

The Moscow Times

SINCE 1992

NO. 5765

JULY 28 — AUGUST 3 2016

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LOOKING FORWARD

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Andrei Belyaninov said the money was "family savings," according to the sources of the Ren television channel.

10 years

Belyaninov has been chief of the Federal Customs Service

\$880,000

cash was found at the home of Federal Customs Service chief Belyaninov.

"Some friends of the president grew old, and some young siloviki became generals with generals' appetites." **Yekaterina Schulmann**, political analyst.



Office Politics, Kremlin-Style

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

Another high-profile government official is under scrutiny as cash and influence continue to be divvied up among Russia's strongmen.

Stacks of cash, security officers, confused victims, compromising photos — these are now the stock images of Russia's new political season. The raids, as usual, came out of the blue. The victim was among the most unexpected. Andrei Belyaninov, the long-time chief of Russia's Federal Customs Service (FTS), could hardly have imagined the turn of events.

And yet, with one short, clinical operation, the full-figured government veteran had become front-page news. As had the snapshots that accompanied his shame: the shoe boxes piled with cash; the red tablecloth with, as was later revealed, 10 million rubles, \$400,000 and 300,000 euros; the collection of expensive art; the piano and indoor pool; the private pier overlooking a most Russian-looking of lakes.

The message of corrupt opulence that these photographs intended to show is not new. It is the message Russians regularly receive in investigative reports by opposition activists such as Alexei Navalny. But this time it was Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) sending the message.

Belyaninov is the highest-ranking government official to be included in the authorities' chaotic, selective, but expanding campaign of "anti-corruption" purges.

The raids in the offices and homes of Belyaninov's deputies and advisors are ostensibly connected to a criminal case against St. Petersburg businessman Dmitry Mikhailchenko. Re-



Andrei Belyaninov has claimed that the \$880,000 stored in shoe boxes was his "family savings."

ported to be worth 18 billion rubles (\$270 million), Mikhailchenko has been detained since March on charges of smuggling cognac.

What was most strange was how the operation ended, or rather, didn't end. Officials targeted in this way usually end up in jail, but Belyaninov has not yet been detained. The customs chief was instead described as a "witness." The origins of the cash and its legality are yet to be established. Meanwhile, close to \$1 million in shoe boxes appears at least suspicious. But instead of being charged with a crime, Belyaninov was exposed in a humiliating and ritualistic manner.

Belyaninov later claimed that the cash was his "family savings." The next day, his spokespeople denied he had any plans to resign. "This can't happen, because this can never happen," said Larisa Cherkesova, head of the Federal Customs Service's legal department. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov stressed that Belyaninov was "not charged with anything."

Yet Belyaninov is far from being off the hook. "This is serious," says an insider close to the government. Something has clearly gone wrong for the man who has a background in foreign intelligence, a man who is clearly no stranger to the system. Belyaninov is said to know President Vladimir Putin personally, having worked with him in East Germany in the mid 1980s.

According to the Vedomosti newspaper, the Mikhailchenko case that led to the searches at Belyaninov's house and offices started as an operation of the FSB's economic security division. That investigation was apparently not welcomed within the main FSB structures and, as a result, the leadership of the entire division was replaced. The new man in charge, Sergei Koryolov, is reported to be the driving force behind the recent purges (see pages 6, 11 for more).

The purges are unlikely to stop any time soon. "The forthcoming battle for customs, which is a source of large financial flows, will be a matter of tough rivalry, including among governing bodies," says political analyst Yekaterina Schulmann. **TMT**



The Moscow Times

No. 5765 (29) July 28 – August 3, 2016

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Internet www.themoscowtimes.com

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Время подписания в печать по графику 19:30, фактическое 20:09. Заказ № 161686.

Отпечатано в ООО «Первый полиграфический комбинат», 143405, Московская область, Красногорский район, п/о «Красногорск-5», Ильинское шоссе, 4 км

Тираж 55 000 Цена свободная

Cover illustration by Galina Gubchenko

ENERGY REPORT

Privatization by the State: The Strange Case of Bashneft

By **Vladimir Milov**
President of the institute of energy policy, former deputy energy minister



The proposed "privatization" of the Bashneft oil company is one of the hottest topics of the Russian economic agenda today. At the time, precious little is understood about it.

What we know: The Russian government wants to sell its shares, and it owns 50.08 percent of the company. What we don't know is much more extensive: timeframe, sale options, stake price, and, crucially, whether state-owned oil giant Rosneft will be allowed to participate.

