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LOOKING BACK

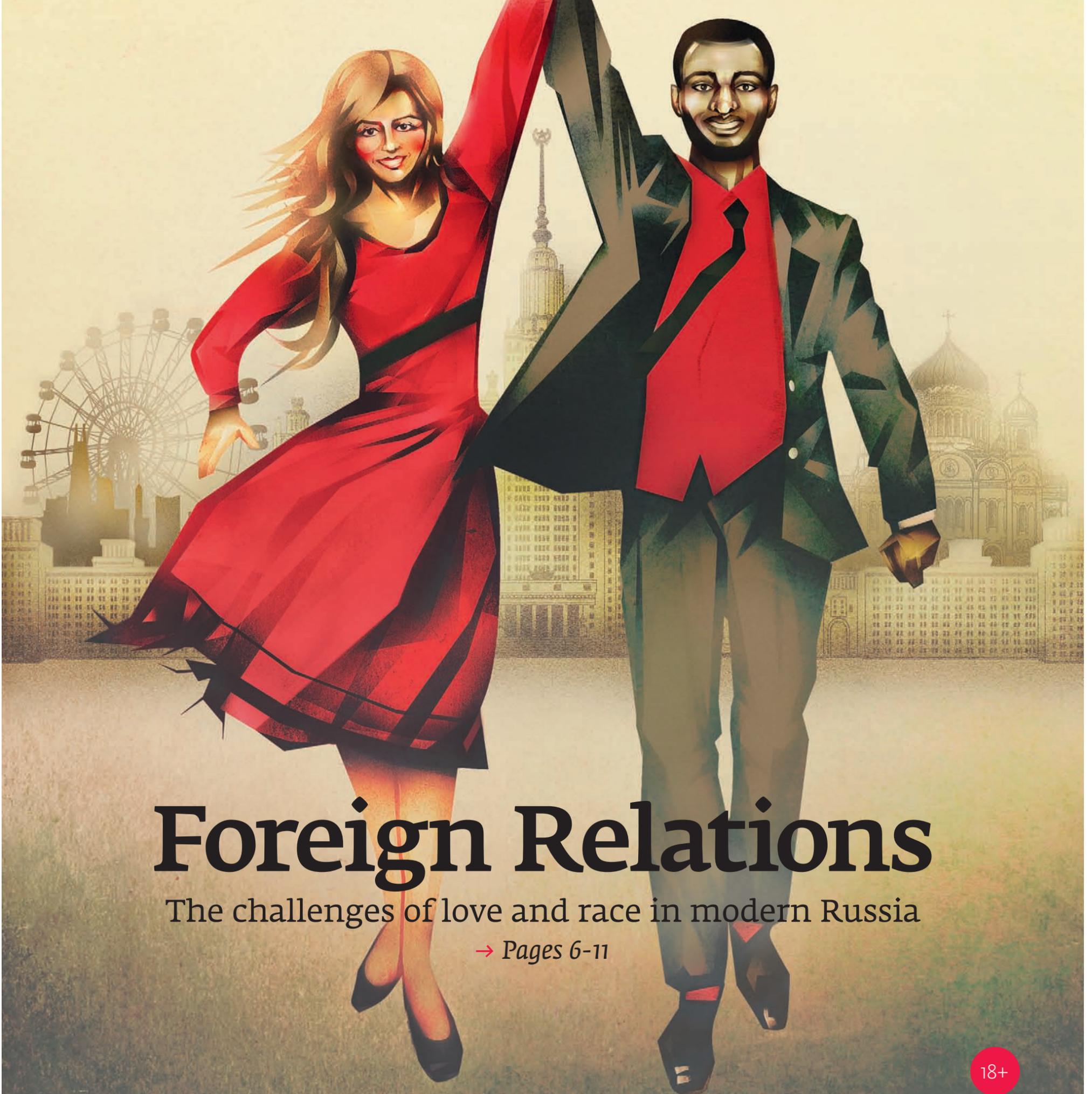
Ruling On Repeat

Alexei Navalny vows to continue presidential campaign despite new conviction. → Page 2

LIVING HERE

Creative Retreat

How an abandoned factory on the edge of Moscow became a refuge for artists. → Page 13



Foreign Relations

The challenges of love and race in modern Russia

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18+



"I don't recognize the verdict. I'm innocent. This will not stop my election campaign." - Navalny's final word at trial.

27%

Navalny's result in 2013 Moscow mayoral election.

300,000

number of signatures required to register as independent candidate.

Яндекс

Navalny's attempt to crowdfund his presidential campaign was cut short when technology firm Yandex deactivated account, under pressure from authorities.

Navalny's Sisyphean Battle

By **Eva Hartog** e.hartog@imedia.ru

A suspended sentence for leading Putin critic surprised no one, and it isn't about to end his presidential ambitions

Over the past four years, Alexei Navalny has given many closing statements — seven, if you're counting. In his final statement, the opposition leader might just as well have taken out his old notes.

"The emotions are very similar," he said during his closing statement earlier this month.

It wasn't just Navalny who experienced *deja-vu*. Those attending the repeat trial of the KirovLes case must have had similar feelings.

The same courtroom, the same prosecutors, the same lawyers and the same defendants, Navalny and Pyotr Ofitserov — little seemed to have changed since the court first heard the alleged timber embezzlement case in 2013.

After three months of both sides presenting practically identical arguments and witnesses, the court's verdict on Wednesday Feb. 8 was also predictably familiar. Navalny was given a five-year suspended sentence and a 500,000 ruble fine (\$8500).

The retrial came as the result of a Russian Supreme Court order in November, which implemented a European Court of Human Rights ruling that the original verdict was unlawful.

More widely, the retrial was seen as a moment of truth for the Kremlin ahead of the 2018 presidential elections: Would they allow Navalny to run?

Before the court could give its answer, Navalny had already given his. In December, he announced he would run.



ALEXEI KUDENKO / RIA NOVOSTI

Navalny has vowed to pursue his presidential ambitions regardless of the new conviction.

The allegation that Navalny had conspired to steal timber from the state-owned KirovLes company first surfaced in 2012, and was likely a response to Navalny's major role in the previous year's anti-government protests. In the first trial, the court gave Navalny a 5-year sentence, disqualifying him from the race under a federal law that bans those convicted of "serious crimes" from running for office.

Following street protests, the ruling was overturned. Later, a court turned the punishment into a suspended sentence — but the gap between the rulings allowed just enough time for Navalny to run for Moscow mayor in 2013.

The Supreme Court ruling returned the case to the Kirov court where it all began.

Once again, the sentence is seen as an obstacle to his political career. But on Wednesday, Navalny's campaign vowed to press on.

A legal loophole may allow him to run.

According to the Russian constitution — which, in theory, trumps federal law — only those currently imprisoned are not allowed to participate in elections. As long as Navalny's sentence remains suspended, that means he could fight a possible election ban in court, says Grigory Melkonyats of the election monitoring NGO Golos. For that to succeed, Navalny would first need to register for a different election, at a local level, be denied registry and then take the matter to court, citing his constitutional rights. "He would have to change judicial practice," says Melkonyats.

Even if he does reach the Constitutional Court, his case could easily be reviewed for long enough for Navalny to miss the election.

More likely than that scenario is that Navalny may be allowed to run after all, says analyst Dmitry Oreshkin. That would lend the election an air of legitimacy, while hardly posing a threat to the establishment.

In any case, Kirov is not a dead end.

"Things will change a couple of times yet before the campaign officially starts," says political analyst Yekaterina Schulmann. In other words: Navalny's best strategy is to play the long waiting game. And keep the show going in the meantime. **TMT**



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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Brothers May Not Like Borders, but Belarus Has Few Good Options

By **David Marples**
Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Alberta, Canada



SOFIA MIREDOVA

On Jan. 26, the head of the Russian FSB, Aleksandr Bortnikov, ordered the establishment of border zone controls with Belarus in Russia's Bryansk, Smolensk, and Pskov regions. He instructed border guards to monitor persons and vehicles, and to set up warning signs at approaches to the border zones. The order came into effect on Feb. 5.

Minsk responded with surprise and anger. The Russian side had not consulted with the Belarusians, said Maria Vanshina, the press spokesperson for the Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs. Many would get the impression that the move is a prelude to full border controls, she added.

What were the reasons for the decision and what will its consequences be?

The official reason is that these borders have become loopholes for smuggling and crime. Belarus has even recognized the problem. In September 2014, President Aleksandr Lukashenko signed a decree establishing a border area, saying that both sides should coordinate to prevent illegal migration and drug trafficking.

But there are likely other reasons for Russia's action. The Kremlin's move closely follows Belarus' Jan. 9 announcement of a visa-free regime for eighty countries. Residents of these countries can enter Belarus via the Minsk International Airport and stay for five days. The de-

cre is about to come into effect, and could open Russian borders to thousands of visitors.

Russia and Belarus have lived under a Union State since the mid-1990s. Trains from Minsk to Moscow do not stop at the border, though travelers from Western countries would be unlikely to make the journey without a visa.

But the Union State, like other Russian-led bodies in which Belarus participates, has never been very effective.

In recent years, Lukashenko and Russian president Vladimir Putin have had running disputes over many issues — the banning of Belarusian dairy products, oil and gas prices, the building of a new Russian air base, and recognition of breakaway regions of Georgia and Ukraine.

Lukashenko has also lately taken steps to bring Belarus closer to the European Union. He released political prisoners and held a presidential election without violent altercations. As a result, the EU lifted most of its sanctions on Belarus in February 2016.

In response, Russian media adopted a scathing and hostile depiction of Lukashenko — particularly agencies such as Regnum and RT. Regnum published a recent article suggesting — without any evidence whatsoever — that Belarus intends to withdraw from the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Such propaganda has prompted a critic of Lukashenko, Coordinator of the Belarusian Civil Campaign Dmitry

Bondarenko, to state that the goal of the new border controls is to cut off what he terms "black cash" for the Belarusian president as part of a plan to remove Lukashenko from office.

Along with the cutbacks of oil supplies from Russia to Belarus, it will eventually prevent Lukashenko from covering workers' salaries and pensions. A second reason for the border zone, he believes, is to nurture an image of Belarus as an enemy of the Russian people.

Bondarenko, however, goes too far. The new border zone installations rather serve as a warning to the Belarusian leadership to change its ways, stop flirting with the Europeans, and to be more pro-active when responding to Moscow's requests to expand its military bases in Belarus.

In reality, Lukashenko and Putin are kindred spirits, who use similar methods to maintain authority. Belarus does not have great power aspirations, but it has to date successfully established and secured an authoritarian state that has survived for a quarter of a century. Under Putin, Russia has permitted Lukashenko the perception of independence and free decision-making in the knowledge that he cannot stray too far.

The new border zone thus represents two reprimands. One, for Belarus' rash decision to grant a visa-free regime to Western countries. The other is for its failure to support Russia's position on Ukraine more strongly. **TMT**



"You wouldn't make a film about someone in the bathroom — although I'm sure it exists and someone considers it art." — activist **Miron Kravchenko**.

