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"While they are bargaining over me, my life will be draining away. Russia will return me to Ukraine anyway — dead or alive."
Nadiya Savchenko



"We have waited for a long time for the release of Nadiya Savchenko. This is a good signal and good news today for her family, friends and Ukraine."
Martin Schulz

Savchenko Flies Home

By **Ola Cichowlas** and **Oliver Carroll** newsreporter@imedia.ru

Long-awaited prisoner exchange finally happens

The receptions could not have been more different. In Kiev: crowds of well-wishers, multiple TV livestreaming, press conferences, flowers and a medal of honour from the president. In Moscow: a cordoned-off piece of tarmac, state media coverage, out of public eye and under close surveillance.

On Wednesday, May 25, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko's plane landed in Kiev with Nadiya Savchenko on board. Just over an hour earlier, the Russian prisoners Alexander Alexandrov and Yevgeny Yerofeyev had set off in the opposite direction. Two flights and months of negotiations, believed to have been concluded two days earlier, when Merkel, Hollande, Putin and Poroshenko tele-conferenced in the so-called Normandy Format.

The legal formula of the exchange became clear soon after the planes set off. Rather than being subject to mutual agreements to serve out prison sentences, all the prisoners would instead receive presidential pardons and walk free.

Russians Alexandrov and Yerofeyev got their pardons only after Poroshenko changed Ukrainian legislation to allow others to apply on their behalf. This allowed the two men to avoid accepting the verdict of a Ukrainian court that they were active Russian officers fighting an illegal war. This would have been unacceptable to the Russian side, which has maintained that the two were acting as private citizens.

Soon after their capture on May 16, 2015, both in fact admitted to journalists that they were serving Russian special forces soldiers. Later, however, they changed their testimony



Nadiya Savchenko with her sister Vera after arrival at Kiev's Boryspil airport on Wednesday.

to claim they were no longer serving officers by the time they had entered eastern Ukraine.

The release of prisoners does not "necessarily" indicate any broader breakthrough in the standoff between Kiev and Moscow, cautions political expert Vladimir Frolov. Nor does it suggest any real movement on the peace settlements agreed in Minsk. If anything, violence seems to be picking up, with Ukrainian forces reporting multiple deaths recently.

There are also dozens of prisoners and captives left on both sides. Among them are the Ukrainian filmmakers Oleg Sentsov and Alexander Kolchenko, sentenced to many years of prison on dubious charges of terrorism.

But what the exchange certainly does is allows both sides to feel happy about themselves.

On the one hand, Savchenko was a more difficult prisoner than Moscow could ever have

imagined. Her cause was much championed abroad, her stoic image and hunger strikes easily translated into the media screens of the West. Video footage and witness evidence conclusively demonstrated she could not have been a party to the deaths of journalists, of which she was accused. The Kremlin had very little argument to offer in return, and it lost a lot of political capital.

"It was a mistake," says political commentator Alexei Makarkin. "The authorities expected her to break down, but it didn't happen."

Poroshenko, on the other hand, can claim he has made good on his promise to bring a Ukrainian war hero home. Such a breakthrough could not be more timely, with him struggling domestically amid the widespread perception of corruption, cronyism and sluggish reform.

Poroshenko needed this national victory, but it will not come without a cost. Most obviously, he will now have to share political stage with a difficult, but celebrated personality. The returning Savchenko has been described by some as Ukraine's Vaclav Havel. Given her character, Malcolm X may be a better description.

Savchenko will not be afraid to speak her mind. There will be few excuses for Poroshenko's failing government, few reasons not to implement difficult reform and few reasons not to upset the oligarchic balance.

For this reason, Ukrainian politics is in for a roller-coaster ride. Poroshenko has reason to be worried that this victory may become the major headache for his presidency in the months to come. **TMT**



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DAINGEROUS GAMES

Taking War Seriously: Russia-NATO Showdown No Longer Just Fiction

By **James Sherr**
Associate Fellow, Chatham House



NATO's former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, General Sir Richard Shirreff's new book, "2017: War With Russia," is a work of fiction. But its subject — a clash between NATO and Russia as early as next year — is not completely fanciful.

When Russia attacked Ukraine in 2014, it also attacked the Helsinki-based security order of Europe. In place of this system, President Vladimir Putin is calling for a revived Yalta system, based on spheres of influence and respect. He also has invoked the borders of historic Russia and proclaimed a right to "defend" Russian "compatriots" abroad.

And if treaties and agreements are not sacrosanct to the Kremlin, why should NATO borders be sacrosanct? It is only reasonable that NATO's Baltic allies ask this question and that others, beginning with Turkey, do so as well.

Their concerns are heightened by military developments as significant as today's political ones. Since the war with Georgia in 2008, Russia has made a steady, cumulative investment in the capacity to wage local and regional war throughout the interior and on the periphery of the former U.S.S.R. This means full-spectrum, non-linear war, from non-attributable attacks by "polite little men" to first use of nuclear weapons. It also means information war, from disinformation to cyber attacks, and a coordinated effort to mobilize the state.

What is the purpose of the investment? The short answer is

to wage proactive defense against geopolitical and civilizational encirclement by the West. That states on Russia's periphery might welcome Western encroachment is grist to the mill of those in Russia who assess threats and respond to them. Inside the Kremlin's febrile world, an unbroken chain of malign intent connects NATO and EU enlargement, humanitarian interventions, colored revolutions and regime changes, culminating with Russia itself. To ask in these circumstances whether Russia's policy is offensive or defensive is to play with words.

Today the Baltic states are threatened politically. The aim of Russian policy is to persuade them that, inside or outside the EU and NATO, they lie in a grey zone and should behave accordingly. To this end, military-force groups with a capacity to seize Riga and Tallinn in 60 hours are an asset, even if it would be folly to employ them in practice. Until NATO takes steps to rectify the military balance, Russia will use fear as a weapon to undermine the political balance.

But what is the risk that the Baltics will be attacked militarily? Since NATO cannot know, it must not allow a dangerous imbalance of forces to arise. Unfortunately, it already has arisen. From 1991 to 2008, the West believed there would be no military threats in Europe, and national armed forces were restructured accordingly. The impact of the Georgian war on these orthodoxies was minimal. But Crimea's annexation has launched an intellectual revolution. Those at its cutting edge

are realists who know that vulnerabilities cannot be repaired by summit declarations and band-aids.

They also know that Russia's weaknesses are as telling as its strengths. Today, Russia has an enhanced version of the army that Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's predecessor, Anatoly Serdyukov, aspired to build. The irony is that he was the first Russian defense minister to remove NATO as the baseline of Russian defense sufficiency.

The core of today's military capability lies in 30-40 maneuver units, nuclear and dual-use strike systems and multi-layered air defense. That is a formidable capability for limited conflict, but it is not the capability Russia's General Staff would design for full-scale war against NATO. Russia's ambitious longer-term plans confirm as much. But these plans are running into the usual Russian buffers — human, industrial and institutional — and not all of them can be planned out of existence, least of all in a damaged and deteriorating economy.

Therefore, the challenge for NATO is no different than it used to be in West Berlin: to persuade Russia that any war means full-scale war. To this end, it is not necessary to deny Russia a victory in the Baltic states. It is necessary to deny it a quick victory. This is a doable task, but that does not mean it will be done. There also is no certainty that Putin's Chekist testing and probing of weakness will not provoke a tougher response than he can safely manage. **TMT**

“Demand from foreign investors of various regions showed a high level of trust in Russia as an issuer.”
Anton Siluanov, finance minister.



\$1.75Bln
10-year dollar-denominated eurobonds sold by Russia.

“We sold bonds to confirm our market presence [and] feel out investor sentiment.” **Konstantin Vyshkovsky**, head of debt at the Finance Ministry.



70%
of bonds were bought by foreign investors, according to the Finance Ministry.

Supplying Demand

By **Peter Hobson** p.hobson@imedia.ru | Twitter: peterhobson15

Russia took to the bond markets for the first time since the Ukrainian crisis. Officials reported the sale was oversubscribed, but insiders say demand was artificially inflated.

Bidding opened suddenly on the morning of May 23. After a three-year absence from international markets, and with very little warning, Russia announced it wished to borrow billions of dollars.

The Finance Ministry sought to help finance a yawning budget deficit caused by the low price of oil. It also wanted to see if Western investors, who have largely avoided Russia since the Ukraine crisis, would buy the country's debt.

It appeared strikingly successful. The plan was to sell up to \$3 billion in 10-year, dollar-denominated eurobonds. The yield, at around 4.75 percent, was generous compared to Western bond markets. Within a few hours, banking sources were saying that orders had been placed worth \$5.5 billion.

But there was a snag: the sources said very few of the buyers were foreign. So the sale was extended into the next day in the hope of attracting extra bids, mainly from Asia.

When orders closed in the evening on May 24, the Finance Ministry said demand had hit \$7 billion, and it had sold bonds worth \$1.75 billion. More importantly, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov announced that more than 70 percent of that — around \$1.3 billion — had been bought by foreigners. This showed the “high level of trust in Russia as an issuer,” Siluanov said.

However, some had their doubts. Why, if there were so many buyers for the bonds, did Moscow sell so few? And with so many Western investors saying they were shunning the sale, who were the foreigners who bought?