Some have wondered how a state-run company could be participating in a privatization process at all. Indeed, for a while Rosneft's own spokesmen seemed to agree. "How can one state company buy another one," press officer Mikhail Leontyev asked just a few months ago. For a while, reports also circulated that Vladimir Putin had personally "banned" Rosneft from buying Bashneft shares.

However, on July 26, Rosneft officially applied to participate in the Bashneft sale.

The Kremlin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has noted that there are "different views on the matter" and "de jure Rosneft is not a state-owned company," referring to the fact that government owns a 69.5-percent stake in Rosneftegaz, Rosneft's parent company.

What this seems to suggest is that a bitter battle is going on within the Russian elite on the issue of Rosneft's participation in the sale.

The participation of Rosneft in a bidding process is no insignificant matter. Structurally, the "privatization" of one state

company by another would only strengthen state domination in the industry, the exact opposite of what privatization should lead to.

Currently Rosneft controls about 36 percent of the Russian crude oil output. With the acquisition of Bashneft, its share would move closer to 40 percent, further strengthening Rosneft's monopoly.

Economically, "privatization" of one state company by another also makes little sense. Rosneft is some way away from a perfect financial condition. It's also subject to Western sanctions, which means it is unable to borrow money at international financial markets. Financing the acquisition of Bashneft's stake (currently worth around \$3.8 billion at the market) would thus come from the state or state banks, diminishing the effect of any cash raised from the sale.

There are other potential buyers. About 50 other companies have been invited to participate, including global oil giants Shell, Total, BP, Statoil, Eni, as well as companies from China, India and the United Arab Emirates. Among Russian players, private oil giant LUKoil, Independent Oil Company and the Antipinsky refinery (a 20-percent stake is owned by attorney Nikolai Yegorov, Putin's university friend) have expressed interest.

However, the sale price remains unclear, and Bashneft market shares appear overvalued. One potential solution is that Bashneft's stake may be sold by the government not via open auction, but directly to a strategic investor based on a valuation that discounts the current market price. This will lead to obvious criti-

cism, but the other option of using the current share price as a benchmark would scare off strategic investors.

Rosneft has long expressed interest in Bashneft, even before it was taken over by the government two years ago. Indeed, many believe the forced nationalization of Bashneft was linked to Rosneft's appetite for growth. That operation saw Bashneft's former owner and Russian tycoon Vladimir Yevtushenkov put under house arrest and forced to surrender the asset in exchange for freedom.

Rosneft's CEO Igor Sechin is well known for his ambition to expand control. Even if Rosneft is not allowed to take part in the government's sale, it could still take over a large part of Bashneft's assets.

One of the potential "private" buyers, Independent Petroleum Company (IPC) is in fact controlled by Rosneft's vice chairman Eduard Khudainatov. It has often been billed as a Rosneft affiliated player. If the IPC succeeds in winning the initial privatization prize, Rosneft may, further down the road, step in to buy off all or most of the "privatized" Bashneft assets. LUKoil, meanwhile, if it wins, could also easily surrender at least a portion of Bashneft's assets to Rosneft at a bargain price. The logic of doing so would be to secure good relations and further peaceful co-existence in the industry.

In other words, whatever the outcome of the first act of the drama, it might not be the end of the story. The Russian oil industry, after all, knows too well who the real national champion in the oil business is. **TMT**

“Turkey’s rapprochement with Russia represents a further victory for the Kremlin’s coercive diplomacy.”
James Nixey, Chatham House.



\$6Bln

estimated value of Turkish exports to Russia.



Turkey buys 30 billion cubic meters of gas from Russia annually, covering 60 percent of its needs and making it Moscow’s second biggest customer.

4.4M

Russians visited Turkey in 2014, the second largest group of foreign tourists.

A Beautiful Friendship, Rekindled

By **Mikhail Fishman** m.fishman@imedia.ru and **Matthew Bodner** m.bodner@imedia.ru

In Erdogan, Putin has rediscovered a soul mate and strategic partner.

Just a few months ago, the situation between Russia and Turkey looked frightening enough. Not since 200 years ago had the risk of war between these two great powers been so real.

In November 2015, Turkey shot down a Russian Su-24 fighter jet flying out of a regime-controlled airbase in Syria. Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, described the act as a “stab in the back” by Turkish President Recep Erdogan. Moscow accused Erdogan’s regime of collaborating and supporting the Islamic State, and Russian television ran stories backing the claim. Both sides dug in uncompromising positions. Islamic State is a terrorist group banned in Russia.

Under domestic pressure, and running out of friends, the Turkish president offered an unexpected olive branch at the end of June. Turkey apologized for the downing of the jet, while new modes of cooperation and a state visit were discussed. The unsuccessful July 15 coup did nothing to undermine the prospects of rekindled friendship between Moscow and Ankara.