Oct. 2017

"Mathilde" is slated to be released.



The Russian Orthodox Church canonized Nicholas II and his family in 2000.

1971

Mathilde Kschessinska died in Paris at the age of 99.

A Forbidden Affair

By **Matthew Kupfer** and **Eva Hartog** newsreporter@imedia.ru

Even before its release, a film depicting romantic liaisons between Nicholas II and a Polish ballerina has provoked an angry response from religious

A graceful ballet dancer glides across the stage. Suddenly, the shoulder strap on her dress gives way, revealing — for a brief moment — a naked breast. In the audience, a man drops his glasses in shock. He is Nicholas II, the last Russian tsar.

The film "Mathilde," which tells the story of a love affair between Polish ballerina Mathilde Kschessinska and the young tsar, will hit the big screen in October. But scenes like this one, featured in the trailer, have already sparked tensions between Orthodox believers and the Russian arts establishment.

The heart of the issue is that Nicholas II and his family — killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918 — were canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000. Some say that depicting them in a less-than-holy light is an attack on a Saint.

Crimean Duma Deputy Natalya Poklonskaya has called the affair between the ballerina and the tsar "fabricated." She has twice appealed to state prosecutors to investigate whether the film insults the feelings of religious believers.

In the meantime, Orthodox activists have taken matters into their own hands. This month, a vigilante group called Christian State — Holy Russia sent a letter to dozens of cinema managers. They explicitly threatened that if the managers showed the film "cinemas would burn, maybe people will even suffer."

The conflict has filmmakers crying censorship. But it has also left many wondering how an otherwise innocuous historical romance film could spark such a controversy.

Nicholas and Kschessinska's affair is a documented fact and has never before been seen as particularly scandalous. It lasted only a year and ended a few weeks before Nicholas's engagement to Alix of Hesse, a German princess and the future tsarina.

"He was young. She was practically throwing herself at him. What do people expect?" says Coryne Hall, author of the book "Imperial Dancer: Mathilde Kschessinska and the Romanovs."

After Nicholas's marriage, Kschessinska stayed on the scene



"Mathilde", a film about Tsar Nicholas II's affair with a Polish ballerina, has become the source of controversy.

and even struck up relationships with other royals. But her romantic relationship with the tsar was over. She remained a controversial figure in the court, but her liaison with Nicholas was never seen as damaging to his reputation, Hall says.

There is also nothing contradictory between the affair and Nicholas's canonization, says Alexander Baunov, a senior associate at the Carnegie Moscow Center think tank.

People like Poklonskaya are making a mistake in their understanding of the nature of holiness, he says: "Saints have different pasts, and sainthood is connected to overcoming one's sins."

Nonetheless, the film is "provocation on a national scale," Miron Kravchenko, a Christian State representative, told The Moscow Times. Kravchenko says that activists are not, in fact, threatening to burn down movie theaters. Rather, they "have in-

formation" that some offended citizens "may be planning violent protest." Christian State, he says, is trying to prevent a tragedy.

But not everyone sees benevolence in the activists' actions. Earlier this week, nearly 70 film directors released an "open letter" decrying efforts to censor "Mathilde".

"We don't want our culture to fall under under the weight of new censorship, no matter how powerful the forces that initiate it," they wrote. The directors compared the situation to a recent scandal surrounding the staging of the Tannhauser opera and an attack on an exhibit by Vadim Sidur.

"In all these cases, the actors are so-called 'Orthodox activists,' but the Church doesn't take a stand on what's happening," they wrote. "At best, the Culture Ministry waits [the scandal] out."

On Feb. 8, Alexei Uchitel, the film's director, also filed a complaint against Deputy Poklonskaya and "Christian State" with the state prosecutor.

Supporters of the film have some reason to worry. Orthodox activists blocked a performance of Tannhauser, and the people who smashed sculptures by Sidur received little more than a slap on the wrist in court. And while the state views the activists' actions as an "unpleasant interference," previous incidents show that the authorities tend to "tolerate it until these groups cross into violence," says Baunov.

But the state offered something of an olive branch to the film's supporters. The same day that Uchitel filed his complaint, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denounced the "extremists" threatening the film and labeled their actions "unacceptable." At the same time, Peskov called for "mutual responsibility," saying that the "artists must explain that they have no intention to insult the feelings of others."

Whatever the final fate of "Mathilde", the controversy is proving one line of the film true. "You're the Tsar, you have a right to everything," a voice in the trailer says. "Except for love." **TMT**



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Реклама



"We don't want to ban homeopathy. We want the government to stop promoting it." - **Alexander Sergeev**, RAS commission on pseudoscience.

The Moscow Times
No. 5791

21.8 Mln

homeopathic medicines sold across Russia in 2016.

1796

Samuel Hahnemann creates homeopathy based on the doctrine of "like cures like."



Homeopathy is not harmless, the memorandum says: patients waste time and money on it instead of dealing with diseases.



The Magic Potion

By **Daria Litvinova** d.litvinova@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Sofia Miroedova**

The Russian Academy of Sciences has declared homeopathy a "health hazard," but Russians seem to be in no hurry to give it up

The stories homeopathy fanatics tell are usually similar. "My two-year-old son was struggling with severe bronchitis for almost a year. I couldn't look at him being tortured with injections, IVs, catheters," says Olesya. "Then a friend recommended a homeopath and a miracle happened. The little round pills he prescribed cured my boy. We never went back to the hospital. And I threw away all the regular medications I had at home."

Olga, another believer, tested the "magic white grains" herself. "Five rounds of antibiotics did nothing for my cystitis, but five grains of homeopathic medicine made me forget about it almost immediately," she says. "I've been avoiding regular doctors at all costs ever since."

There is no reliable data on just how many Russians actually trust homeopathy, but some estimates suggest the number may

reach into the millions. Russia's most popular social network Vkontakte has dozens of communities devoted to homeopathy. According to the National Homeopathy Council NGO, 28 pharmaceutical companies in Russia produce homeopathic medicines. In 2016, pharmacies across Russia sold 21.8 million packs of homeopathic medicines, making the market worth 7.32 billion rubles (\$123 million).

But scientists from the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) warn that the fad poses dangers. Patients who reject standard medicine in favor of unproven homeopathic cures put their lives at risk, they wrote in their latest memorandum. "The principles of homeopathy contradict known chemical, physical and biological laws, while there are no persuasive scientific trials proving its effectiveness," the RAS commission on pseudoscience said in a document released in December.

A New Dawn, A New Cure

German physician Samuel Hahnemann popularized the practice of homeopathic medicine in 1796. Six years earlier, a perfectly healthy Hahnemann consumed cinchona bark — a substance used to treat malaria. He soon started to experience symptoms of malaria. The experiment led him to believe that substances that cause the symptoms of a disease in healthy people could cure similar symptoms in sick people.

Medications used in homeopathy include these substances, diluted in distilled water or alcohol multiple times, and often well past the point where molecules of the original substance could remain in the medication. Scientists all over the world argue that this medication can only have one effect on patients — the placebo effect.

Russia's Health Ministry legalized the use of homeopathy in "practical medicine" in 1995, four years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During Soviet times, homeopathy wasn't banned, but it was heavily criticized, and healthcare officials publicly warned patients about its dubious effects, says Alexander Sergeev, a member of the RAS commission on pseudoscience.

"When the Soviet system collapsed, people opened up to things the Communists frowned upon," Sergeev told The Moscow Times. "Like dissidents and UFOs, homeopathy re-

ceived a new lease of life, and homeopathy supporters used the energy to infiltrate the healthcare system."

According to Sergeev, homeopathy now constitutes 1.5 percent of the Russian pharmaceutical market — "It is not something marginal anymore, and that's why we must take action."

Opinion polls support Sergeev's concerns. Almost half of Russians — 46 percent — told the Public Opinion Foundation pollster in 2015 that they prefer self-treatment. A similar poll conducted by the state-run pollster VTsIOM in 2015 showed that at least 21 percent of respondents don't trust regular doctors, describing them as "inefficient," "negligent" and "incompetent."

Government Intervention

The RAS commission on pseudoscience is petitioning Russia's Ministry of Health to abandon the use of homeopathic medicine in state hospitals. The commission called on pharmacies to remove homeopathic cures from shelves that contain actual medicine. Finally, the commission has urged Russia's Federal Anti-Monopoly Service to limit advertising of homeopathic medicines.

The commission does not aim to ban homeopathy entirely, Sergeev insists: "It has the right to exist, why not? But the government shouldn't promote it, just like it doesn't promote alcohol or smoking."

Government officials have cautiously backed the commission's findings. The Health Ministry promised to create a special working group to discuss ways of regulating homeopathy, but has yet to make any statement that identifies its position on the issue. Representatives of the homeopathic community meanwhile said they still enjoyed a healthy dialogue with government.

"People have been attacking homeopathy for the past 200 years. But it is still there, isn't it?" Alexei Karpeyev, head of the National Homeopathy Council, told The Moscow Times.

Sergeev believes reversing the situation is difficult, but not impossible. Officials will find it hard to admit they were wrong 20 years ago, he says, when they allowed homeopathy into the healthcare system. At the same time, the memorandum gives them a good excuse to conduct new studies and do the right thing, the expert says.

In the meantime, the magic, cure-all pills will remain available in pharmacies across the country. **TMT**



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РЕСТОРАНА



"Antonov's problem is that he's not in touch with Putin. They have no personal relationship." **Vladimir Frolov**, foreign affairs expert

8 years

Russia's U.S. ambassador Sergey Kislyak's time in office.



Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to Washington from 1962 to 1982, played a pivotal role in preventing nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

April, 2010

New START treaty signed between Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama.

Moscow's Man in Washington

By **Matthew Bodner** and **Mikhail Fishman** newsreporter@imedia.ru

Russia appears to be falling back on Soviet-era policy of disarmament as the focal point for relations with the U.S.

Few watching the Russian Defense Ministry's Dec. 2, 2015 press conference could have guessed the man speaking was a professional diplomat, let alone a skilled negotiator.

"[Turkish President Recep] Erdogan and his family are at the heart of this criminal business. But even if their faces are fully covered in stolen oil, they will never admit their guilt," the man, shoulders decorated with the four stars of an army general, snapped. "The Turkish elite is directly financing global terrorism," he added.

A lot has changed since then. Turkey's strongman has become one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest partners in the Middle East. Donald Trump is president of the United States. And the man with the four star epaulets, former Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov, is poised to receive the ambassadorship in Washington, according to Kommersant and Moscow Times sources.

The Russian press has painted Antonov, now deputy foreign minister, as a hardliner. In reality, this term has little meaning in the context of modern Russian politics. "Can you name a single person in the Foreign Ministry today who is not a hardliner?" one former diplomat, who requested anonymity, asked ironically.