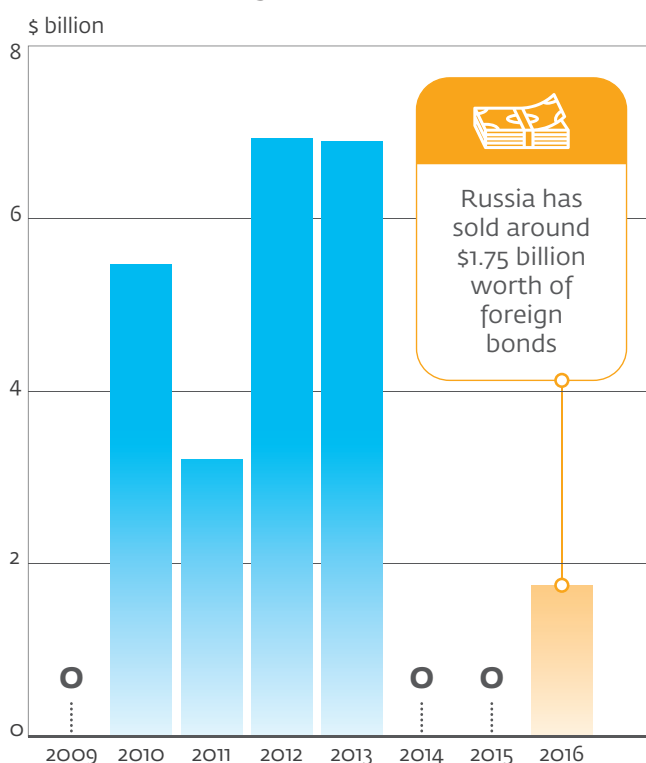
“Foreigner might well be offshore Russian,” tweeted Timothy Ash, emerging markets economist at Nomura in London. Market sources told Vedomosti, a Russian business daily, that local buyers had submitted outside bids to artificially inflate demand for the eurobonds, and may have cycled money through the United States and other countries to give the appearance of foreign investment.

The Sanctions Effect

Russia last borrowed on international markets in 2013. Then, it raised \$7 billion. But the following year, Western governments slapped financial sanctions on the country after it annexed Crimea and backed separatist militias in Ukraine.

The government itself was not blacklisted; the sanctions targeted only individuals and companies. But they

Russian sovereign bonds



Source: Dealogic

made many Western banks wary of dealing with the Russian state, which owns and runs several sanctioned firms.

Moscow had sought to try international bond markets earlier. In February, the Finance Ministry sent letters to 25 foreign banks inviting them to underwrite a eurobond sale. But fearful of breaching sanctions and under pressure from their governments, none took up the offer.

However, if the West's banks were leery of the bond sale, other industries had no such qualms. The prospectus for this week's sale lists British lawyers Linklaters and U.S. firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton as legal advisors. The listing agent is Ireland's Walkers Listing & Support Services. Aided and advised by these firms, Moscow decided to go ahead with the bond issue anyway.

The sale's sole organizer was VTB Capital, an arm of Russian state banking group VTB that itself is sanctioned. To assuage worries, VTB's prospectus promised that money raised in the bond sale would not be used to finance sanctioned companies. But it said “no assurance can be given” that international clearing houses would handle the bonds, and that instead a single Russian clearing agency would be servicing them.

Clearing houses such as Euroclear and Clearstream are seen by investors as guarantors of the trustworthiness and tradability of bonds. Neither has signed up to handle the bond. And neither Barclays nor JPMorgan have included Russia's bond in their indexes.

Local Dollars

Whether or not foreign interest in the bond sale was inflated, local demand was solid, analysts say.

That might even have been the way the government planned it. Russia's financial sector has built up a large stash of hard currency since the start of the Ukraine crisis, when sanctions and the falling oil price caused financial turmoil and a rush to buy dollars to protect against a collapse of the ruble.

A year and a half later, “banks had nowhere to put their dollars,” says Dmitry Polevoy, chief Russia economist at ING Bank in Moscow. The eurobond offer was an effective way to release those funds, and at the same time help finance the budget deficit, he said.

That deficit, expected this year to reach some 3-5 percent of GDP, or between \$35 and \$60 billion, is one of the government's major headaches.

To cover the shortfall Moscow plans to privatize major state companies and draw down its \$50 billion reserve fund. But both these moves are unpopular — state corporate bosses are resistant to going private and authorities fear a painful fiscal crunch if the reserve fund is spent before the economy recovers or oil prices rise. Meanwhile, government debt is low, at around 13.5 percent of GDP.

Even if its success was limited, the bond sale shows that Russia is out of crisis, says Neil Shearing, head emerging markets economist at Capital Economics in London.

“This sends a message,” he said. “The economy is through the acute phase of its crisis, and sanctions will no longer put a hard stop on the government's access to hard currency debt.” **TMT**



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4 Looking Forward

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“This is a direct violation of an article of the Constitution. These restrictions need solid grounds.”
Mikhail Trepashkin, lawyer



20%
of Russians have international passports.

>1.4 million
of Russians were not allowed to leave the country in 2015 due to unpaid bills.



After terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, Russia's Foreign Ministry was considering banning trips to the European Union.

A New Iron Curtain

By **Ola Cichowlas** newsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by **Evgeny Tonkonogy**

Proposed amendments to anti-terrorist legislation raise concerns of Soviet-style travel restrictions being extended to ever larger numbers of Russians.

The fall of the Soviet Union gave Russians a taste for several freedoms. Some, like freedom of expression and assembly, are no longer taken for granted. Others, like freedom of travel, are — at least by the monied and mobile. In recent years, however, authorities have made it clear that this freedom was no longer automatic for those it sees as undesirable. New proposals to amend Russia's existing terrorism laws, published this month, raise the prospect of such bans being given even wider application.

Authored by uber-loyalists State Duma deputy Irina Yarovaya and Federation Council member Viktor Ozerov, the proposals would increase the categories of Russians prohibited from leaving the territory of the Russian Federation. They would limit overseas travel for people who “justify” extremism online and for those officially cautioned for activity that “creates the conditions to commit a crime.” Both of these clauses can be actioned without the involvement of a court.

In effect, this could mean any Russian reposting an “extremist” article or Internet post is at danger of receiving an extra-judicial five-year travel ban. Aside from travel bans, Yarovaya also wants to raise the jail sentence for justifying terrorism from five to seven years and lower the age of responsibility from 16 to 14.

Flexible Definitions

The number of Russians charged with the increasingly widely interpreted definition of “extremism” is rising fast.

“Every year, a few hundred Russians are charged for the simple matter of having an opinion,” says Alexander Verkhovsky, the director of Moscow's SOVA Center, which monitors abuses of anti-extremism legislation. Verkhovsky believes this particular bill would be a clear limitation of rights, as it would enable authorities to punish an individual prior to a court decision.

Sociologist Denis Volkov from Moscow's independent Levada Center pollster, on the other hand, says the bill is unlikely to make Russians more wary about what they post on the Internet. “Most people are not aware of these laws,” he says.

Authors of the proposal say they want to “increase the guarantee of safety and health of Russian citizens.” There are some doubts as to whether travel bans can do that, and the potential



for the opposite effect is clear. According to Verkhovsky, they “risk further alienating those Russians most prone to radicalization.” The legislation's only logical aim, he says, would be to stop Russian extremists from making the journey to Syria.

Russia is, of course, not alone in exploiting anti-terrorism initiatives to broaden state control over citizens. Surveillance and detention capabilities of Western governments are expanding, not least since the Paris and Brussels attacks. But in Russia, the proposed travel ban fits a wider trend.

Those Russians employed by state security services have long been prohibited from travel abroad (for non-work purposes, that is). The Federal Security Service (FSB) made these rules even stricter after 2010, when the United States uncovered its sleeper spy network.

But the list of those affected by travel bans now goes far beyond those with potential access to state secrets — and it is growing steadily.

In particular, the groups subject to travel bans has grown considerably since the start of the war in Ukraine. In 2014, travel restrictions were extended to civil servants in the Defense Ministry, Internal Ministry and the staff of Russia's vast prison service.

The no-fly list now also includes debtors — those avoiding

paying back loans or who are behind in their tax payments. During a crisis, an estimated 4 million people are at risk of falling into this category.

Closing Borders

On the face of it, the Kremlin seems to have adopted a change in strategy following the white-ribbon protests in the winter of 2010-11.

In the years immediately following, authorities did much to encourage opposition sympathizers to leave. Many middle-class Russians with opposition ties left Russia for Europe: Riga, London and Berlin have since become liberal Russian hubs. Travel bans were certainly imposed on opposition leaders but some of their most active supporters were free to leave.

But the picture today is changing. The Kremlin has sought not only to control the right to travel itself, but, more broadly, the destinations open to Russians. As a reaction to Western sanctions imposed on Moscow for the annexation of Crimea, Russia's Foreign Ministry advised its citizens not to travel to the United States (government officials have long been asked for permission prior to traveling to the United States) nor the vast list of countries with which Washington has extradition rights.

The Russian blogosphere has erupted in forums with titles such as “am I allowed to travel abroad?” Many now posit the prospect of a Soviet-style exit visa system being introduced. Senior diplomat Vadim Syromolotov has even suggested that the government was considering demanding exit visas for Russians traveling to Europe.

Officially his own employer, the Foreign Ministry, has been quick to deny such plans. The very suggestion of exit visas, however, was enough to raise fears over the future of foreign travel in Russia.