Putin and Erdogan are due to meet on Aug. 9, in St. Petersburg. The agenda of their meeting is still under discussion, but, as Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, “they definitely have a lot to talk about.”

Visiting Moscow to lay the groundwork for that visit, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek met with his Russian counterpart, Arkady Dvorkovich. The two delegations covered the entire range of Russia-Turkish bilateral issues — from the Southstream gas pipeline project and the Akkuyu nuclear station, to sanctioned food, charter flights and visa restrictions implemented by Russia.

The Turkish delegation expressed interest in reaching new levels of bilateral cooperation. The Russian side also seemed keen as ever, with Putin discussing the meeting with members of his national security council.

Two months ago, the two nations seemed to be teetering on the edge of armed conflict. Now they are long-lost brothers, in rhetoric if nothing else.



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Unequal Partners

In practice, even beautiful friendships need work and rules. And here, Russia will only play if it is granted the role of leading partner, says Russian political expert Vladimir Frolov. In the standoff with Erdogan, Putin was the clear winner.

“Erdogan is triumphing at home, but he has failed in the region, found himself at deadlock and, is now turning away from the West,” agrees Fyodor Lukyanov, head of Russia’s Council on Foreign and Defense Policy.

Turkey currently hosts the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State at an airbase in the south. But there is friction between Ankara and Washington on the issue of Syrian Kurds, who seek autonomous rule. The U.S. supports the group, but Turkey has designated them terrorists.

After the downing of the jet, Russia too has made inroads with the Kurds, prompting Turkish claims that they are fighting on behalf of Syrian President Bashar Assad’s regime against ethnic Turkmen in northern Syria. Moscow even started shipping arms to the Kurds. This was Erdogan’s nightmare scenario

“Turkey and Russia also increasingly resemble each other in the repressive measures they employ and in the lack of allies on the international stage,” says James Nixey.

— both Russia and the United States backing Kurds (for different reasons). This was Putin’s main lever of influence on Erdogan.

Living Alongside NATO

While Putin certainly has an opportunity to court Erdogan as the West scoffs at his illiberal crackdown across Turkish society, there is only so much he can do. The West, at the end of the day, is unlikely to dump Turkey over its domestic behavior. NATO is used to coups in Turkey, and dealing with their bloody aftermaths.

Turning a blind eye to Erdogan’s behavior will come at a cost, but the West doesn’t have many good options. “Either it takes a pragmatic stance and accepts what Erdogan is doing, un-

dermining its claims to having values-based policies. Or it risks losing a crucial partner in both military and migration matters,” says security expert Mark Galeotti. “Putin — who never claimed to have a values-based foreign policy — can simply make encouraging noises, sit back and watch the West tie itself in knots.”

While Putin’s concrete opportunities with Turkey are limited by its standing alliance with NATO, Moscow has more options than ever before. Turkey’s Simsek went out of his way to thank Russia for supporting Erdogan during the failed coup. After the event, Erdogan will be rethinking his international partnerships.

Holding onto power by any and all means has already cost Erdogan his “Turkish European dream,” a platform that propelled his party into power. Post-coup Turkey and its evolving regime represent a darker and more cynical set of values, and it seems to be falling further into the Kremlin’s embrace.

“Moscow’s first priority is the Eurasian community, and here Turkey is a big player,” says Lukyanov. “The only question is: How far Erdogan’s new Turkey will be ready to follow down this path.” **TMT**

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ADVERTISING

"It was done with one aim: to destabilize the situation in Ukraine." President **Petro Poroshenko** on Sheremet's murder.



69

journalists have been killed in Ukraine since 1992.

16

journalists were murdered after the Maidan revolution and war in the Donbass.



The Ukrainian authorities are investigating claims that Vadim Troyan, the head of the National Police, organized surveillance on Sheremet.



Pavel Sheremet was killed when a bomb exploded under his car seat on July 20. The journalist was heading to host his morning radio show in Kiev.

Reporting Under Fire

Has Ukraine become more dangerous for journalists than Russia?



Op-Ed by **Katerina Sergatskova**
Russian-Ukrainian journalist

The killing of journalist Pavel Sheremet shocked everyone who knew him. Belarusian by nationality, Russian by citizenship, and most recently a resident of Ukraine, Pavel was not afraid of speaking his mind and criticizing the powerful. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko (who revoked Sheremet's citizenship in 2010), President Vladimir Putin and the Ukrainian government all found themselves on the receiving end of his work.