But Antonov has demonstrated the two qualities most valued by the Kremlin: competence and fidelity. He has a reputation as a tough negotiator, cemented during START nuclear arms control negotiations. But it was his loyalty that allowed him to transcend arms control and rise in the foreign policy ranks. One source close to the Defense Ministry called him "more Catholic than the Pope." He is, in short, a man the regime can trust to carry the flag.

The Military Negotiator

As the Foreign Ministry's chief disarmament and arms control official, Antonov was loaned to the Defense Ministry in 2011 to help manage relations with the Pentagon during the ill-fated Obama-Medvedev reset. There, he was named deputy minister, given a uniform, and conferred the rank of general.

"We liked to joke that he was the foreign minister of the Defense Ministry," the source said.

Antonov was Medvedev's special envoy within the military as the U.S. and Russia explored new avenues of cooperation. "The Defense Ministry understood that they needed a negotiator who specialized in military issues — and especially in what the Americans call political-military affairs," the ministry source said.



VADIM SAVITSKY

But his time at the Defense Ministry was not without complications. "He constantly tried to establish himself as the most patriotic person in the ministry, and some compared him to a bull terrier on a leash."

None of this got in the way of his candidacy. Since at least Fall 2016, when Moscow believed Hillary Clinton would win the U.S. election, the Kremlin has been preparing to send Antonov to Washington. They appear to be sticking with that plan. On Dec. 28, Antonov was moved back to the Foreign Ministry, and promoted to the rank of deputy foreign minister.

High Up The Vertical

A posting at the Washington embassy is no trivial thing. Since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the ambassador has been one of the most senior figures in Russian foreign policy. Only the foreign minister and, more recently, the president's foreign policy advisor outrank Moscow's man in Washington.

This arrangement dates back to the days when Anatoly Dobrynin was Soviet Ambassador to Washington. Dobrynin was the key intermediary between the White House and the Kremlin before the establishment of the famous hotline. He played

a critical role in defusing the Cuban Missile Crisis. By the time he left Washington in 1982, he was reporting not only to the Foreign Ministry, but also to the leadership of the Communist Party.

Russian decision-making today differs greatly from the Soviet era. The process has become more personalized, obscured behind the Kremlin walls. The Foreign Ministry isn't always consulted. If reports are to be believed, Lavrov is not part of Putin's inner circle.

The only real way diplomats and other officials can influence policy-making is through personal relationships with Putin. This will be a challenge for Antonov, who doesn't seem to enjoy such a relationship. He will have to work through Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov or Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov. Foreign policy expert Vladimir Frolov told The Moscow Times that this will likely limit his role substantially.

All in all, Washington's experience with the Russian ambassador isn't likely to change. "There probably won't be much demand for creativity," says Steven Pifer, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine and arms control negotiator. "Antonov is a professional diplomat. Like [current ambassador Sergei] Kislyak, he will likely faithfully carry out instructions from Moscow."

Reshuffle

Rumors are circulating that Antonov's looming appointment is part of a wider reshuffle of the Russian foreign policy apparatus. Kislyak is leaving Washington, and Ushakov, now 70 years old, is also expected to retire soon. Putin will want to replace the latter with somebody he knows and trusts.

Antonov's expected appointment might also offer some clues as to the priorities the Kremlin will be pursuing in its relationship with the Trump administration.

The career diplomat was one of the faces of Russian engagement with the U.S. in Syria, an area where Putin and Trump are likely to find common grounds. But more importantly, his experience on New START leaves him well suited to engage the U.S. on arms control. This seems to be what sets him apart from other candidates. Russia, it seems, is falling back to the Soviet-era focus on disarmament and conflict prevention as the focal point of relations with the U.S.

A former Russian diplomat suggested the Russians were targeting an area where they still enjoy parity with the U.S.

"The problem is the Americans don't think it's that important — no one expects nuclear war anymore," he said. **TMT**

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"I never imagined that I would find a woman who could accept and respect my children." — businessman **Sharip Dzhabirov**.

40,000

approximate number of Afro-Russians.

1957

Festival of Youth was the USSR's attempt to project an international face.



Alexander Pushkin, Russia's most celebrated poet, was mixed race, with a great-grandfather from modern-day Cameroon.



↑ Uzbekistan-born Korean Vladimir and Armenian Gayane met online. They married in April 2016.

→ Russian Yevgenia and Mexico-born Aristeo met in Spain in 2007. They married in 2008.



The Color of Love

By **Matthew Kupfer** and **Bradley Jardine** newsreporter@imedia.ru | Photos by the couples

Mixed-race marriages are becoming more common in Russia, but society is taking its time to adapt

When David first came to Moscow 10 years ago, he stood out like a sore thumb. People stared at him. On public transportation, other passengers avoided sitting next to him. Even his marriage provoked speculation. Many accused him of marrying his wife Natasha for financial reasons.

People treated him as though he were "from another planet," he says. "I tried to ignore it. It was too painful."

Both David and Natasha are African, in a sense. The challenge is that David is black and Natasha is white. Born to Soviet diplomats in the Republic of Congo, Natasha spent her formative years in Africa, speaking French better than Russian. She says that being married to David, a Nigerian former professional soccer player, is normal for her and her parents.

Not all of Moscow agrees.

"Mixed" or "international" marriages are not uncommon in today's Russia, but they are still far from the norm. The collapse of the Soviet Union, which opened the country to foreigners, also opened the floodgates to increased national sentiment.

In multicultural Moscow — an international city, but less so than many in the West — love across racial, ethnic, and national boundaries still poses particular challenges.

Festival Children

Natasha and David — who asked to be identified by pseudonym — represent an extreme example of the challenges of "mixed marriages." A Russian-African union is likely the most "exotic" pairing imaginable for most Russians.

Their desire for anonymity is understandable. Black Africans are frequent targets of violence from skinheads in Russia. According to data from SOVA Center, an anti-extremism monitoring organization, blacks are the third most targeted group in Russia after Central Asians and people from the Caucasus —

a remarkable statistic, given the African diaspora's small numbers in Russia.

But the challenges of Natasha and David's marriage are hardly unique. An October 2016 poll by the independent Levada Center pollster found that 52 percent of Russians support the nationalist slogan "Russia for Russians," while only 12 percent felt that immigrants enrich Russian society.

Nor is the problem simply the novelty of mixed marriages. The Soviet Union, a country with hundreds of ethnicities, also had mixed couples. According to a common stereotype from the Soviet period, romances would sometimes bloom between young African and South America men — often students or members of youth delegations — and local Russian women. The children of these unions were called "festival children" after the 1957 World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Moscow.

The problem is changing norms, says Elena Khanga, a Russian journalist born to a Zanzibari father and a mother of African-American and Jewish ancestry. When she was growing up in the Soviet Union, "friendship of nations" was state policy and any manifestation of racism by a public figure was seen as indecent.

"Unfortunately, nowadays there is no such policy," Khanga says.

Overcoming Stereotypes

Sharip Dzhabirov was a successful real estate entrepreneur, but his romantic prospects looked dim. He was 50 years old, divorced, with three children and a nephew living with him. He was also Chechen — "all solid disadvantages," he says.

Negative stereotypes, combined with two bloody separatist wars in Chechnya, led many Russians to view Chechens as uncultured and aggressive. Alongside his complicated family situation, this seemed like a lot of baggage to Sharip.

Then, at a breakfast hosted by a bank where he was setting

up an account, he met Irina Ayatova. She had a child of her own and could understand his predicament. As an ethnic Tatar, Sharip was encouraged that she "knew Islam." She also related well to his children.

"I never imagined that I would find a woman who could accept and respect my children," Sharip says.

Both families were supportive of Sharip and Irina's decision to marry and start a family together. But there were some reservations. Sharip says his Chechen relatives would have "preferred I marry a Chechen."

Irina's parents and friends also had concerns — unfortunately, Chechens "provoke a subjective reaction," she says euphemistically. However, once they met Sharip, both her parents and friends were relieved.

In fact, both Sharip and Irina say that the biggest challenges were not cultural, but practical: how to unite two separate families with their own lifestyles, habits, and routines.

Long Distance Love

Practical challenges like these are something Yevgenia Novokhatnaya understands well. She and her husband Aristeo Gonzalez, a Mexican national, live over 10,000 kilometers apart while he is studying to become a diplomat in Mexico City.

Yevgenia and Aristeo met in Spain during a New Year's trip in 2007. After more than a year of emailing, writing, and visiting one another in Mexico, Paris and Madrid, they got married in 2008. She was 24. He was 21.

Because Aristeo still had two years left at university, the young couple made a drastic decision: to move to Mexico. Yevgenia's parents were suspicious. Her mother even challenged the plan: "The Mexicans all run to the United States. Will you be running too?" she said.

Yevgenia admits her first months in Mexico were difficult.

Continued on Page 11 →

Out & About



February 9 – 15, 2017

7

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



USACHEVSKY MARKET



The newly renovated Usachevsky market is open from 9am daily.

One Stop Shop

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

Be transported around the globe with international cuisine and exotic delights

Last summer, Usachyovsky Market followed the lead of hipster magnet Danilovsky Market. It was completely renovated, and several new restaurants opened.

Situated between Sportivnaya and Frunzenskaya metro stations, the first market stall appeared here in 1934. In the 1970s, a new building was constructed in the futurist style popular in the U.S.S.R.

In 2016 Alexander Martyanov, the market's new owner, decided to give the market a face-lift. The Usachyovsky facade was rebuilt using bricks from demolished 19th century buildings and the interior was gutted.

The center of the building is now filled with fruit and vegetable stalls, meat and cheese fresh from farms in the Moscow region and beyond. There are exotic foods and spices from South East Asia. Around the perimeter of the building is a brand new food court with cafes and a seating area so you can try out the latest culinary delights.

Mitzva is an outpost of the Mitzva bar, a restaurant of Israeli cuisine in the central Chistiye Prudy district. Usachyovsky's Mitzva serves just three basic dishes: humus, falafel (200 rubles for 9 pieces), and babaganoush — 320 rubles. You

can add various things to any of the basic dishes, including olives, beans with za'atar and eggplant (30-50 rubles).

Plov.com serves three types of plov, the Central Asian version of pilaf. There is a vegetarian option and a special with chickpeas and raisins (each at 300 rubles). You can also try samsa, a pastry similar to samosa, with cheese and greens or chicken (130 rubles).

United Kitchen serves more sophisticated food. Try the "exploded duck" sandwich (pulled duck, arugula, fennel, pear and onion marmalade) or the "United Ruben" sandwich, a classic version with

pastrami and sauerkraut served on black bread (550 rubles).

Wash it all down with a pint or two from Beer Dock, a small kiosk that has mostly European classics on draft (from 200 rubles). The owners say their selection will expand to include Russian-produced craft beers.