It is unclear the extent to which the Kremlin is willing to go to make Russians stay put, or, indeed, if this is part of a larger effort to reduce exposure to the outside world. But it is also true that most Russians value their right to travel and have little nostalgia for the Soviet-era travel bans. While they may have waved goodbye to other freedoms with a sense of detachment, it may well be that moves to limit their movement will be met with a more emotional response. **TMT**

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World Trade Center Moscow: Recipes of Champions



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In May, Moscow and St. Petersburg hosted one of the major sporting events of the year, the 2016 Ice Hockey World Championship. Besides the VTB Ice Palace Arena in Moscow, one of the main places that drew in the teams and championship organizers was the World Trade Center, where some of the teams and visitors to the hockey championship lived. Director of the WTC restaurant complex Dmitry Motorin talks about what was on the hockey players' menu and what it's like to feed athletes.



Dmitry Motorin
Director of the WTC restaurant
complex

Dmitry, this is not the first time the WTC has hosted renowned athletes. How does the WTC restaurant prepare for guests such as these?

True, this is far from the first time we have hosted participants in sporting events of such a high level. For example, participants in the Rugby World Cup Sevens and the World Championships in Athletics in 2013 lived in the WTC. And despite our already considerable experience feeding world sports stars, it is a crucial moment for us every time.

Preparation of the restaurant complex's service takes far more than a day, and we start long before the guests arrive. Prior to the event, food production is tested and inspected by supervisory authorities, and the entire staff undergoes an additional medical exam. Particular attention is paid to preparing the kitchen and wait staff, conducting food safety training, compliance with sanitary standards and rules for behavior with guests.

What is the secret to a successful menu for competitors? (a menu specifically for athletes)

A special menu for athletes is made up well in advance and carefully coordinated with team

dietitians. Competitions take a lot of energy from the players, so the food must be properly balanced in calories, protein, carbohydrates and the vitamins the athlete's body needs for a quick recovery of energy during strenuous exertion. The outcome of the competition depends in many respects on the athletes' diets. By the way, Manchester United won the Champions League in 2008 living and eating here.

To feed the World Cup hockey team in 2016, WTC brand chef Mikhail Kuznetsov developed separate options for lunch and dinner, which provided the athletes a varied diet for two weeks of matches. A distinctive feature of the menu was the absence of fatty and fried foods. The basis of the hockey players' diet, as well as that of many other athletes during competitions is meals with a high protein content – lean beef, chicken and turkey. Our menu also includes pasta, rice, tuna, salmon, lots of fresh vegetables, oatmeal, dried fruit, low-fat yogurt, broccoli, cauliflower, baked potatoes, nuts, honey, fruit juices and fresh fruit, chicken broth and whole-grain bread.

For breakfast, we offer the athletes the usual European buffet assortment at five-star hotel standards. It has everything you need to charge the body with energy at the start of a long and busy day.

In addition to the main meals, we have prepared individual snack menus, taking into account not only the sport, but also the teams' national traditions. Typically, these are foods with a high content of fiber and calories. Depending on the teams' wishes, this might be, for example, sandwiches, fruit, bananas, dairy products or cereals.

Often in sports, you can't predict when a match will end. There are overtimes and penalty shots, and teams' meal times often change, so our task is to respond quickly to different situations and be prepared 24 hours a day.



REAL FOOD RESTAURANT (RFR)

Athletes delight us with their playing and we have to please them with our food! (Laughs)

If it's not a secret, what do athletes eat most often before going out onto the ice or field?

A few hours before the game, athletes, unlike in their daily diet, choose foods high in carbohydrates and low in fat: spaghetti, white chicken meat without the skin, or chicken broth. We prepared special menu options for this too.

How can WTC restaurants surprise and please visitors during the sports season?

We always try to please our guests with the variety of our offerings, delicious food and more. During sports competitions of this level, we broadcasts the matches on specially set up large screens. In addition to the main menu, visitors can choose from a special "beer menu for the

fans" with light snacks, delicious sandwiches and burgers, hearty hot dishes and, of course, various kinds of beer.

Also, championship players and visitors can have breakfast, lunch or dinner with us at any time of the day or night, in their familiar time zone, in the bar or restaurant that suits your culinary preferences. Our selection is comprehensive: there is Russian and European cuisine, and the haute cuisine of Maxim Savelyev, chef of RFR restaurant. There are Japanese specialties prepared by our sushi master, who has more than 20 years of experience. Connoisseurs of authentic dishes of the Far East and Asia will like the WTC – there is a wide choice of high-quality Indian, Korean, Japanese and Chinese restaurants.

And on weekends, regardless of the sports season, RFR restaurant offers a 20% discount on its entire menu.

Spaghetti with Bolognese Sauce

WTC brand chef Mikhail Kuznetsov explains how to cook this famous dish, a favorite among athletes, with detailed, step-by-step instructions.



To make the sauce:

- 1 Pour olive oil (35 g.) into a warmed pan, add butter (20 g.). Add carrot, cut into medium-sized cubes (100 g.) and finely chopped onion (50 g.), shallot (50 g.), celery stock (10 g.), garlic (10 g.), as well as a bay leaf, fresh thyme and rosemary (3 g. each), and pinch of sea salt. Fry them, stirring constantly, until the vegetables are soft and have taken on a golden color.
- 2 Add ground beef (600 g.), salt and pepper and fry over a medium flame until browned, stirring and combining the ingredients.

- 3 Pour 150 g. of dry wine into the sauce (the alcohol will evaporate during cooking, leaving behind a light fragrance), meat or vegetable bullion (300 g.), peeled tomatoes in their own juice (1 kg.), add a little ground nutmeg. Bring to a boil, lower the flame and leave it to simmer on a low flame for 1½ to 2 hours, stirring from time to time. Add salt and ground black pepper to taste.

To make spaghetti:

- 1 Boil durum wheat spaghetti (1 kg.) until al dente (Ital. to the tooth). Fully cooked

spaghetti should retain its firmness inside when tested.

- 2 Pour into a colander and do not rinse.
- 3 Add a little olive oil.

To serve:

The spaghetti and sauce are combined only at the time of plating. Place spaghetti on the plate, ladle sauce over it, sprinkle with cheese, garnish with a sprig of fresh basil. Each person can determine the amount of spaghetti and sauce in their serving. A burst of energy and a good mood are guaranteed, especially after a long workout!



"Cossacks are the best light troops among all that exist. If I had them in my army, I would go through all the world with them." **Napoleon.**

7 million

people self-identify as Cossacks.

1 Bln rubles

spent on Cossack organizations in Krasnodar in 2015.



"The 'Cossacks' and the police carried out the attacks, but of course it was the authorities who organized them." **Alexei Navalny.**



GALINA GUBCHENKO

The Cossack Reinvention

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

The image of famous mountain warriors are making a comeback in the Russian cultural psyche. But just how much of it is real?

At Moscow's Kazachya Lavka, or Cossack Store, you don't need to be rich to be a Cossack. Their fake-fur version of the famous red papakha hat will set you back about \$10. The full regalia, from head to toe, and including the horsemen's infamous nagaika leather whip, will cost the ruble equivalent of about \$100. Today, the store has branches in several large Russian cities and its online shop delivers throughout the country.

While it might be a boon for small business, the widespread availability of Cossack garb comes at a price. In May, a group of men in papakhas attacked anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny and members of his Anti-Corruption Fund at an airport in the seaside town of Anapa. More than 20 men splashed the group with milk and a brawl ensued. In the aftermath of the incident, there was considerable confusion over the hecklers' identities — even within the Cossack community.

The leader, or ataman, of the local Anapa Cossack group, Valery Plotnikov, denied they had been part of his 98-member-strong crew. He told media that "real" Cossacks had actually tried to break up the scramble that had broken out. Another regional former Cossack ataman, Vladimir Cromov, said the men's outfits were nothing to go by. "Anyone can buy a papakha at any souvenir stall," he said.

Other Cossack leaders sided with the assaulters. The head of the Taman division of the Kuban Cossack troops Ivan Bezugly, defended the Cossacks and told the Ekho Moskvy radio station that Navalny himself had "provoked" the fight by insulting a Cossack colonel. And yet another man who identified himself as a Cossack was widely cited in the media as saying the attack on Navalny had been politically motivated.

"We just wanted to show them that there is no room here for Navalny who lives on American money," the man who identified himself as Dmitry Slaboda was quoted as saying by the Govorit Moskva radio station. Several requests for comment from Slaboda by The Moscow Times went unanswered.

The who's-the-real-Cossack questioning that followed the incident goes beyond a simple matter of uniform. The attack on peaceful opposition activists, including women and children, has fed concerns that the Cossacks' romanticized past is being used to legitimize the actions of Kremlin-backed paramilitary groups. Ahead of parliamentary elections in September, it's not just opposition-minded Russians who are worried — some traditional Cossacks are too.



Rehabilitation

Cossack culture was all but extinct when then-President Boris Yeltsin issued a decree encouraging its revival in the 1990s.

The Cossacks had served tsars for centuries, lending their sabers to help conquer Siberia, the Caucasus and Central Asia in return for land and privileges. Loyal to the Romanov dynasty and the Orthodox Church, they fought on the losing side against the Red Army in 1917. After suffering defeat, hundreds of thousands of Cossacks were killed and persecuted under the Soviet policy of "Decossackization."