Sheremet was more biting commentator than muckraking journalist. Now, however, his name stands alongside pioneering investigators such as Anna Politkovskaya and Natalya Estemirova of Russia, and Georgy Gongadze of Ukraine, founder of the Ukrainian Pravda newspaper for which Sheremet would later work.

He was killed by a bomb, which had been placed under the driver's seat of his car. Were there any warning signs that such a grotesque attack would happen in Ukraine?

The first thing to say is that Ukraine today is in profound political crisis. As a Reporters Without Borders report noted in May, the media is a significant part of that crisis. Ukrainian journalism is rapidly losing the confidence of the Ukrainian people.

What that report failed to mention, however, was how both politicians and the public have stigmatized journalists in the last year.

In May, a website called Mirotvorets (Peacekeeper), which claimed to be devoted to the "struggle against the Russian threat," came to public attention when it published the personal details of 4,500 journalists, complete with phone numbers and e-mails. The website's creators accused the journalists of collaborating with DPR terrorists. The basis of these claims were that the journalists had received accreditation from the leadership of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). The list contained not only local media workers, but also many of the world's leading correspondents. Hardly surprising,

given the fact that working without accreditation was a sure-fire invitation to prison and worse.

A great number of the listed journalists soon began receiving threatening letters and phone calls. Accusations that they were "accessories to terrorists" appeared on social networks along with calls to revoke their right to work in Ukraine. "Bot attacks began and a barrage of threats," said Ukrainian Information Policy Deputy Minister Tatyana Popova. "They called us anti-Ukrainian journalists that are aiding the enemy."

Anton Geraschenko, an Interior Ministry adviser and member of parliament, believed by some to have played a role in instigating the publication, called for new censorship laws to counter Russian propaganda. He proposed establishing control over the content of licensed television channels, requiring accreditation for foreign media operating in Ukraine, and blocking Internet sites that "incite hostility, hatred, and undermine national security."

Geraschenko referred to the Mirotvorets site administrators as "patriot hackers, united by the desire to protect their country by the means available to them."

The incident received wide international coverage. The Ukrainian president spoke out in support of the journalists and Ukraine's State Security Service promised to look into the matter. The Interior Ministry was the only government agency to say nothing, while Interior Minister Arsen Avakov referred to the journalists as "liberal separatists" in a Twitter post.

A confrontation between liberals and "patriots" has split Ukraine for two years, with journalists the main victims of the division. Officials were the first to harass them, but after Mirotvorets published its list, ordinary citizens joined the attack.

Another serious incident occurred when reporters from the Ukrainian independent television channel Hromadske.ua and Russian Novaya Gazeta correspondent Yulia Polukhina filmed DPR forces using heavy equipment banned by the Minsk Agreement to shell Ukrainian troops at the front in Avdeyevka in the Donetsk region. Two Ukrainian soldiers died in that clash.

Before publishing the footage, the Hromadske.ua reporters submitted the video to Ukrainian soldiers to confirm that its publication would not reveal the position of government troops. The next day, however, military officials accused them

of doing exactly that, even though only Novaya Gazeta had posted the video — and then only in response to the deaths of two Ukrainian soldiers.

The story developed into a major scandal. Soon after, Interior Minister Anton Geraschenko blamed Hromadske.ua for the deaths of the soldiers. That prompted the wave of threats against the journalists that continues to this day.

"We have grown accustomed to the fact that bots, spin doctors, and trolls work for various political forces and struggle against each other to create fake public opinion," says Hromadske.ua managing editor Angelina Karyakina. "Now, the authorities are using the same tools against those whom they deem undesirable — primarily independent journalists. We believe that by accusing journalists of helping the enemy to correct the trajectory of its guns, the authorities are trying to silence their voices," she said.

Karyakina said that Ukrainian officials were adopting Kremlin techniques for manipulating public opinion. Denis Krivosheyev, deputy director of Amnesty International for Europe and Central Asia, agrees.

Unlike Russia, however, the threat against the media community in Ukraine has not become unofficial state policy. Head of the Institute of Mass Information NGO Oksana Romanyuk believes the level of aggression has actually declined since 2014, when the war was in full swing and society was caught up in it. New trends have since appeared. Oligarchs realized they can do as they please, and that they can go back to using the media outlets under their control to promote their own interests. And the media now has a negative image, so that journalists are hindered and threatened.

But the murder of Sheremet in central Kiev goes against any positive trend. No one of this prominence has been killed in Ukraine since Gongadze was murdered in 2000.

The public stance that politicians and senior security officials have taken against independent journalists probably contributed to this tragedy. No matter who ordered this terrorist act, it has benefitted those politicians who publicly call for censorship and discredit the media. The killing of Sheremet intimidates all journalists and, therefore, is a threat to democracy.