Nearby is Camera Obscura, where the famous Moscow coffee roasters work their magic on an espresso machine. A flat white is just 140 rubles. usachevsky.ru
26 Usachyova Ulitsa.
Metro Sportivnaya

NEWS & OPENINGS



GRAND ECLAIR

Grand Eclair

French pastries à la Russe

The éclair is Moscow's latest confectionary obsession. After the arrival of French chain L'Eclair de Génie, new spots to eat these sweet treats keep popping up. Grand Eclair, housed in an art deco styled room, sells eclairs "à la Russe," which means they have lots of butter and are inexpensive. A chocolate spice or a vanilla éclair will set you back 250 rubles; raspberry with aloe — 450.

+7 (495) 510 3050

grandclair.ru
15 Bolshaya Yakimanka
Metro Polyanka



KOFEPROVOD

Kofeprovod

No fuss coffee

You might have seen the Kofeprovod brand before—perhaps at a pop-up stand in Gorky Park or in the Omega Plaza business center. Their newest branch near Kurskaya is a caffeine pit-stop that keeps things to the point. The coffee on offer is simple, no-nonsense, and, best of all, won't break the bank. An Americano costs just 100 rubles.

+7 (926) 785 1843

facebook.com/pg/kofeprovod
9 Yakovoapstolsky Pereulok, Bdlg. 1
Metro Kurskaya



TOCHKA DZY

Tochka Dzy

Pan-Asian cuisine

Maxim Fazylov, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu culinary school and a former chef at Strana, Kotoroi Net, owned by the prominent Moscow restaurateur Arkady Novikov, just opened his own place near Tsvetnoi shopping mall. At Tochka Dzy you can try all the most popular Asian soups — from Vietnamese pho bo (320 rubles) to Japanese ramen (320 rubles with pork).

+7 (925) 871 7210

facebook.com/TochkaDzy
7 Tsvetnoi Bulvar
Metro Tsvetnoi Bulvar, Trubnaya



PIZZA LIKE PIE AND BIKE

Pizza Like Pie and Bike

A slice of Italy

Given that bicycles are absent from its small stall in the Pogozhskaya indoor market, it's unclear where PLPB got its unwieldy name. Happily, its freshly made pizzas baked in a real stone oven are absolutely delicious. Try the "Parma" pizza with artichoke and arugula for the reasonable price of 450 rubles.

+7 (967) 166 6618

facebook.com/PizzaLikePieAndBike
Rogozhskaya Market
1 Rogozhskaya Val
Metro Proletarskaya, then tram 43 or 12

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!**



1

2nd Baumanskaya Ulitsa



2

Golovinskaya Naberezhnaya



2. Slobodskoi Palace

Follow flocks of hurrying students and pause in front of the Slobodskoi Palace. Built in the 1750s for the rich and powerful noblemen Alexei Bestuzhev-Ryumin, the palace changed hands three times before being passed on to an orphanage that founded a technical school here in 1830. This was the start of the Bauman State Technical University, alma mater of engineers. Over its almost 200-year history, the student community has invented lots of weird and funny rites and rituals. For instance, the graduation party involves bathing in the fountain in the courtyard, as well as throwing drawing tubes into the nearby Yauza River.

5 2nd Baumanskaya Ulitsa

Yauza River

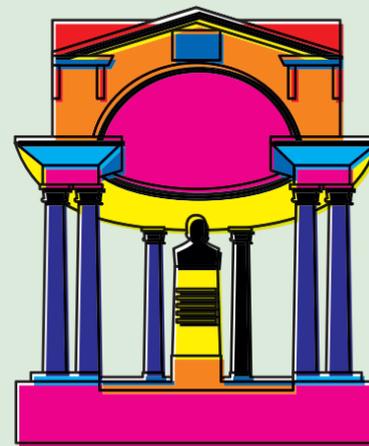
1. Lefort's Palace

Take the metro to Baumanskaya station, head down Baumanskaya Ulitsa away from Spartakovskaya Ulitsa, turn left on Starokirochny Pereulok and then right on 2nd Baumanskaya Ulitsa. Immediately on your left is a yellow building with a majestic arch in the middle. Ponderous, regular and classicist, this house looks like a ministry building. But it started out as a palace, originally built in 1697-1698 by Emperor Peter I for his major supporter, Franz Lefort. Unfortunately for Lefort, he died a month after moving in. Rumors had it that Lefort's ghost haunted the place and brought bad luck to its tenants. Since the mid-1860s it has housed military archives. The archives' collection of documents on Russian military history is exceptional with memoirs and diaries dating back to the mid-17th century.

3 2nd Baumanskaya Ulitsa



5



7

Gospitalnaya Ulitsa

1st Krasnokursantsky Proezd

5. Lefortovsky Park

Backtrack along Krasnokazarmennaya Ulitsa and turn into Lefortovsky Park on your right, and wander down until you can see the stunning view of Bauman University across the ponds and river. Though winter has never been the best season for park walks, there are some advantages. If it's really cold, venture onto the ice to take a closer look at the fanciful red-brick grotto harkening back to Russia's glorious baroque epoch, when Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli created a park that was dubbed "Versaille on the Yauza."

Golovinskaya Naberezhnaya



4

Krasnokazarmennaya Ulitsa

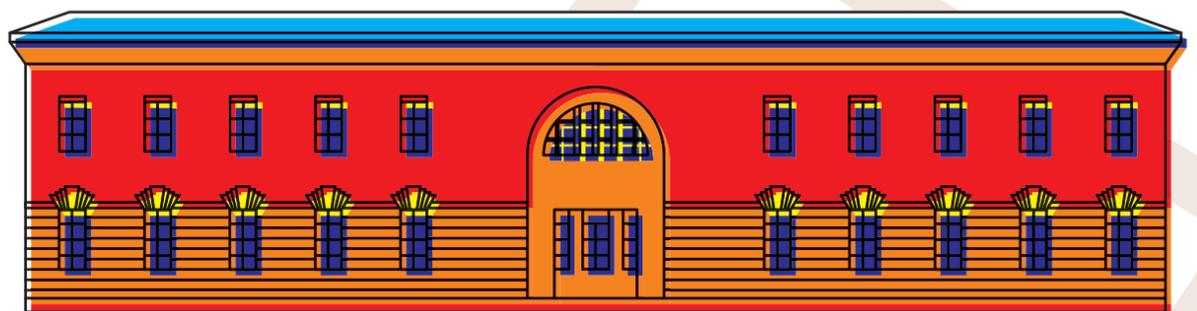


3

3. Red Barracks

Continue down the street, turn left on Ulitsa Radio and cross the river. On the other side, follow the tram line along Krasnokazarmennaya Ulitsa ("Red Barracks Street"). After fire devastated this part of the city in 1834, the Moscow administration built up the district with military barracks and command centers. One of the vestiges of that time — the red barracks of the military school on the right side of the street. Plaster banners, arms, shields, and armor on the façade kept the spirits of the cadets up. They got a chance to test their mettle in 1917, when they resisted revolutionary soldiers. Today the complex houses the Preobrazhensky regiment.

4/1 Krasnokazarmennaya Ulitsa

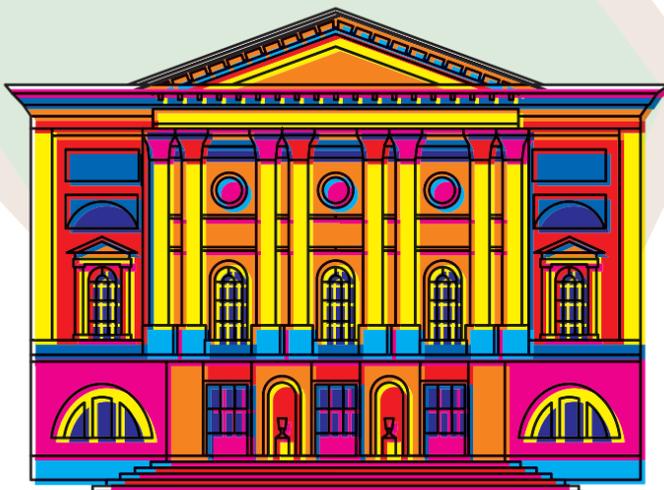




6. Burdenko Hospital

Exit the park onto Gospitalnaya Ulitsa and turn right. You have already seen archives, barracks and military colleges – battlefield medicine and hospitals are up next, starting with Burdenko Hospital. In 1706, Nicolaas Bidloo, Peter the Great's physician, established Russia's first medical school here. The old building did not survive; the cream-colored Empire-era ensemble you see was put up in the late 18th century. Since the War of 1812, the staff has specialized in healing battlefield wounds. The institution has many talented physicians and surgeons on record, including Nikolai Burdenko, the national pioneer in neurosurgery whose name the hospital proudly carries.

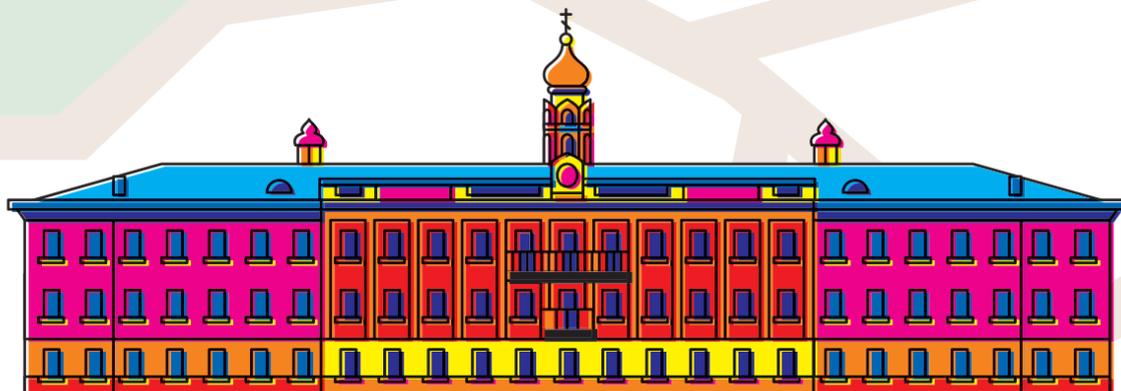
3 Gospitalnaya Ulitsa



7. "Assuage My Sorrows" Charity

Continue on Gospitalnaya until it turns into a square with a park on the left. Just at the corner of the park, turn left and pause in front of number 2/2 Gospitalnaya Ploshchad, a long 2-story ivory structure. Given the logic of the street, you'd be right to presume that the institution also deals with medical relief in wars and conflicts. From 1875 to the 1920s the building housed a hospital and a nursing school established by an aid group called "Assuage My Sorrows." The charity did an important job training nurses, called "sisters of mercy" in Russian, for conflict zones. In the Soviet era, the aid group was dissolved, and a city hospital was opened here.