Yeltsin's decree called for the restoration of Cossacks as an "ethno-cultural group." By then, there were very few Cossacks left. Instead, the vacuum was filled with men of questionable Cossack ancestry, lured by a romantic vision of horsemen on the southern steppes. "The average Cossack was a middle-aged man who daydreamed about patriarchal values, unbridled masculinity and the glorious pursuit of imagined ancestors," says Brian Boeck, a historian who researched the Cossacks' rehabilitation in the 1990s.

In subsequent years, the Kremlin's return to conservative values and a brand of militant patriotism under President Vladimir Putin has made the deeply conservative and religious Cossacks a natural ally.

Under Putin, registered Cossack organizations have been set up across the country and championed as a symbol of patriotism.

Continued on Page 11 →

Out & About



May 26 – June 1, 2016

7

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



Street artists will change the courtyard's look every month to keep Heineken Bar Moscow looking fresh and innovative.

Heineken Bar Moscow Kickstarts the Summer

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

Inventive cocktails and food too good for a bar

Heineken Bar Moscow only had its official opening a week ago but it's already become the newest "it" place in Moscow. The line for the opening party was so long that people had to wait for an hour to get in. Occupying what used to be Good Enough cafe by day and Mishka bar by night, the bar has taken over a squat-like courtyard on the corner of Stoleshnikov Pereulok and Bolshaya Dmitrovka.

A pop-up, the bar will only grace Moscow's streets for one season — but that doesn't mean effort and thought hasn't gone into the design. The courtyard has been completely revamped for

the summer and there's now a second bar next to the DJ booth, a few street-art murals and all kinds of design shticks. A staircase leads to a small balcony area where you can survey the ebb and flow of the crowd around the main bar.

Severyane's chef Georgy Troyan is in charge of food, and it's criminally good for a bar. The beef tartare with grilled potatoes (600 rubles) is tender and delicious, while the whipped cheese cream with tarragon (300 rubles) is a delightful sweet accompaniment to your cocktail. The chicken breast with vegetable mousse is also worth mentioning (500 rubles) as are the veal cheeks with

pear (650 rubles).

Bartender Vladimir Kolganov from Pinch, a bar near Patriach's Ponds, is the man masterminding a new take on traditional summer cocktails. There's Tarkhun-fizz, featuring the eponymous tarragon-flavored soda drink and a wine-based cocktail with thyme, Benedictine and grapefruit called the Aeroplane.

There are also innovative cocktails such as "Lapsha" (noodles) and "Aquarium" which are only available at the far bar of the courtyard (450 rubles each). The Lapsha cocktail is served in a Chinese takeout box with chopsticks, which can

be used for eating the edible toppings. Aquarium comes in a tight triangular-shaped plastic bag with straws sticking out — which makes it perfect for avoiding spills while you dance.

Aside from the regular evening parties, Heineken Bar Moscow has also introduced daytime parties which start on Sundays at 4 p.m. It's the perfect excuse to spend your weekends at the bar enjoying the good music and warm weather.

+7 (495) 643 2137

facebook.com/heinekenbarmoscow
11/3 Ulitsa Bolshaya Dmitrovka
Metro Teatralnaya, Okhotny Ryad

NEWS & OPENINGS



Cubar

Affordable food from the island

Cubar Moscow is a celebration of everything Cuban—you can even enjoy live Cuban music on certain nights. Start with potaje—black bean soup (175 rubles) and continue with either a Cuban sandwich (445 rubles) or picadillo—ground beef and pork with rice and beans (445 rubles). Indulge in a Cuba Libre (from 250 rubles).

+7 (499) 579 8185

facebook.com/cubar.moscow
15-17 Bolshoi Cherkassky Pereulok
Metro Lubyanka, Ploshchad Revolyutsii,
Kitai-Gorod



Locals

Quirky bar by the station

Locals was opened by the same people who created the legendary Oldich Dress & Drink. Some offerings are reminiscent of Oldich, like the pike burger with cheddar cheese and ginger sauce, served with fries (380 rubles). Enjoy the view of Belorussky Station as you sample craft beers and ciders. A blackboard features "odd offers," like a free beer for those wearing brown boots.

+7 (968) 417 1672

facebook.com/Locals-бар-и-кухня-853645521436739
4 Ulitsa Butyrsky Val. Metro Belorusskaya



The Mad Cook

Italian cuisine with a twist

Situated on the bottom floor of a business center, the open kitchen and chic interior will impress any client you're looking to wine and dine. The food is interesting, but hardly as off-the-wall as the name would suggest. A vast wine list with many foreign vintages and the professional staff make this a safe bet for a pleasant meal. Perhaps bet to avoid the black meat popsicles.

+7 (495) 775 2085

Legenda Tsvetnogo Business Center
2 Tsvetnoi Bulvar



KOF

A speciality caffeine fix

KOF, which stands for Knowledge of Coffee, has quietly been making a name for itself through appearances at food fairs and selling its own speciality coffee blend online. Last month KOF firmly entered the real world with a small coffee counter south of the river. It's a simple set up, but the coffee speaks for itself. Start your day with perfectly frothy cappuccino or keep it classic with a smooth espresso.

+7 (985) 786 6087

facebook.com/knowledgeofcoffee
7/1 Varshavskoye Shosse. Metro Tulsckaya

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!**



6. Church of St. John the Soldier Martyr

Almost directly across the street from the Igumnov Mansion, nestled in the trees, is yet another church. This one was built in 1712 and dedicated to St. John the Soldier Martyr and is remarkable for two reasons. First, it was based on a sketch done by Peter the Great himself to honor victory over the Swedes at Poltava. And second, inside is the Smolensk Icon of the Savior that once graced the Spasskiye (Savior) Gates to the Kremlin. It is a very ornate and striking church, with multicolored ornamentation and a soaring spire holding up a delicate and ornate cupola. This church is one of the few in the city that was never closed.

46 Ulitsa Bolshaya Yakimanka, Bldg. 1

6

Ulitsa Bolshaya Yakimanka

5

Ulitsa Bolshaya Polyanka

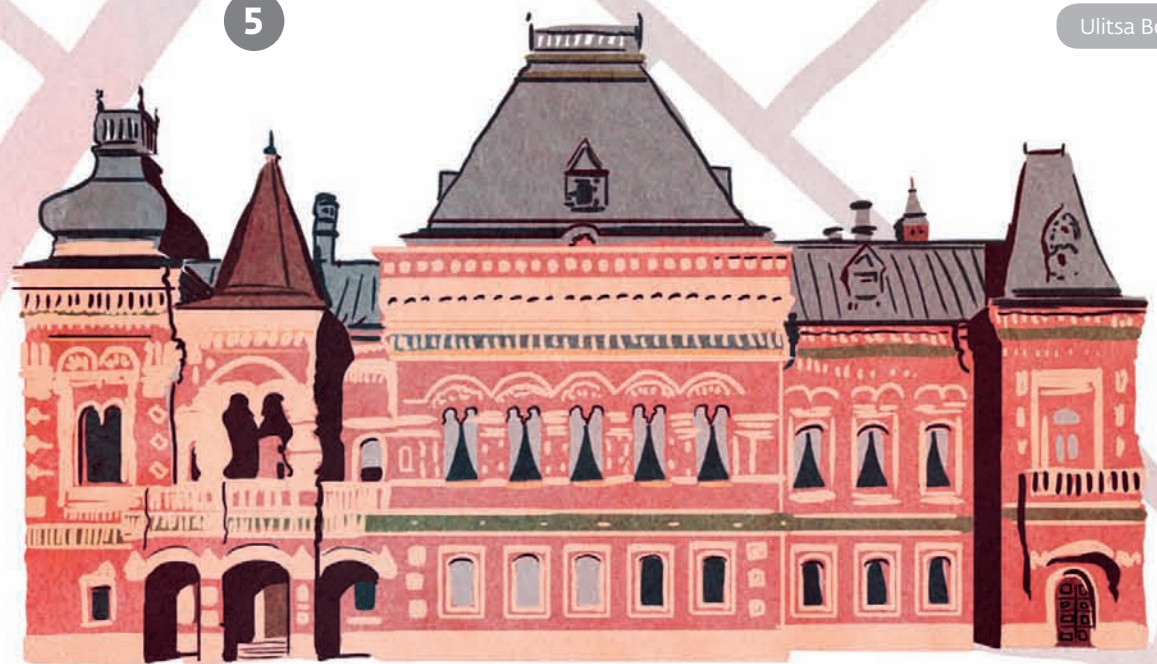
4



4. Guest House of the Panteleimon Monastery of Mt. Athos

Cross Bolshaya Polyanka and continue along 1st Khvostov Pereulok. On your left you'll see a building that is simple in shape but astonishing in brickwork: Its façade is made up of thousands of glassy blue and pale green ceramic bricks. If you think this is a modern building — colored glass subway tiles being all the rage these days — you'd be wrong. It was built almost 100 years ago, from 1912 to 1923, as a guest house for a monastery on Mt. Athos. Next to it you'll see what is clearly the real ancient architectural gem of the block. Wrong again! This bit of whimsy was built in 1997 as a very fancy version of the old Russian style.

3 1st Khvostov Pereulok



5. Igumnov Mansion

Continue along the street until it ends at Ulitsa Bolshaya Yakimanka. The name Yakimanka might sound Japanese, but it is actually a conflation of the names Joaquim and Anna, the parents of the Virgin Mary, in whose honor a church once stood here. Turn left and walk to the wildly decorative house at No. 43, which looks like the love child of a medieval boyar and Walt Disney. It was built by the owner of a large manufacturing company, Nikolai Igumnov, in 1895 in the faux old Russian style — the real deal — that included decorative ceramic tiles from the famous Kuznetsov factory. Poor Mr. Igumnov was rather snubbed by the Moscow elite for his fancy house, which was nationalized in 1918 and subsequently made available in 1938 to the French government for their embassy. Now it is the residence of the French ambassador — and no one snubs an invitation to this glorious mansion today.

