewish history." **TMT**

"Abstraction and Appearance" runs through Feb. 5 at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center. 11/1A Ulitsa Obraztsova. Metro Marina Roshcha, Mendeleyevskaya. jewish-museum.ru



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November 24 – 30

FILM **Train to Busan** Korean zombie thriller

"Train to Busan" has taken Asia by storm since its release earlier this year and now the zombie thriller is out to make Muscovites think twice about taking the metro home. It has all the elements of a good horror — endless thrills, heart wrenching suspense and lots and lots of gore. Directed by Yeon Sang-ho, "Train to Busan" also makes some important points about class conflict on its plague-ridden rail ride. Fast paced and easy to follow, this movie will sweep you up in all its gory glory. In Korean with Russian subtitles.

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CONCERT **Belka Records Launch** Eastern sounds

Belka Records, an upcoming Franco-Russian record label is out to bring the sounds of Russian indie and alternative music to a wider audience. They will be celebrating the release of their latest compilation, "Russian Tour" this Tuesday at Fassbinder. Expect tunes from HUT, Tigry and Seed of Freedom and the chance to expand your musical horizons. Tickets cost 400 rubles. Fassbinder
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THEATER **NET Theater Festival** The best European theater

NET, which stands for the New European Theater, is already a Moscow institution. Some of Europe's most renowned directors have been invited to the festival to show their productions on the Moscow stage, alongside established Russian names. From Italian Pippo Delbono's dark choral work "Vangelo" (Gospel) to Tim Etchell's comic "Holidays of the Future," this is a rare chance to see so many innovative productions from abroad in the capital. Many will be performed in unusual spaces, so check the program.
netfest.ru
Through Nov. 27

History Through the Lens of Yakov Khalip

By **Phoebe Eddleston** artsreporter@imedia.ru

In 1938 Russian photographer Yakov Khalip set off on the icebreaker "Taymyr" to rescue Ivan Papanin and three of his fellow crew members from their drifting research station in the North Pole. The images he captured of the expedition, which were developed onboard the ship and flown back to Russia, made the papers the very next day.

It was just one of the many iconic events of the Soviet era that Khalip documented. From the everyday lives of ordinary people to the changing urban landscape, his photographs captured the very essence of the Soviet Union. It's a fascinating legacy that Muscovites can enjoy at the first ever major retrospective of Khalip's work. The 10-year labor of love by the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography and Khalip's family, who offered their archive to the gallery, offers a unique opportunity to experience Soviet history through the lens of one photographer.

The New Soviet Man

After settling in Moscow in 1921, Khalip began working as a news photographer. His shots were commissioned by Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova for the U.S.S.R. in Con-

struction magazine which aimed to promote the Soviet Union to the rest of the world. While essentially intended as propaganda, Khalip's photography demonstrated his obvious artistic talent.

"Khalip was able to retain his artistic integrity whilst still being a Soviet citizen, and thus produce amazing pieces of avant-garde photography," said Yana Iskakova, the curator of the exhibition, in an interview with The Moscow Times.

From metro stations and movie theaters to factories and parades, Khalip documented the growth of the new Soviet state. His series "Baltic Fleet" captured young naval officers at work but also at play.

"The photos combine social realism — that is, the idea of showing the greatness of the Soviet Union and everything it stands for — with the avant-garde treatment of the subject: sharp angles, diagonal composition, playing with scale, active use of foreground, enlargement of details and bold cropping," said Iskakova.

Art and War

Khalip was sent to the front during World War II as a correspondent for the Red Star news-

paper. While he photographed the "action" of war, his lens also often focussed on the small, snatched moments of calm where soldiers went about their day-to-day routines.

Khalip went on to secure a permanent job at U.S.S.R. magazine, where he worked until he died in 1980. His growing status opened up a world of opportunity to him, from capturing the moment when Yuri Gagarin kissed Italian movie star Gina Lollobrigida at the Moscow Film Festival, to travels abroad in Italy, Sweden, Morocco and Algeria. While he was an incredibly talented photographer, it was his charismatic personality which opened many doors for him throughout his career.

"Khalip was nice to everyone he met, and fondly remembered many of his subjects. He even tracked some of them down, years after first taking their picture, in order to once again capture these people whose lives had often completely changed since he last saw them," said Iskakova. **TMT**

"CONQUEST. Yakov Khalip, heir to the Russian avant-garde" runs through Dec. 11 at the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography. 3 Bolotnaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg.1. Metro Kroptinskaya, Polyanka. Lumiere.ru



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