2/2 Gospitalnaya Ulitsa



4. Catherine Palace

Cross the street and turn left on 1st Krasnokursantsky Proezd, where you'll see another structure that looks like a barracks on the left. Catherine the Great decided to build a palace here, but after a decade of no progress, she handed the project over to Giacomo Antonio Domenico Quarenghi. The palace would be rather ordinary but for a spectacular detail on the façade: a line of 16 columns made of rare gray sandstone to break the monotony of the long façade. Ironically, all the time and effort was spent in vain, as Catherine's son and successor, Emperor Paul, did not like the design. He passed the palace to the military, which used it as barracks for the military school until the 1917 Revolution. Today it houses a branch of the Combined Arms Academy.

3/5 1st Krasnokursantsky Proezd

8. Vvedenskoye Cemetery

Cross the small square to Ulitsa Gospitalny Val and walk over to the Vvedenskoye Cemetery, Moscow's oldest cemetery for Catholics and Protestants. Both intricate tombstones and modest crosses mark the burial places of many prominent foreigners, including French chef Lucien Olivier, inventor of the eponymous salad. Many families who interred their loved ones here could afford beautiful monuments, such as the Ferrein and Erlanger family crypts by Fyodor Shekhtel, Russia's finest art nouveau designer. Here our long walk ends. After a walk through the past, you can grab a cab or follow your tracks back to the metro station.



In and Around Lefortovo

All Things Military and Majestic

By [Daria Demidova](#) artsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by [Maria Zaikina](#)

This former foreign quarter along the Yauza River has been home to medical and military institutions for over two centuries



Anthony Young, expat in Moscow

One of my favorite places is the **Vino Bar** near Taganskaya. It's a low key restaurant-bar with great food and a wide range of international wines. The atmosphere is great and there is live music on most weekends. You can't beat it.



SERGEI BOBYLEV / ITASS

Celebrating Valentine's Day in Moscow

Valentine's Day is approaching, and even though it falls on a Tuesday this year, there's no reason you shouldn't mark the occasion. To help you pick the right place for a perfect date, we've compiled a list of top events.



SMOLENSKDIAMONDS.RU

No Expense Spared

Diamonds are your Valentine's best friend

If you are really looking to splash out for Valentine's Day, you might consider a gift of local diamonds (brilliantly). Did you know that Russia has a booming diamond trade and a unique way of cutting the rough stone to make it, well, just really really sparkly? Smolenskiye Brillianty offers flawless "Russian cut" diamonds, a technique with highly regulated parameters which ensures optimal light reflection. That means: sparkly. Prices increase according to the complexity of the cut and, of course, the number of carats. Smolenskiye Brillianty prides itself on quality and heritage and so all diamonds are certificated to guarantee their authenticity.

smolenskdiamonds.ru
various locations



FPC.RU

A Romantic Train Journey

Love on the rails

Granted, it's no Orient Express, but on February 13th the № 003 overnight train from St. Petersburg to Moscow will be getting into the spirit of love and giving its passengers a journey to remember. The eve of Valentine's Day will be marked by a special concert from a St. Petersburg music group in the train's restaurant wagon. Guests aboard the train will also be treated to romantic gifts, and the cars will be decorated with all the trappings of the holiday. For a truly romantic evening consider avoiding the platskartny (third class) carriage. Sharing Valentine's Day with 50 babushkas may not scream romance.

fpc.ru
February 13

Sokolniki Park

Selfies with your significant other

Those who aren't fans of public displays of affection can stop reading now. Love taking selfies with your significant other? Stick with us. February 13 marks the launch of Sokolniki Park's Valentine's Day quest, in which happy couples are invited to take photos of themselves around the park and share them on social media with the hashtag #влюбленывпарке (lovers in the park). An additional element of the fun will be secret helpers hiding twenty miniature versions of the park's golden fairy statue near the main trails and landmarks of the park. The more you find and photograph, the greater your chance of winning. If that all sounds like hard work, don't worry. Sokolniki boasts plenty of other activities, including skiing paths, a husky club and a tubing slope.

park.sokolniki.com

1 Sokolnichesky Val
Metro Sokolniki



MAMM-MDF.RU

Films about Love

Cinema and chocolate

On Valentine's Day, the Swiss Embassy in Moscow will present a special event called "Films about Love" at the Multimedia Art Museum. Two movies by Swiss filmmakers from the Italian speaking canton Ticino will be shown: "Bread and Tulips" by Silvio Soldini and "Sinestesia" by Erik Bernasconi. There's no better way to spend the most romantic evening of the year than treating yourself and your significant other to some Italian and Lindt chocolates that the organizers promise will be provided at the event. The films will play in Italian with Russian subtitles.

Multimedia Art Museum

mamm-mdf.ru

16 Ulitsa Ostozhenka

Metro Kropotkinskaya

17:15 Bread and Tulips. 19:30 Sinestesia



MEATLESS

Meatless

An alternative Valentine's Day

Sick of couples making out in front of you on the metro escalator and the proliferation of pink decorations and candied roses in town? Meatless could be your sanctuary this Valentine's Day. Down with hearts, roses and sweet sparkling wine, and up with huge chunks of roast beef chased by a smooth whiskey — their words not ours. Meatless is encouraging ladies to treat their men to an unforgettable night this Feb. 14. Think free shots and meat tastings, a bearded waitstaff and an abundance of dark wood and leather.

+7 (495) 968 1131

cafemeatless.com

20/1 Tverskaya Ulitsa

Metro Tverskaya, Chekhovskaya



DANCES ABOUT LOVE / YK

Dances about Love

An evening of contemporary ballet

If you and your loved one are into classical music and ballet, then the Russian Academic Youth Theater (RAMT) has prepared a real gift for you on Feb. 14. Primas and leading singers of the Bolshoi, Mariinsky and Perm Opera and Ballet theaters, as well as guests from abroad, will talk about love on the same stage. "Dances about Love" is a collection of true love stories, from Mozart's "Kiss" to Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker," to some contemporary composers like Olga Wojciechowska from Poland that will delight any fan.

Russian Academic Youth Theater (RAMT)

danceoflove.info

2 Teatralnaya Ploshchad

Metro Teatralnaya



VDNKH

Fall in Love at VDNKh

A romantic extravaganza

Whether you have a significant other or not, the romantic atmosphere at Moscow's VDNKh is bound to get you in the mood for love this Valentine's Day. Most activities will be centered around the gargantuan ice rink, where guests will be welcomed by cupids on skates to learn dance moves, take part in the "longest kiss" competition and join in with a huge, romance filled flash mob. If you're single and don't mind being loud and proud about it, don a "my heart is free" badge and try to find yourself a date on the ice. The evening will culminate with a huge balloon release where you'll be encouraged to make a wish for the special someone in your life.

VDNKh

vdnh.ru

119 Prospekt Mira

Metro VDNKh



реклама

SEASONAL SPECIAL:

All kinds of salted treats, and other exciting chicken & meat dishes from Elena Nikiforova, Head Chef at the Shinok Restaurant.

MOSCOW, YEAR 1905 STREET, 2

OPENING HOURS: 12 pm – 00 am

TEL.: +7 495 651-81-01

shinok.ru #shinokmoscow

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"[Interracial marriage] is quite common where I came from, but in Russia people are curious about it."
— Malaysian **Sazlin Zainudin**.

1917

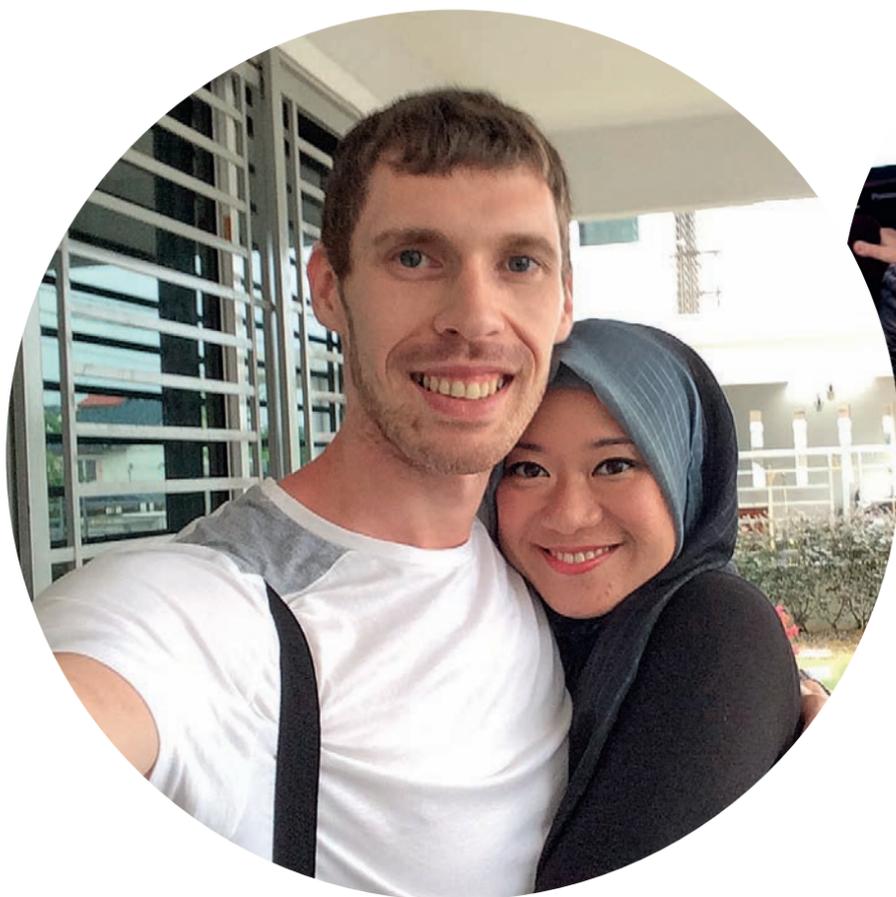
Stalin appointed Commissar for Nationalities' Affairs.



"Friendship of Nations" was a policy officially sanctioned by USSR.

808

number of Central Asian victims of racial assaults between 2007 and 2016.



↑ Chechen Sharip and Tatar Irina met at a bank in Moscow. They married in Spring, 2015

← Russian-Tatar Ramazan and Malaysian Sazlin met through family contacts. They married on Jan.1, 2016.

← Continued from Page 6

She knew no Spanish and struggled to integrate with the culture. Aristeo encountered the same issues in Russia. Ultimately, his need to build his career brought him back to Mexico. For the last year, they have spent only four months together — a challenge unique to an international relationship.

If there was one cultural challenge that stood out for Yevgenia, it was adjusting to her Mexican in-law's staunch Catholicism. Her Mexican family always prayed before meals and attended church every Sunday, something foreign to Yevgenia. Mexican people are "much more devout than most of the Orthodox Christians I know," she says.

Have Faith

Religion can be one of the biggest challenges in mixed marriages. It can also be the factor that helps to unite people from different backgrounds. Vladimir Ten saw this first hand.