43 Ulitsa Bolshaya Yakimanka



7

7. Lenin on Kaluzhskaya Ploshchad

Continue to the left along Yakimanka until you get to the enormous square. The name of the square went back and forth over the decades, from Kaluzhskaya — it was where the road from Kaluga entered the city — and Oktyabrskaya — the name of the metro station here. On the left side of the square is a line of very serious government buildings: the Interior Ministry, the Justice Ministry, and a Central Bank office. In the center overlooking it all stands the city's largest statue to Vladimir Lenin, put up in 1985. The sculptor was Lev Kerbel, a specialist in Lenin monuments, perhaps, in part, because he was born on Oct. 25, 1917, the day of the revolution. Here, after a moment to contemplate Lenin and the Central Bank, the tour ends near the metro station.

2. Martha and Mary Convent of the Sisters of Mercy

Continue to walk along Ordynka and cross the street to enter the green oasis of the Martha and Mary Convent. Founded in 1908 by Grand Duchess Elizabeth after her husband, Grand Duke Sergei, was killed by a terrorist, the convent served the poor and wounded soldiers who returned from the war with Japan. The Grand Duchess was killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918 (thrown down a mine shaft) and the convent was plundered many times before finally being closed in 1928. Once again a convent that serves the community, its gardens provide peaceful respite. But you must stop in to see the Cathedral of the Intercession, perhaps the most unusual and possibly the most beautiful church in Moscow. It was built 1908-12 by the famous architect Alexei Shchusev as an art nouveau rendering of a Novgorod-style church. Inside, the walls are almost all white, with some medieval-style floral and vegetal ornamentation, and breathtaking frescoes by the artist Mikhail Nesterov. They are painted mainly in soothing slate and pale blues and in a less canonical and more emotional style than you'll see in other churches. Note, in particular, the fresco behind the altar of the Mother of God holding aloft her cloak of protection and intercession.

34 Bolshaya Ordynka



2

Ulitsa Bolshaya Ordynka

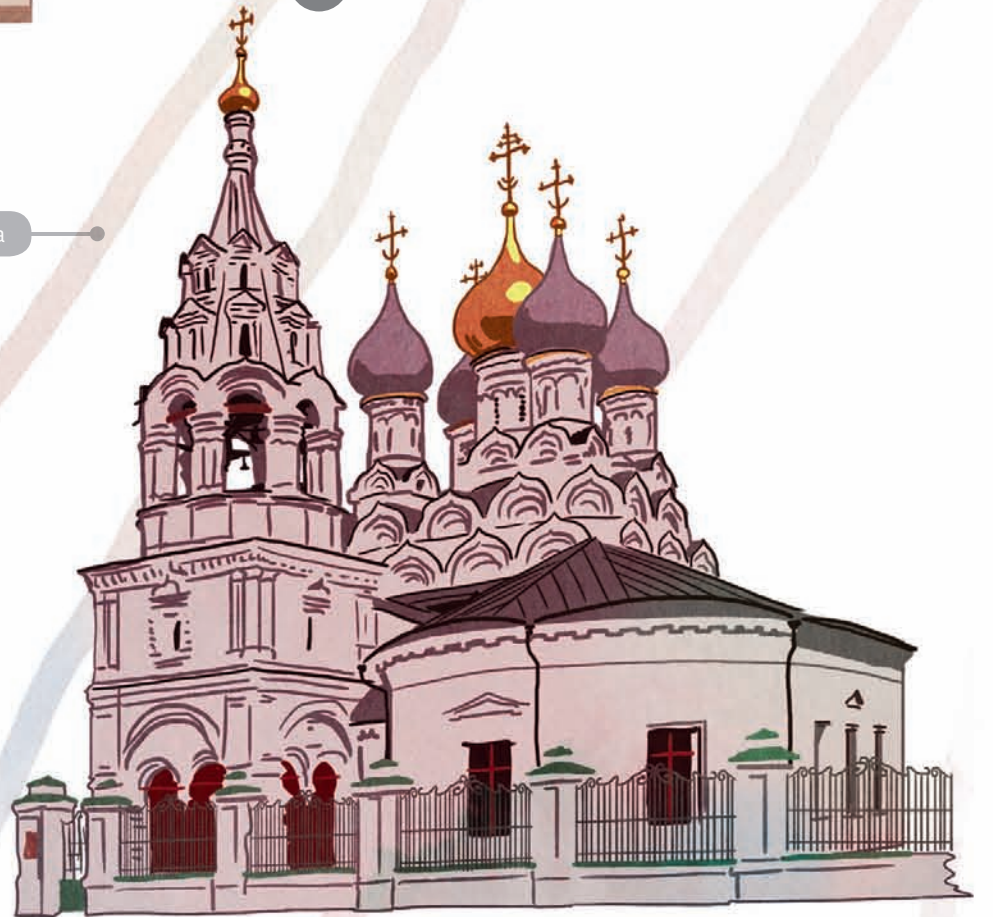


1

3. Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in the Cossack Settlement

Continue along Ordynka, passing lovely urban manor houses and churches until 1st Kazachy Pereulok. Turn right and walk to the intersection of Bolshaya Polyanka. On the right is yet another pretty little church, this one built first in the 17th century by the community of Cossacks who lived here, and then added to and changed and rebuilt after fires over the next centuries. The extant version is an example of Moscow baroque, although it was simplified during reconstruction. Across the street is a one-story house with a mezzanine built in the 1820s for the Rogatkin-Yozhikov merchant family, an example of what the entire neighborhood might have looked like once upon a time. If you like it, make an offer; it's for sale.

37 Ulitsa Bolshaya Polyanka, Bldg. 3



1. Church of St. Nicholas in Pyzhy

This walking route begins on Ulitsa Bolshaya Ordynka outside the Tretyakovskaya metro station. Walk along Ordynka away from the Kremlin. Stop and look up and around. Notice anything? Perhaps loads of church cupolas and steeples? This land beyond the Moscow River was home to many community settlements, and each of them built a church. And then, as legend has it, when the area was taken over by merchants in the 19th century, they built churches in gratitude for their success or to atone for their unscrupulous business practices. A fine example of a "settlement church" is on the left side of the street, the Church of St. Nicholas in Pyzhy, built in 1672 (or maybe earlier in 1657 — no one is sure) in the settlement of the streltsy (Kremlin guardsmen) commanded by Bogdan Pyzhov. Stop in this frothy white church with its airy bell tower and rows of kokoshniki (decorative pointed arches) leading up to five cupolas.

27 Ulitsa Bolshaya Ordynka

Beyond the Moscow River

Churches, Lenin and a Stately Mansion

By Michele A. Berdy m.berdy@imedia.ru | Illustration by Evgeny Tonkonogy

A stroll in the neighborhood beyond the Moscow River, where churches abound and the unexpected is on every corner



Emina Veladzic, attache, Swiss Embassy

Darbars is my first choice for authentic spicy Indian food in Moscow. The professional service, contrast between the tasteful decor and the Soviet-style Hotel Sputnik in which the restaurant is located and beautiful view from the 16th floor are just right!



BOSCO FRESH FEST

Moscow Music Festivals Attract Top Talent

Summer is right around the corner, and so are the music festivals. Moscow became a major European festival destination about three years ago and there's no lack of world-renowned headliners this year. To ensure you don't miss out, we've prepared a guide to the most important music events of the summer.



DAVE MITCHELL / FLICKR

Ahmad Tea Music Festival

Held on the embankment of the Muzeon Park, the Ahmad Tea Music Festival will be headlined by PJ Harvey. This spring, she released a new album "The Hope Six Demolition Project After" after a five-year hiatus and will play almost every major European festival. Django Django and The Maccabees will also perform. The former are relative newcomers from London, whose music is upbeat and danceable — their 2012 debut album earned a Mercury Prize nod, and they released a second album last year. The Maccabees, another British indie-rock band, will perform songs from "Marks to Prove It."

ahmadteafest.ru
June 18



BOSCO FRESH FEST

Bosco Fresh Fest

Bosco Fresh Fest has moved to VDNKh and expanded to three stages. The first day's headliners are Mumiy Troll, probably the most popular Russian rock band and New York hip-hop diva Azealia Banks. On the second day you can check out Ivan Dorn's new concert program with a Dixieland band and Tesla Boy. You can also see Skriptonit, a rising rap star from Kazakhstan and Brainstorm from Latvia, as well as electronic pioneers GusGus from Iceland and Kwabs, the British Ghanaian singer who authored the ubiquitous hit "Walk." Moscow indie scene regulars On-the-Go, Pompeya, and Tesla Boy will be there as well.

boscofreshfest.com
June 4-5



LASTOCHKA

Lastochka

Held at the Luzhniki sports complex, the Lastochka (swallow) festival is a new addition but it's organized partly by the same team that did Subbotnik in Gorky Park a couple years ago. Lastochka is bringing some big names, including Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, the duo famous for "Thrift Shop" and the LGBT rights anthem "Same Love." They just released their second album. R&B diva FKA Twigs and Swedish electropop band Icona Pop of the "I love it" fame will also perform on Lastochka stage, as well as the British heartthrobs Hurts, who are regulars on the Moscow scene.

lastochkafest.ru

July 9



OUTLINE

Outline

The most alternative festival, Outline will be held in the abandoned MoZAL. Organizers promise six stages with 50 musicians; one of the stages will be set up at a working film studio. The only names revealed so far are U.S. dada punk band Sudden Infant, Russian Philipp Gorbachev and Magda from Poland. Outline is also famous for its public art installations.

outline-festival.ru

June 2-3



LANADELREY.COM

Park Live

The Red Hot Chili Peppers are scheduled to headline at the Otkritie Arena stadium. The band is returning to Moscow with a new album, "The Getaway," set for release in June. The second day headliner is Lana Del Rey, who is coming to Moscow with her latest album, "Honeymoon." Other "Park Livers" include Russian pop-rock veterans Splin, British soul star John Newman and Irish indie rockers Two Door Cinema Club.

parklivefest.ru

July 9-10



USADBA JAZZ

Usadba Jazz

Located on the Arkhangelskoye estate, Usadba Jazz focuses on jazz and world music. This year you will be able to see Maceo Parker from the United States, French-Indian singer-songwriter Darlini, Lucille Crew and Gal de Paz from Israel and a Parne Gadje, a Balkan sound band from the Netherlands. The headliner will be Russia's old-school rocker Boris Grebenshchikov with his band Aquarium.

usadba-jazz.com

June 4



The Moscow Times
CONFERENCES

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1 JUNE
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AGENDA

- Strategic planning in a volatile environment. How do key companies shift their focus and prioritize today?
- Efficient anti-crisis solutions of the leading players of the Fashion Retail market.
- The energy of uniqueness, non-trivial solutions and secrets of success from the leaders of the industry.
- Integration of Sales Channels (Offline and Online) as a Recession-Proof Solution and Opportunity to Increase Profit.
- The study «Consumer Behavior and Buyer Preferences in 2016». What should market participants pay attention to and how can they gain leadership among their competitors?
- Latest trends in fashion retail logistics market in Russia.



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“Cossacks’ authority lies in what’s under the papakha hat. The moment one puts it on, he becomes representative of all Cossacks.” **Vladimir Gromov, Kuban.**

10

Cossack military regiments in Russia.



Cossack patrols working during the Sochi Olympics were filmed beating members of the punk group Pussy Riot with a whip in 2014 during a street stunt.

\$100

Price of the full Cossack regalia, including the infamous leather whip.

← Continued from Page 6

Today, Cossacks’ sense of patriotism, in some cases, runs ahead of the Kremlin’s.

Bezugly, the Cossack ataman, late last year reportedly presided over the burning of effigies of U.S. President Barack Obama and Turkish President Recep Erdogan in the Kuban region at a rally in support of Putin.

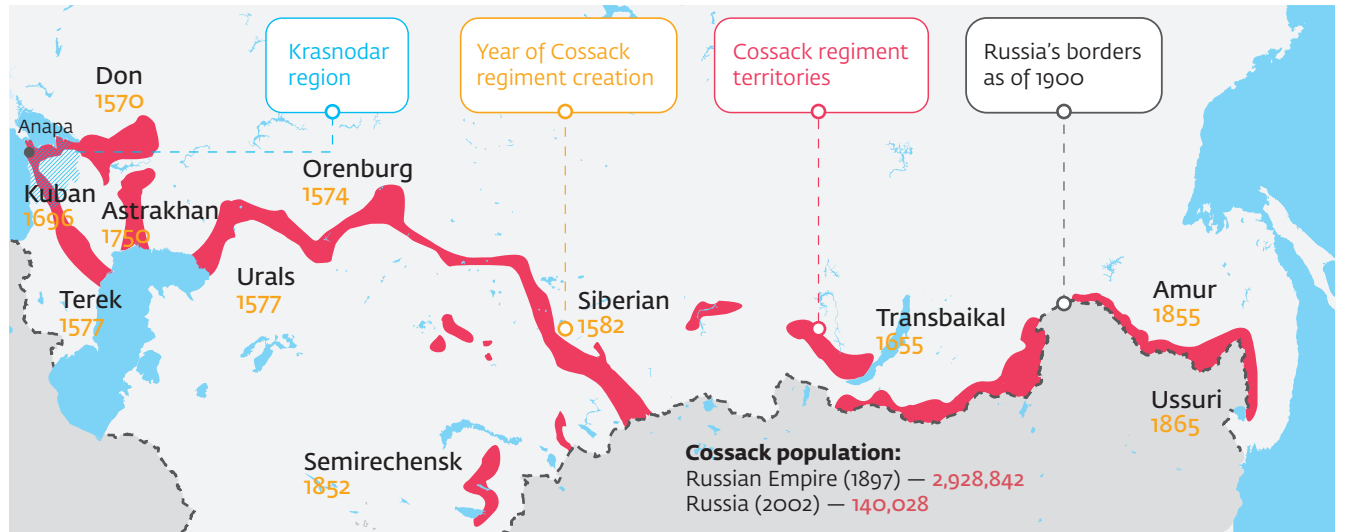
And in the lead-up to Russia’s annexation of the Black Sea peninsula Crimea two years ago, Cossacks in black woolen and fur hats stood guard at the Crimean parliament and manned checkpoints across the peninsula. Later, under the direction of Don Cossack ataman Nikolai Kozitsyn, they streamed into eastern Ukraine to fight against Ukrainian government forces. There, they were joined by local converts, attracted by the glamorous uniforms, the Cossacks’ weapon supplies, and, according to many reports, good salaries.

Inside Russia, Cossack patrols have become a kind of volunteer morality police. In Krasnodar, the southern region where the attack on Navalny and his team took place, they were even put on the region’s payroll in 2012. Their increased presence was widely seen as an attempt to keep in check an increasing number of migrants in the region bordering the restive Caucasus region. And even though they had no authority to conduct arrests or carry firearms, the message was that the Cossack figure alone would provide police with a tool of intimidation less constrained by the burden of public accountability.

“What you can’t do, the Cossacks can,” then-governor Alexander Tkachyov was cited as telling police when he announced the creation of Cossack patrols.

The pouring of state money into local Cossack organizations has come under attack following the Navalny in-

Cossack regiments in the early 20th century



Source: RIA Novosti

Make Culture, Not War

According to Vladimir Gromov, who served as the ataman of the Kuban Cossack Army for 17 years, paying Cossacks for serving alongside regular Russian police and military is not the issue. “No one works for a thank you,” he told The Moscow Times. At the same time, he believes the Kremlin’s focus on incorporating the Cossacks into federal structures has overshadowed the traditional cultural and spiritual aspects that are central to Cossack identity.

“There is the government on one side. And Cossackdom on the other. They enter into agreement, fine,” he says. “But it shouldn’t define Cossackdom.”

Gromov cites a rich culture of song and social traditions, including “respect” for women and the elderly, as central to being a Cossack. Some of those traditions veer close to anachronism. As an example of proper Cossack conduct, Gromov said in a widely reported tweet that female smokers should be “flogged” with a Cossack

whip as a way to discourage others. The tweet was later deleted.

Above all, honor and constraint are central to Cossack conduct, says Gromov, denouncing the Navalny episode. “If Navalny is guilty of breaching Russian law, there are law enforcement agencies that can and should prevent crime,” he says. “What do the Cossacks have to do with this? But the image that has stayed in people’s heads is that of Cossacks.”

Already, Ella Pamfilova, the head of the Central Election Commission, has denounced the activities of so-called groups of rhyzhenniye, or fake, Cossack groups. She said there had been “an increase in aggressive behavior of such groups toward ideological opponents on the eve of electoral campaigns.” Regular law enforcement has been turning a blind eye to these rogue Cossack groups, she said.

The rhyzhenniye label — used for Russian medieval-era jesters and nowadays is often used negatively to describe those who wear a costume that is not their own — has been met with resistance among the Cossack community. In an online statement, Nikolai Doluda, chieftain of the Kuban Cossacks, has called Pamfilova’s statement “incorrect and unacceptable.”

“It not only offends the feelings of various generations of Cossacks and their families,” he said. “But it undermines the authority of all Russian Cossacks.”

One of the reasons for that hostility could be the Cossacks’ own interest to maintain a degree of obscurity as to who is, and isn’t, a “real” Cossack. In a census conducted in 2002, around 7 million Russians identified themselves as Cossacks, which could be taken as a sign that the Cossack revival initiated in the 1990s has been successful. But, according to historian Boeck, the Cossack caste has largely been extinct since the 1920s.

“More individuals who claim Cossack ancestry today remain outside the official Cossack organizations than those embraced by them,” Boeck says. “So even the Cossack atamans might not be viewed as ‘real Cossacks’ by most residents of the region.”

According to former ataman Gromov, describing groups as rhyzhenniye also does little to explain away the incidental wrong behavior of Cossacks. “There are good Cossacks and not such good Cossacks,” he says. “In that sense, Cossacks are just like any other people.” **TMT**



Milk is thrown on opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his associates outside the Anapa Airport in southern Russia on May 17.

cident. In 2015, roughly 1 billion rubles (\$15 million) was sidelined for Cossack groups in the Kuban region, the RBC newspaper reported. Some are now questioning the legitimacy of funding groups with a reputation for close links to local crime. “Most of these Cossack squads consist of local criminals,” says commentator Maxim Shevchenko. “The kind of ruffraff that behave like militias on behalf of local oligarchs. Real Cossacks don’t behave in this way.”