In 2014, Vladimir was surfing Russian social network site VKontakte when he came across a girl named Anna Kim. An ethnic Korean born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan Vladimir had been looking to meet a girl in the Korean community. He decided to write Anna a message.

But things were not as they seemed. Anna Kim was actually the alias of Gayane Khachtryan. Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Gayane had grown up in Moscow. At the time, she was working for a think tank and carrying out research on different ethnic diasporas in Russia. She had become Anna Kim to get a window into Korean community.

Despite the initial deception, Vladimir and Gayane continued talking and eventually started dating. However, they were a bit concerned about what their families would think. On the whole, Moscow has little problem with interracial relationships, Vladimir says. However, most Koreans and Armenians tend to favor marrying within their own group. Religion was also a challenge.

"My family is religious, and they were a bit concerned that Vladimir's family is not baptised," Gayane, 28, says. However, after talking with Gayane's parents, they were able to get their approval. Both are thankful it was not more difficult.

"We're lucky that our families are not extremely conservative," Vladimir, 26, says.

Love is... Bureaucracy

Religion was what helped unite Russian Tatar Ramazan Akhmetshin and Malaysian Sazlin Zainudin. In 2014, Ramazan, an IT specialist in Kazan, the capital of Russia's Republic of Tatarstan, began thinking about marriage.

He was almost thirty. It was time, he thought. Nearly, 7,500 kilometers away in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Sazlin Zainudin,

who had just finished an MBA, was having similar thoughts. One of Sazlin's friends was married to a Tatar, whose mother was friends with Ramazan's parents.

That was their connection. Soon they had exchanged pictures and were chatting over Skype and Whatsapp. Several months later, Ramazan travelled to Kuala Lumpur. On Jan. 1, 2016, they got married.

Neither had planned to marry a citizen of another country — "but maybe someone else had such a plan," Ramazan says, glancing upward. Support from both families eased their decision to marry. What's more, interracial marriage is fairly common in Malaysia. They were also both religious Muslims.

"There were no contradictions in terms of religion, so it was easier for us," Sazlin says.

Today, Ramazan, 30, and Sazlin, 34, live in Kazan. In a city known for Muslim-Christian harmony, they say their international and interracial marriage has been welcomed. The biggest challenges have been bureaucratic.

Unlike many other countries, Russia has no simple spousal visa. As a result, Sazlin had to travel back and forth between Russia and Malaysia. They have since resolved the visa problem — for now. Sazlin is currently studying Russian at the local university, which gives her visa support.

A Changing City

For all the challenges faced by international and interracial couples in Russia, no one interviewed by The Moscow Times suggested that they were insurmountable. Despite some initial difficulties, Sharip and Irina managed to unite their two households

by creating family traditions that could bring everyone together. And Yevgenia and Aristeo — who have had to traverse continents together and spend months apart — have been married for nearly 10 years.

Even Natasha and David, who initially encountered racism in Russia, say the situation in Moscow is improving. Like many mixed couples, they say that most Muscovites are now largely indifferent to such marriages.

It's a development that runs somewhat contrary to official narratives. Russian politicians and state-controlled media increasingly promote an idea of "us" and "them," and a sense of Russian exceptionalism. Meanwhile, prejudice toward people from Central Asia and the Caucasian republics certainly persists, and the construction of mosques remains a divisive issue in Moscow. In theory, all this should point to an increasingly polarized society.

But, today, Nigerian David says that people no longer stare at him on the metro. Russians, he believes, have grown more used to seeing foreigners in their country, and international marriages have grown increasingly more common across the country.

Life, he says, "is going a lot smoother than I ever expected." Meanwhile, Natasha says her family's internationalism has benefitted her children. The couple's daughter goes to an English-specialized school, and enjoys a major advantage over her classmates because her father is fluent in English. In that context, she looks cool.

"I gave my kids a chance to be popular," Natasha says with a laugh. TMT

Racial Violence in Russia

Violence against Russia's ethnic minorities has been in decline since reaching a peak in the mid-2000s. In recent years, authorities have increased pressure on nationalists — stepping up arrests of leading activists, and classifying more of Russia's far-right groups as extremist.

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	Total
1 Central Asia	21	14	45	77	44	51	103	132	190	131	808
2 Caucasus	3	8	17	31	19	23	48	96	100	102	447
3 Blacks	0	6	15	7	26	20	30	61	29	34	228
4 Arab world	0	4	6	1	2	5	2	2	15	22	59
5 Other Asian countries	3	2	6	7	5	15	21	49	47	72	227
6 Other "non-Slavic"	8	10	9	31	16	27	109	59	73	75	416

Source: SOVA Center



"I am here to represent the interests of Jamaicans in Russia, ensure they aren't discriminated against" - **Chet Bowling**, Honorary Consul for Jamaica.

1996

Jamaica closes its embassy in Moscow.

1972

Jamaica opens formal relations with the Soviet Union.



Jamaica's main export to Russia is Aluminium Oxide. In 2014, it exported \$75 million worth of the chemical to Russia.

Cool Runnings

By **Matthew Bodner** m.bodner@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Andrei Dorohin**

Jamaica is re-establishing a diplomatic presence after a twenty year hiatus. A charismatic businessman from Guyana will be its first consul

Chetwynd Bowling's hands shook as he surveyed the audience. A ragtag group of rum-drunk Caribbean ambassadors and corporate expats stared back at him. Bowling gathered himself. Recently appointed Jamaica's consul to Russia — the first in 20 years — he had an image to uphold.

"To my friends in the diplomatic community," Bowling said, exuding a cool, laid-back demeanour. "Forgive me if I don't follow protocol. I'm new to this!"

That much was obvious. Bowling, a native of Guyana, has never been a diplomat. He is a lawyer by trade. His boozy cocktail reception, sponsored by Jamaica's most popular rum — was a refreshing departure from the usual formality of the Moscow diplomatic scene.

As the rum flowed, the Cuban ambassador to Moscow welcomed his new Jamaican counterpart to the Latin American diplomatic corps. The Russian Foreign Ministry's chief of Latin American affairs then stepped up to explain all the reasons Russia loves Jamaica.

"Sunshine! Beaches! Reggae! Bananas!" he said.

Russia's interest in Jamaica, of course, runs somewhat deeper than that. 20 years after Jamaica shut the doors to its embassy in Moscow, Bowling's appointment is the first step in reinvigorating bilateral relations between two culturally disparate nations. In a nutshell, Jamaica wants Russian tourists, and Russia is interested in resources (Aluminium Oxide) and its trade ports.

A Natural Choice

In 2013, when Jamaica began mulling the restoration of its diplomatic presence in Russia, Bowling was the outstanding candidate. He might not be a Jamaican, but that didn't seem to bother anyone. The Caribbean expat community in Moscow is small, and Bowling has carved himself a niche within it.

"I like hanging out at the old Havana restaurant and bar, as well as places like Casa Agave," Bowling says. "I fell in with the Latin and Cuban expat scene because there isn't really a Caribbean or Jamaican one. Maybe that's a business opportunity!"

Though he is plugged in socially, Bowling plays a more important role in the South American and Caribbean expat community. For the past decade, he has been the go-to legal counselor for Jamaican students in Moscow.

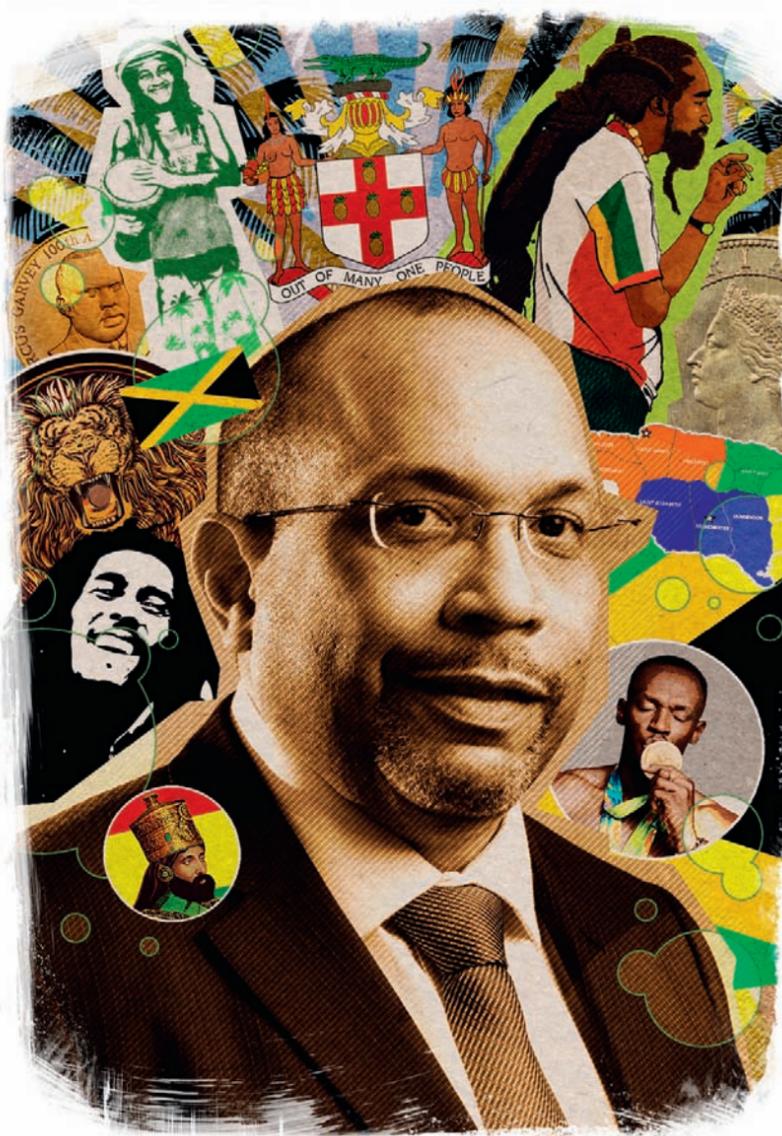
"When you get in trouble, the clerk at the store is giving you a hard time, or you get arrested on suspicion of selling marijuana, you call Chet," he says, invoking the third person in an apparent attempt to coin a catchphrase. "If you need a passport renewed, Chet's the lawyer can sign the documents certifying the application. All of the students came to me. Chet was doing the job."

Bowling was, essentially, already performing half the mandate of a Jamaican consul. The students who relied on him began to lobby the Jamaican Foreign Ministry to give him a formal appointment, claiming it would simplify things for everyone. The appointment was stuck in bureaucratic limbo for three years. But at the end of 2016, Bowling received an email.

"You're appointed," it read.

A Long Way to the Top

Bowling's affinity for Caribbean students in Moscow is a byproduct of his own background. In 1991, he arrived in Moscow on a law scholarship at Russia's People's Friendship University. He made money on the side working as a barman, and later, as manager of Azteca, the capital's very first Tex-Mex restaurant, which was located on the 20th floor of what was then the Intourist hotel (the Ritz-Carlton now stands in its place).