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"The problem of teenage suicide is one of the biggest there is today."
Yelena Mizulina, Federation Council senator.

519

teenagers killed themselves in Russia in 2014.

16-17

Russians in every 100,000 kill themselves yearly.



"Every case of teenage suicide is a tragic incident that we investigate very thoroughly." **Pavel Astakhov**, children's ombudsman.



Support networks in Russia for teenagers in crisis are notoriously absent. Activists fill in some of the gaps but complain that the issue is not sufficiently addressed at state level.

A Chat Away From Death

By [Daria Litvinova](#) d.litvinova@imedia.ru | Twitter: @dashalitinovv

A disputed story about online predators and suicide has led to criticism of social networks. But while government does nothing, they offer the best chance of reaching troubled kids.

It was a story that sent shivers down every Russian parent's spine. Over the course of six months, 130 teenagers across the country were reported to have killed themselves under the influence of suicide masterminds operating within the social network VKontakte.

Novaya Gazeta, the liberal weekly newspaper that published the story, claimed mysterious "leaders" had created a whole network of closed public communities. The predators challenged school kids with creepy puzzles and assigned "death dates" to those successful in solving them. When the dates came around, children, cleverly manipulated into playing the game, committed suicide.

"Children are being worked on in social networks, pushed closer and closer to the edge, and this work is systematic and carefully planned," the article claimed.

The story — titled "Groups of Death" — immediately received more than 1.5 million hits, and sparked a media storm. Some commentators accused Novaya Gazeta of exaggerating the problem, and expressed fear that the story would only inspire authorities to impose more restrictions on the Internet, the standard reaction nowadays.

Indeed, officials seemed ready to jump on their favorite hobbyhorse. The flamboyant children's ombudsman Pavel Astakhov declared that the Internet and communications systems were threatening children in ways never seen before. The infamous author of the so-called "gay propaganda law" Yelena

Mizulina, currently a Federation Council senator, proposed fining social networks for having suicidal content.

Novaya Gazeta's terrifying claims are yet to be verified and confirmed: Russian law enforcement launched a large-scale investigation of VKontakte communities and their connection to teenage suicide. Follow-up investigations by other media outlets concluded that much of Novaya Gazeta's story was embellished. The Lenta.ru news website reported that ill-famed VKontakte communities were not aiming to force children to commit suicide. Rather, they were run by nerdy teenagers obsessed with accumulating likes and shares, Lenta.ru said, and publishing "shocking content" about suicide helped them drive traffic to their online groups. Such efforts did result in suicides, the investigation reported, but not hundreds of them.

Nevertheless, youth suicide rates in Russia have for many decades been among the highest in Europe, and the Internet alone cannot be blamed.

For some, it may be the best mode of providing help.

Underlying Causes

Government targets are already in place to reduce the suicide rate in Russia to under 16 people per 100,000 people by 2020. By this criteria, the government can claim some success — the average rate nationwide is around 16-17 suicides per 100,000 people. But these figures are not uniform across the country, and this is a problem, says Yevgeny Lyubov, head of the sui-

cide department of the Moscow Psychiatric Science Institute. "The situation here is more than worrisome: in some parts of the country we are talking about 100 or 200 suicides per 100,000 people," he says.

Risks usually multiply in rural areas nationwide, northern and far eastern regions — places where the social and economic situation is worse.

As Russia's suicide rate places it in the top-three in Europe, it is not surprising that its youth suicide rate is also one of the highest, says Matthjis Muijen, mental health program manager at the World Health Organization's Europe office. "There's clearly something going on in Russian-speaking countries that creates anxiety and unhappiness. You don't just commit suicide, it's a pretty big decision to make," Muijen told The Moscow Times.

Suicide among teenagers is essentially an anomalous reaction to often ordinary events. In 90 percent of cases, depression or certain character features, like extensive impulsiveness, is an underlying condition that drives a teenager to commit suicide. Common assumptions that a child killed himself because of bad grades in school or an unhappy love story are wrong. "Bad grades and unhappy love stories happen to all of us," says Lyubov. "If these experiences trigger suicide, it means that the teenager has been suffering from depression or had specific character traits that led him to react to a traumatic event in this manner."



“Eighty percent of parents didn’t see it coming. Writing in chat groups is already a signal for help.”
Yevgeny Lyubov, suicidologist.

90%

of teenage suicides involve depression.

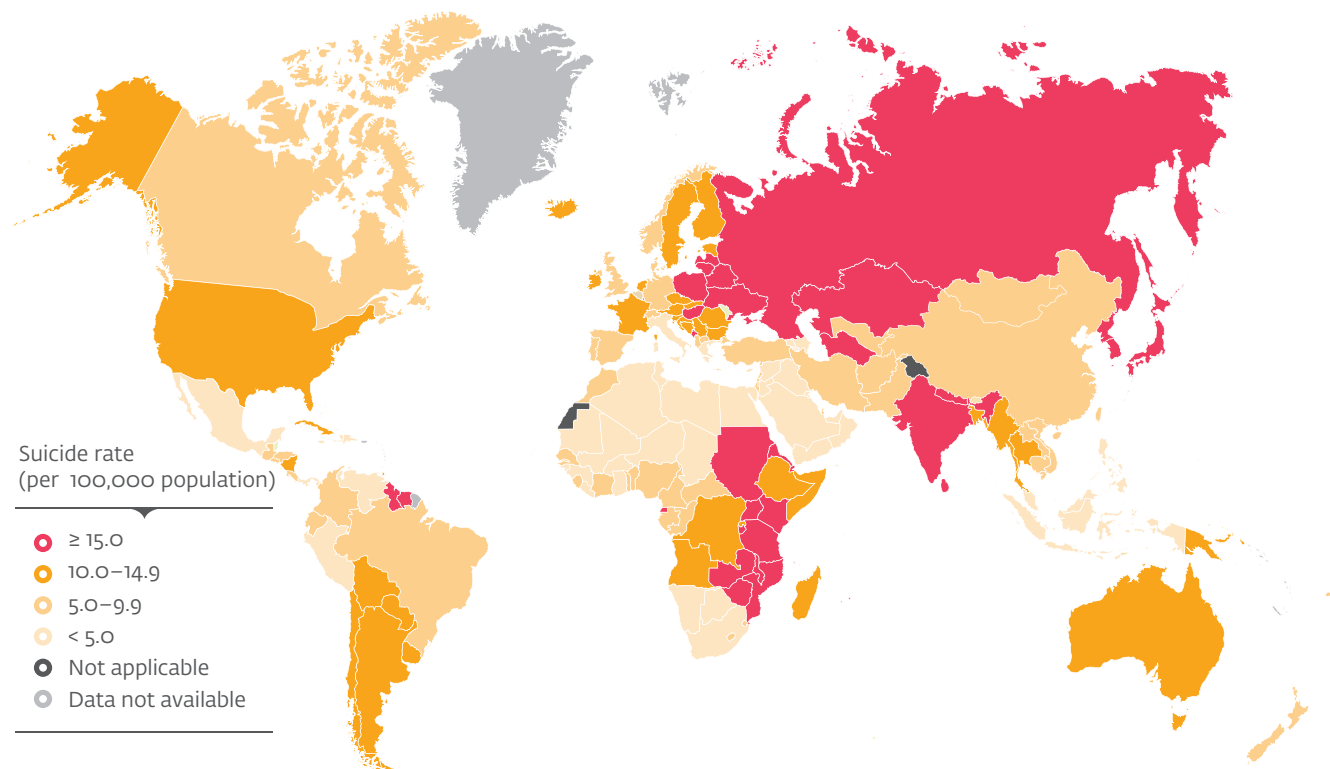


WHO experts believe that alcohol abuse, poverty, inequality, bullying and unemployment are linked to youth suicide.

14-16 Years

age when the risk of suicide is 3-4 times higher for a teenager.

Age-standardized suicide rates, as of 2012



Source: World Health Organization

Russian children are becoming lonelier these days, says Yelena Shumakova, a supervisor at Your Territory Online, a foundation that provides anonymous online consultations to teenagers in trouble.

“Kids used to spend more time at school, participating in different after-school activities,” she says. “There used to be a lot of free workshops and studios and classes, and children had more friends and more mentors they could talk to. Now they spend most of their time alone with their computers.”

Those of them who reach out to suicidal communities online feel rejected by their family or friends, if there were friends to begin with, says Lyubov: “A family can look happy and wealthy from the outside, but if a child joins a suicide community, it means there’s been a serious lack of understanding in the family. He is basically looking for that understanding in these communities. He’s looking to socialize, to be part of a group again and follow someone’s example.”

First Aid Online

Banning such communities and websites is unlikely to solve the problem, if only because new ones will fill the void. At the very least, government should create different online consultation platforms to help young people in trouble.

Lyubov suggests the Internet is, in fact, an ideal medium, through which to reach teenagers. “First aid in one click — that is what teenagers would understand. Hotlines are not for them: Only 5 percent of suicidal adolescents telephone hotlines for help. Something that connects teens to professional psychologists, and to their peers as well is what is needed. It is very helpful for children to see how their peers survived traumatic experiences, how they dealt with difficult situations.”

Shumakova of Your Territory Online agrees. “Children are already there anyway, so why not bring help directly to them?” she says.