Chet Bowling might not be a natural diplomat, but his work helping Jamaican students made him the obvious candidate to become honorary consul of the Caribbean island.

"Everyone went there to make deals, so I had a good sense of what was going on," Bowling says. In time, he fell in with a group of Western expats looking to start a brokerage firm in Russia. They needed a lawyer on staff for compliance purposes. Bowling, with his Russian law degree, was a perfect fit.

"I always wanted to be a lawyer," he says. Growing up in Guyana, Bowling looked up to his father's lawyer friends. They were everything he wanted to be: confident, polished, and rich. And so, he enrolled in law school in Guyana. He didn't finish the program, taking a break to work. That is when he found scholarship opportunities at the People's Friendship University.

"Apart from wanting to study law, I thought to myself: 'why not come to Russia, learn a new language, and go east?'" Bowling says. "Everyone else was going to New York or London. My parents couldn't afford to send me there, but it also occurred to me to do something different. And so, I landed in Russia in 1991."

By the time he finished his degree in Moscow in the mid-1990s, however, there wasn't much money to be

made in the legal profession. The real cash was in stock brokerage. So before long, Bowling had abandoned his legal ambitions and was trading at the firm he helped found — KRES Financial Brokerage.

The bull run on the stock exchange ended with Russia's 1998 financial collapse. At this point Bowling and his friends began looking for other opportunities. He noticed that the market for small and medium-business consulting firms in Russia was wide open. So he started his own firm, Alinga, bringing him back into legal and business consulting.

Jamaica's Man in Moscow

Beyond helping Jamaican students in Moscow — there are about 50 or 60 at the moment — Bowling's diplomatic mandate is to help foster deeper trade relations with Russia. In this capacity, his long career as a business and legal consultant to foreign firms should come in handy. He already has a network.

"Until two years ago, there were 15-20,000 Russians flying to Jamaica each year," Bowling says. These volumes collapsed in 2014, with the bankruptcy of Russian airline Transaero, which offered a direct flight once every 10 days. "We are pushing Aeroflot to re-establish that flight," he says.

In the longer term, Bowling's mandate will expand to helping Jamaican businesses enter the Russian market. "Jamaicans are, on the whole, very entrepreneurial and I am quite certain there are a lot of products that can sell well here. For example, you saw the nice rum at the reception: A lot of people ask me why they don't sell more of that here."

Bowling's experience with Russian business culture leaves him uniquely placed to advise Jamaican entrepreneurs. His advice to them: "have an open mind — what is normal practice here is not normal

in other places," he says. "Also, get to know your local staff, learn their language. And always remember: trust but verify."

Ambitions may be sky-high, but for now, the reality is more ground-level. The new Jamaican Consulate in Moscow does not enjoy a pomp aristocratic mansion. Instead, the Consulate shares a desk with his Alinga consulting firm, located in an unassuming post-Soviet block. The only sign that you've found the consulate is a modest "Jamaican consulate" plaque on Bowling's door.

As for his official standing, Bowling's direct superior is not Jamaica's foreign minister, but a few rungs down — the ambassador in Berlin. He checks in on a weekly basis.

Bowling has taken his appointment with humor. "My friends in the business community!" he cried at the end of his speech. "If you continue to support me so energetically, maybe they will think about making me an ambassador!"

In this interview, conducted at the desk of the Jamaican Consulate the day after the reception, a groggy Bowling admitted that wasn't likely to happen. **TMT**



“In this country, there are things you can and cannot talk about,”—**Katerina Sadovskaya**, an artist who rents a studio in NIIDAR.

2014

year NIIDAR relocated to Moscow's outskirts.



NIIDAR was one of Moscow's largest and oldest factories, dating back to pre-war years

25,000 rubles

At \$400, average studio rents in NIIDAR are far below the Moscow average.



← Dar Truda is a carpentry workshop, which organizes design classes for both adults and children.

→ Svalkaland is a place to drink, buy retro art and smash up junk.

Escaped Artists

By **Ola Cichowlas** o.cichowlas@imedia.ru | Photos by **Albina Shaimuratova**

An abandoned factory in northwest Moscow has become Russia's coolest industrial jungle

When economic decline finally forced Moscow's oldest radio factory to close in 2014, it ended nearly one hundred years of manufacturing history. But while one chapter closed, another opened. And in the three years since, NIIDAR has grown to become one of the city's most dynamic artistic spaces, home to dozens of independent galleries and workshops.

It isn't easy to maneuver the six-building labyrinth. Visitors have to notify security in advance just to enter the art lover's paradise. Wandering the former-factory's galleries could keep any creative explorer occupied for days.

Just as Moscow is not the first Western city to turn abandoned factories into modern use, NIIDAR is not Moscow's first former industrial complex turned into an art space. The nearby Elektroavod complex was also a popular colony for artists and designers. But with rents on the rise and developers poised to commercialize assets, artists have migrated northwards to NIIDAR.

“There is no better place in Moscow to own a workshop,” says Konstantin Skvortsov, a carpenter who set up what he says is Russia's first co-working art space. An interior designer by profession, Skvortsov struggled to find space in Moscow to keep his machinery. “I wanted to open a space where people could share instruments,” he says.

“There's a real air of solidarity in NIIDAR. All the artists help each other out,” says Skvortsov. But like Elektroavod, the future of the space is uncertain. There are rumors that NIIDAR will be knocked down to make space for luxury apartment blocks. Many are apprehensive.

A Studio Like No Other

Viktor Alimpiyev is one of Russia's leading modern painters and video artists, with work currently on show at Moscow's prestigious Pushkin Museum. “Painting is still hugely appreciated in Russia. It is one of the most popular art forms,” he says.

Alimpiyev has chosen the top floor of the run down NIIDAR as his workplace. One of the studio's walls is a window and the sun setting over Moscow illuminates every detail of Alimpiyev's work.

“We're at the border of the city — depressing Moscow starts just behind it,” he says. For Alimpiyev, NIIDAR is a place of freedom: “It is a city within a city — especially in the summer.”

Art, Unbounded

In another part of the complex, The Moscow Times meets Katerina Sadovskaya, a 30-year-old painter who set up the Akopyan Gallery with two other female artists. Their gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings and photographs focused on the human body.

“In Russia, photography is not considered a serious art form. We try to blend it with painting,” says Sadovskaya. As part of their show, Sadovskaya and her partner Lilia Li-Mi-Yan have deformed photographed faces and nude bodies by painting over them.

The young artists lament that Moscow's galleries — however small — have rejected their work on the grounds that it is too “scandalous.” Curators think of it as “porn” or “something to do with Satan.”

“In this country, there are things you can and cannot show or talk about,” says Sadovskaya. She says the mood among artists in Moscow is similar to the 1980s, when freedom in the Russian art scene was restricted to a small underground circle.

But NIIDAR has given Sadovskaya the freedom to exhibit. “I could not sit around and wait forever until someone

agrees to show my paintings. I needed to work and stage exhibitions,” she says.

Stress Reliever

Alexei Barinsky has brought NIIDAR into the public eye more than any other artist in the complex.

Barinsky is the founder of Moscow's most original second-hand store. The route there is not for the faint-hearted: visitors have to enter a dark corridor, then find the staircase next to a giant poster of Vladimir Lenin. At the top of the dark staircase, a huge warehouse of second-hand clothes and furniture awaits, complete with more Soviet posters and even a bar.

Barinsky thought of the idea while he was in the process of moving to another country with his family. During the move, he amassed a mountain of things he wanted to get rid of. “I started uploading every item online to sell,” he says. The next day, he told his colleague at work: “Imagine if there was a company that could sell it for you!”

And so Svalka (Junk) was born. Starting from a Facebook post, Barinsky offered to collect unwanted items from friends to re-sell them. In the first few weeks, they were looking for a somewhere to store the goods. “NIIDAR was the perfect place,” he says.

Barinsky eventually decided his project was not entirely ethical. “We decided to give a fraction of each collection to charity,” says Barinsky.

That still left him with a mountain of items that could not be re-sold. So Barinsky came up with another idea. “I thought: I'm going to let people destroy this stuff.” He bought some large metal hammers, helmets and safety glasses and invited some friends to destroy old Soviet cupboards, broken plates and computers.

Before long, Muscovites were queuing up to take part in the destruction. Now entire offices come to take part in the activity as a form of stress relief. Some private psychologists have started taking their clients to join in the novel activity to treat anger management.

Barinsky aims to keep the destruction safe. But if clients don't take safety seriously, it can result in minor injuries. “One guy took off his glasses and got a piece of piano in his eye,” he says.

Barinsky's business has been a huge success. “There's a lot of stress in Moscow,” he says. “Why don't you come destroy some stuff in NIIDAR?” **TMT**



Yekaterina Sadovskaya compares Russia's “underground” art scene to the late Soviet era.



Igor Gubernsky is the founder of several food festivals, including Taste of Moscow and Moscow Gastronomic Festival.

The Moscow Times
No. 5791

2014

Bjorn first opened its doors in November.

780 rubles

cost of signature onion caramel pork belly dish.



The New Nordic Cuisine movement developed in Scandinavia during the 2000s.

THE WORD'S WORTH

Take A Load Off, Russian-Style

Отдыхать: to rest, retire, etc.



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

Отдыхать. Simple word, right? You use it all the time. But think for a minute: how many meanings does it have? Two? Three? So far I've counted eight. Take a load off — отдыхайте! — and see if I've missed any.

Let's start with an old and obscure meaning. The verb pair отдыхать/отдохнуть is related to дышать (to breathe) and once meant to catch one's breath, to come to after fainting. This usage is about two centuries out of date: Мы подумали, что котёнок умер, но вдруг он опять отдохнул (We thought the kitten had died, but it suddenly took a breath.) Today we'd say вздохнул.

Отдыхать can also mean the opposite: to sleep, usually to take a nap. This seems to be a polite way of saying someone is conked out on the couch after lunch. On the phone someone might say: Михаил Васильевич отдыхает. Что ему передать? (Mikhail Vasilievich is resting. Can I take a message?)

Отдыхать can mean "not working." Sometimes "not working" really means "retired," which some people need to be pushed into: Генерал, который не справился со своими обязанностями, должен отдыхать на пенсии (A general who couldn't keep up with his responsibilities should retire.) In other cases, "not working" means outside usual work hours. For example, a night-duty nurse says: Когда все отдыхают, мы работаем (We go to work when everyone else is off the clock.)

Another way of "not working" is taking a vacation: Люди покупают путёвки и едут отдыхать (People are buying package tours and going on vacation.) The folks on those package tours — or at any resort or dacha — are отдыхающие (vacationers). You may want to avoid them: Мы нашли место в стороне от пляжей и отдыхающих (We found a spot that was away from the beaches and holiday makers.) Vacationing can be a bit repetitive: Однажды я отдыхала в доме отдыха (Once I went on holiday in a holiday hotel.)

In a slightly different context, отдых can be recreation or leisure, like at the country's thousands of парки культуры и отдыха (parks of culture and recreation).

Отдыхать can also mean to rest, like what kids should do before the school year begins: Пусть отдыхает, скоро ведь учёба (They should rest up — school starts soon, after all.) And what adults should do every night: Три часа перед сном: отдыхайте, читайте, расслабляйтесь (Three hours before bed time: relax, read, and wind down.)

But sometimes it can mean almost the opposite of relaxation — having a real good time: Мы редко видимся, но если уж встречаемся, то отдыхаем на полную катушку (We don't see them often, but when we do, we really cut loose.) As another parent points out: Дети в лагере, родители отдыхают (When the kids are at camp, the parents will play.)

Отдыхать can be to take a break — or not, as the case may be: Палач не отдыхал, виселицы были обыденным явлением (The executioner didn't take a break, and gallows were commonplace.)

But in slang, отдыхать means something else altogether — it refers to a loser. When a guy sings in the shower like an opera star, his friends shout: Паваротти отдыхает! (Pavarotti has nothing on this guy!)

Among the younger set отдыхать can be a command that means "we don't need you": Отдыхай! (Get lost!)

So the next time someone tells you: Отдыхай — think about it before you thank them. TMT



Chef Stanislav Pesotsky's path to the prestigious Silver Triangle culinary prize took him on a journey to Kiev, Moscow and Connecticut.

Bjorn Again

By Andrei Muchnik artsreporter@imedia.ru

Nordic cuisine meets modern Russia in the unusual creations of culinary prize winner Stanislav Pesotsky

Stanislav Pesotsky says his decision to become a chef was "spontaneous." Born in Kremenchug in central Ukraine, the 2016 Silver Triangle award winner learned the basics in Kiev, where he studied hospitality, business and linguistics. But his first real gastronomic practice came while working in a cafe bar at the Mohegan Sun casino complex in Connecticut, halfway between New York City and Boston. Before the season was done, Pesotsky had been promoted to become chef at California Pizza Kitchen, one of the restaurants at the casino.

"I've always been a creative person, had a knack for studying languages and have even been writing music. So I guess cooking became a form of creative expression for me," he told the Moscow Times. "I came with zero knowledge and skills, but in a few months I got a promotion. The workload was really hard. I had to become a superhero. And fast."

After returning to Ukraine, Pesotsky tried to work as a chef in Kiev, but quickly realized that the work style there was very different from what he was used to in the U.S.

After countless interviews and weeks of waiting, the aspiring chef landed a job at the prestigious Hyatt Regency hotel in the Ukrainian capital. But he only lasted three days.

"It was the same as everywhere else — chaos and disorganization," says Pesotsky. "The Head Chef was more interested in computer games than cooking. I decided that I didn't want to work in Ukraine anymore. It was the last straw."

Outside of the kitchen, Pesotsky was making big decisions. He stopped eating meat and drinking alcohol. His band Pyl (Dust) had finished their second album, and Pesotsky began reading religiously. Then, he met his future wife, who was living in Moscow.

Six years ago, Pesotsky decided to move to Russia to be with her.

The move to Russia kick-started his culinary career. He worked at the Oblaka restaurant for three years, becoming a sous chef, then worked as a chef at Extra Virgin wine bar.

At the end of 2015 he became Bjorn's new chef.

Pesotsky put together a completely new team and introduced some radical

changes. The new chef applied the principles of the "new Nordic cuisine" to his own ideas and started using only Russian products. Another change was the pricing, which was reduced significantly.

Then came the Silver Triangle. First organized in 2011 by Igor Gubernsky, one of the most influential people in Russia's restaurant business, the annual contest judges the most talented and innovative chefs in the country. One of the main conditions of the contest is that the food has to represent contemporary Russian cuisine.

Apart from Pesotsky, two other finalists took part in the last round of the 2016 competition: Yevgeny Vikentyev, chef of Hamlet and Jacks restaurant in St. Petersburg, and Oleg Kusov, from Moscow's Delicatessen. The best chef was determined during a blind taste test. Each chef had to prepare one starter and one main dish. The judges of the contest included prominent Moscow chefs Vladimir Mukhin (White Rabbit); Luigi Mani (Uilliam's and Pinch); Dmitry Zotov (Madame Wong, Haggis); and Georgy Troyan (Severyane).

The winning dishes were a gravlax sphere with cranberry and horseradish and a shot of vodka as a starter and beef rib with onion and pickled apple.

"My mission is to make Russian cuisine up-to-date, trendy and in-demand all over the world," Pesotsky said in his acceptance speech.

The two winning dishes are now available at Bjorn, although they have been recreated with some significant differences. The gravlax sphere was transformed into a dessert called "Snowball": sea buckthorn and elderberry mousse in a sphere of white chocolate with crumbs of rice biscuits.

The beef, meanwhile, is replaced by pork belly, fried and glazed with onion caramel. "A principle of new Nordic cuisine is not to waste anything and use every product to its full potential," says Pesotsky. And so along with the onion caramel glazing, the dish offers baked onion with balsamic vinegar, onion purée and crunchy onion pieces, arranged neatly around the pork belly. TMT



At Bjorn, chef Stanislav Pesotsky reimagines Russian cuisine using culinary principles from Scandinavia.

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The Moscow Museum of Modern Art is displaying works by the great non-conformist Russian artist Valery Aizenberg.

February 9 – 15

FESTIVAL Vietnamese Food

Everything from pho soup to ointments

The second annual Vietnamese Food Festival will take place this weekend at the NII (Nauka i Iskusstvo) club near Kurskaya metro station. Organized by the owners of the popular Lao Lee chain and Nha cafe, the festival will have stalls with exotic fruit, kebabs, traditional pho soups and nem rolls, and even Vietnamese medicines. facebook.com/events/1076729129103656/
13-15 Nastavnichesky Pereulok, Bldg. 3
Metro Kurskaya

CONCERT Waka Flocka Flame at Yotaspace Southern rap in Moscow

Waka Flocka Flame is the stage name for American rapper Juaquin James Malphurs. Waka Flocka is known for his hits "O Let's Do It" and "No Hands." His Sunday concert at Yotaspace is the musician's first visit to Moscow, so expect crowds of fans of southern rap. yotaspace.ru
11 Ulitsa Ordzhonikidze. Metro Leninsky Prospekt

CINEMA Maren Ade Weekend at Pioneer All the movies of this year's Oscar nominee

This weekend is Maren Ade weekend at the Pioneer Cinema, celebrating this German director who just got an Oscar nomination for her latest movie "Toni Erdmann." The film has already been recognized as the best film of the year by the International Federation of Film Critics and took in all the main awards from the European Film Academy. Apart from "Toni Erdmann" the retrospective will include "The Forest for the Trees" and her second work, "Everyone Else." pioneer-cinema.ru
21 Kutuzovskiy Prospekt
Metro Kievskaya, Kutuzovskaya, Studencheskaya

EXHIBIT Toward the Source New exhibit at the Garage Museum

Garage invited five artists to do research at the Garage Archive Collection and create new works based on their discoveries. Olga Chernysheva, Vyacheslav Kuritsyn, Vladimir Logutov, Andrei Monastyrsky and Kirill Savchenkov spent eight months exploring the archive. "Toward the Source" connects the past and the present, with contemporary artists offering their perspective on Russia's recent art history. Until April 23. garagemca.org
9 Krymsky Val, Bldg. 32
Metro Park Kultury, Oktyabrskaya

Artist Valery Aizenberg's Journey in "Migratio"

By [Alina Safronova](mailto:alinasafrova@imedia.ru) artsreporter@imedia.ru

The Moscow Museum of Modern Art has opened a retrospective exhibition of works by Valery Aizenberg, an acclaimed artist from the 1980s who remains one of the most influential figures in the Russian modern art scene.

The show features over 100 works created by Valery Aizenberg in the last 40 years, displayed across the four floors of the Museum. Visitors are invited to descend from the top floor down to the first. In the process, they follow the artist's own life journey — from Ukraine to the U.S. — and his creative development, which is more a play of concepts and formats than a straightforward path to find his artistic self.

However, the structure of the exhibition is not chronological. It flows in accordance with the artistic concepts and historical context. The spirit of the retrospective is an installation called "Intellectual Forest," which allows the viewer to wander around the dense woods of the artist's unconsciousness, pulled back to reality by multiple cultural references, direct quotes and striking images.

A Visual Forest

The show itself is a forest of paintings, objects, and performances — text, video and photo. Most of the pieces do not stand alone. They are groups arranged in series. Some works, such as "Maslenitsa," "Oka River," and "Snow Flies," are curated to capture the rhythm of the compositions produced by colors, lines and texture. Here you begin to understand the point of the

Forest. It's not the painting itself that Valery Aizenberg is interested in, but the context his series create within the art space as the pieces are either installed away from the walls or hanging from the ceiling.

"It was Aizenberg's spectacular idea to place the pictures this way. Installation is one of his art strategies," Leonid Bazhanov, curator of the exhibition, told The Moscow Times. "He wanted to show the pieces from an unexpected angle."

The installation lets you see a painting from the front and back and compare the original names of the pieces with the official titles on the museum plates. The visitor literally looks at the art space between the paintings by moving between hanging artworks and mentally "migrating" through the art series.

Escapism

A theme of escapism, which Valery Aizenberg calls "fly," runs throughout the installation. Alongside the "flying" paintings, the artist's constantly repeating images of stars ("Danae and the Acid Rain") and airplanes ("Asphodels" and "Airhive") create a strong theme of striving for freedom. One of the most significant works of the retrospective is Aizenberg's most recent "Vulgarians." In the installation, cats and flies hover around a Magritte-like self-portrait. It is an illustration of absolute freedom from substance and context: an artist freeing himself from the physicality of pictorial art.

Aizenberg captures the viewer's imagination with a series of video art performances created as part of his ESCAPE series. These are the most conceptual works displayed in the exhibition. In "The Eye" the artist scratches the image of an eye on paper with a knife and provokes a deep emotional response. The "Red Welder" deals with the transformative power of art.

Aizenberg's conceptual journey ends with his series "Malevichism." This is not a set of direct quotations from the avant-garde artist Kazimir Malevich, but an attempt to bring Malevich into the artist's personal space and realm of perception. Bazhanov explains: "Modern Russian artists are regularly engaged in a dialogue or polemics with Malevich. For some it's a tribute to a style, for others it's a way to focus their artistic obsession."

Visitors become part of the context the moment they enter an installation. In the "Endless Ukrainian Landscape with Water Tower and Shadow," Aizenberg explores the idea that the viewer can never fully comprehend the artist's world. To see what is on the paintings, you have to strain to look through a small opening.

This innovative approach to painting and the ability to "migrate" into different genres has given Valery Aizenberg the reputation of one of the most profound conceptual artists of our times. The show will run until March 5.

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