Your Territory Online started out as a VKontakte group, and two years ago turned into an online platform with a dozen consultants on call every day — from afternoon till late at night. In 2015 they helped 392 teenagers with suicidal thoughts. “The suicidal state is like a tunnel — a child in that state can’t see things clearly, and first of all we need to carefully walk him out of the tunnel. Only then will he be able to talk about the problems that led to suicidal thoughts,” says Shumakova.

Online consultations are common practice in Western countries, but are yet to gain popularity in Russia, she adds. “However, we can see that authorities are starting to consider it useful. For example, officially, the children’s ombudsman’s office in the Leningrad region only has a hotline, but they receive a lot of online messages from children in trouble, and try to help by corresponding with them,” says Yekaterina Fyodorova, director of the foundation.

In addition to rare projects like Your Territory Online, there is a number of unofficial VKontakte communities that also work with teenagers. One of the most renowned is Deti-404 (Children-404), founded by LGBT activist Yelena Klimova. Deti-404 helps LGBT teenagers who find it hard to cope with all kinds of problems related to their sexual orientation.

“There are no official statistics on how many LGBT teenagers commit suicide, but Deti 404 receives at least four to five letters each week from kids with suicidal thoughts,” Klimova told The Moscow Times. Volunteers at Deti 404 say they know of at least 24 teenage suicides related to LGBT intolerance. “Authorities don’t care at all about LGBT teens, but at least they have a few places on the Internet they can reach out to for help,” Klimova says.

An Indifferent State

Repeated requests for comments on what measures authorities take to prevent youth suicide — sent to both ombudsman Astakhov and State Duma deputy Olga Yepifanova, head of the committee for affairs of families and children — went unanswered by the time the article went to press.

Experts, in the meantime, agree that the state does not do much.

In big cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg, things are not that bad, says Fyodorova, but outside of the cities almost nothing is being done. “In cities at least NGOs are there to help, but [it’s a different picture] when it comes to rural areas,” she says.

A great deal can be done to prevent suicide among young people. For example, identifying depression on early stages could change the situation drastically. “School children undergo medical examinations every year — why not throw in screening questions to establish depression? Especially for children aged 14-16 — they are at a higher risk,” says Lyubov from the Moscow Psychiatric Science Institute. After that, school psychologists, or even psychiatrists, could work with the troubled teenagers.

Yet, rather than acting and tackling the problem systematically, authorities are happier “creating hype” when something tragic happens, says Lyubov. “But after a while it dies down and they forget about it until the next tragic incident.”

The hype around the Novaya Gazeta investigation appears to be dying down already. Several online communities mentioned in the report have been shut down by law enforcement; others continue to exist and attract users.

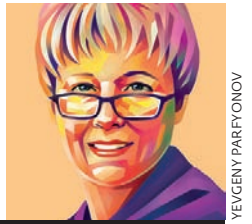
Will the government do something constructive to help vulnerable teenagers? So far only the VKontakte governing body has acted: They posted adverts and links for the Your Territory Online project in suicidal groups, and called on users to reach out for help. **ТМТ**

THE WORD’S WORTH

A Fixer-Upper The Russian Way

Благоустройство: improvements

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



Russia and Russians have a reputation for doing things big: big land, big hearts, big feats — the biggest, tallest, largest, longest whatever, from aquariums to hotels. Appropriately they have a few words that are huge, too. I mean words that encompass an enormous range of meaning, like this one: благоустройство. It’s a whopper of a word.

It is also one of those compound words that you can figure out: благо (benefit, advantage) and устройство (organization, installation, set-up). So благоустройство is organizing or setting something up in a way that is beneficial. That’s pretty much it, just bigger: благоустройство is any kind of work to improve a territory, like building roads, putting in telephone and electricity lines, water, and a sewer system; cleaning up and landscaping; decorating, etc. If you are acting to make something look better, you’re conducting благоустройство.

This is a lovely word to have in your Russian language pocket, since you can pull it out to cover a multitude of circumstances. But the trick is with translation. English doesn’t have one word to describe it all — except “improvements,” which is awfully vague.

Let’s start small: Жили по соседству два мастера по подвеске штор и прочего благоустройства (Two handymen who were good at hanging curtains and doing other home improvements lived in our neighborhood.) It might just mean cleaning up a mess: В пятницу мы занимались благоустройством центра города после зимы (On Friday we did the spring clean-up of the city center.) Or fixing the potholes: Сэкономленные деньги пойдут на благоустройство дорог после тяжелой зимы (The leftover funds will be used for road repair after the harsh winter.)

Here’s a case where it’s hard to know exactly what is meant: Рекомендовано заняться наведением порядка и благоустройством внутренней части перехода (The recommendation was to clean up and improve the appearance of the pedestrian underpass.) It could mean anything from washing the walls to painting them or putting up posters.

Often it means general improvement of an outdoor space. Наш завод осуществил крупный проект по благоустройству центра села — спроектировали и построили парк на главной площади (Our factory carried out a major project to beautify the village center: we designed and built a park on the main square.)

Or it can mean repair and reconstruction, especially of housing or equipment that is described in Russian as морально устаревшее (literally, morally obsolete). I am particularly fond of that phrase, since I often wonder if I am already морально устаревшая. All of this is almost harder to translate than to do: Следует сделать акцент на повышении качества городской среды путем реконструкции, модернизации и благоустройства ветхой и морально устаревшей жилой застройки, капитального ремонта многоквартирных домов (We’ve got to emphasize improving the quality of the urban environment by reconstructing, modernizing and updating of housing that is dilapidated and has out-of-date utilities, and by completely updating and reconstructing large apartment houses.)

The only problem with благоустройство is that the process is so hellish, it’s more like what Russian wits call злоустройство (harm creation). Want to know what that looks like? Walk down Tverskaya Ulitsa this week. It’s a 3-D version of злоустройство. **ТМТ**

What's On

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MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF RUSSIA

The Timeless Cool of Soviet Film Posters

By Ruth Moore artsreporter@imedia.ru

Bold and experimental, the designs currently on show at the Central Manege Exhibition Hall have none of the romanticism of the Hollywood silver screen. Celebrating the cultural heritage of Soviet cinema through the revolutionary new art form it precipitated — the film poster — “The History of Soviet Cinema in Film Posters 1919-1991” brings together some of the most innovative film artwork of the past century. The exhibition explores the symbiotic relation-

ship between cinema and the graphic arts, demonstrating how a mass-produced publicity tool became its own artistic genre. A joint venture from the State Museum and Exhibition Center ROSIZO and the Moscow Museum of Design, the exhibition gathers together more than 300 iconic posters from the past century. The collection chronologically spans the history of Soviet film and allows visitors to track artistic developments through the

20th century as cinema became the most popular art form. From the advent of constructivism to the arrival of socialist realism and later photo-montage techniques, film posters were a medium for pushing creative boundaries. “I had wanted to do an exhibition of film posters for a long time. It is such an interesting and somewhat forgotten form of art. And then the occasion presented itself — 2016 was declared the year of Russian cinema,” says Anna Pakhomova, the exhibition curator. Simultaneously a medium of mass entertainment and a channel for communicating ideology, Soviet cinema flourished in the newly formed U.S.S.R. Freed from the confines of realism, artists created modern posters that defied the confines of fine art.

The poster for Boris Barnet’s 1927 silent film “Devushka s Korobkoi” (The Girl With a Hatbox) combines elements of different scales and proportions to create a striking single image. Created by Vladimir and Georgy Stenberg, who famously staged the first constructivist exhibition in 1922, the poster incorporates geometric abstraction with a highly stylized composition. The second part of the exhibition, covering the 1930s to the mid-1950s, demonstrates aptly how cinema of this era fell under the auspices of state-sponsored propaganda. Using the language of socialist realism, film posters had to convey the ideological messages of the ruling party as censorship squeezed the film industry and production and variety rapidly reduced. There was also a focus on patriotic, nationalistic themes. Films produced during the war years, such as “Molodaya Gvardia” (Young Guard) and “Zhdi Menya” (Wait for

Me), reflected on the sacrifice and heroism of ordinary Russian citizens. It was only during the Khrushchev Thaw that artists could once again experiment relatively freely with composition, metaphorical content and symbolism. “Istoria Asi Klyachinoi, Kotora-ya Lyubila, da ne Vyshla Zamuzh” (The Story of Asya Klyachina, Who Loved but Did Not Marry), directed by Andrei Konchalovsky, was originally suppressed by Soviet authorities. The poster on display, created by Lyudmila Vasilyeva-Linetskaya, combines photography and line-drawing to create an abstract composition.

But viewers need not be familiar with the films to enjoy the exhibition. “Film posters are interesting to look at — there are many metaphors, imaginative artistic decisions and framing elements. The language of film posters is very graphic, and, at the same time, artistic,” says Pakhomova.

The latter part of the exhibition showcases the cinematography of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. Films such as “Chuchelo” (The Scarecrow) and “Igla” (The Needle) had posters that played with photography, experimenting with the new possibilities offered by developments in photo montage.

“For me Soviet cinema offers a history of our country. It is our past, as well as our favorite films” says Pakhomova. While the film posters currently on show at the Manege provide a historical reminder, they remain strikingly timeless. **TMT**

“The History of Soviet Cinema in Film Posters 1919-1991” is at the Manege Central Exhibition Hall until June 13. 1 Manege Square. Metro Okhotny Ryad. moscowmanege.ru

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