The question now is whether Ukrainian society can defend the country's media rather or, instead, remain a passive tool of cynical politicians seeking to manipulate public opinion. **TMT**



"We do know that the Russians hack our systems, not just government systems but private systems."
U.S. President **Barack Obama**.

19,252

hacked DNC e-mails were leaked by WikiLeaks, July 22.



"Such leaks occur not because of hackers. Any professional will tell you: someone just forgot their password." **German Klimenko**, presidential Internet adviser.

June 2016

The DNC first reported a breach in their internal party e-mails.

Spying on Uncle Sam

By **Hannah Berkman** newsreporter@imedia.ru, Twitter: @hberk5 | Illustration by **Ilya Kutoboi**

Experts express "high confidence" that Russia was involved in hacking DNC e-mails.

Russia meddling in the U.S. presidential elections? Computer hacking, international espionage and damaging leaks — what sounds like a Soviet-era fable might, in fact, have some truth to it.

On July 22, on the eve of the U.S. Democratic Party Convention, WikiLeaks released some 20,000 internal party e-mail from the Democratic National Committee (DNC). The most damaging ones revealed the committee had championed a rear-guard action against the challenger candidate Bernie Sanders in favor of eventual nominee Hillary Clinton.

Fallout was swift. DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz resigned. The Clinton campaign then accused the Kremlin of being behind the leaks, echoing cybersecurity experts' claims that Russian hackers breached the DNC and Clinton Foundation systems in June. Her campaign manager said the leak was meant to play into her Republican opponent Donald Trump's hands.

The U.S. media has long connected Trump's campaign to the Kremlin, pointing to his pro-Putin advisers and Russian business ties. Could it be that Russia has decided to actively meddle in the U.S. presidential elections?

State-Level Capacity

The evidence mounts. U.S. intelligence agencies told the White House that they have "high confidence" that the Russian government was involved in the hack, the New York Times reported July 26. President Barack Obama called it "possible," citing experts, but stopped short of a full-blown accusation.

As a country that has been suspected of similar behavior in the past, Russia's involvement is possible and even plausible, international affairs analyst Vladimir Frolov told The Moscow Times. After the initial hack was reported in June, three cybersecurity firms have concluded that a Russian trace is present in the leaked files.

The firm handling DNC's breach, Crowdstrike, reportedly has experience with the "Russian espionage groups" in question. The groups had "advanced methods consistent with state-level capabilities," and one of the two groups responsible had access to DNC servers for a year.

After Schultz's resignation, Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks founder and vocal critic of Clinton, told reporters that he had timed the leak to coincide with the convention. Assange, who has been living in self-imposed exile in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London for four years, has well-reported links to Russia — even hosting an interview show in 2012 for Russia Today, a Kremlin-sponsored propaganda outlet.

The DNC wasn't the only organization targeted. Around the same time, Russia was accused of hacking into the Clinton Foundation, the Clinton campaign and e-mail accounts of U.S. lobbyists, policy groups, law firms and consultants.

The Kremlin has denied the accusations, calling them "absurd." When initial reports came out, Putin's recently appointed Internet adviser, German Klimenko, suggested that someone "simply forgot the password."

Intelligence officials from various countries have previously accused Russia of breaching their systems, including a three-week string of cyber attacks in Estonia in 2007 and a 2015 hack into Germany's parliament. Both attacks disabled the countries' government websites and systems for days.

What's Russia Got to Gain?

If they are indeed behind the leaks, Russia might be following one of several possible objectives. One prominent explanation is an attempt to discredit Clinton for what is seen as a smear campaign against Putin. The Kremlin does not actually believe they



can influence the U.S. election, analysts say, but they do see an opportunity for retaliation.

can influence the U.S. election, analysts say, but they do see an opportunity for retaliation.

"The DNC is a secondary target," Frolov says. "Even if Russia didn't find anything to directly harm Clinton's chances, they found a good information war weapon, and they released it at the opportune moment."

A scandal is exactly what the Kremlin wants, says Dmitry Oreshkin. The political analyst sees the Soviet logic at play, describing a zero-sum game "where a point lost for the West is a point gained for Russia." Rather than calculatedly aiming at a particular election result, the leaks were meant to "conjure up feelings of chaos" in the United States, Oreshkin argued.

The Kremlin favors Trump over the more Russia-skeptic Clinton. A Trump presidency is seen as a "window of opportunity" because he has already spoken of restoring relations, Frolov said. The Russian media have painted him as a non-systemic candidate who will keep the United States out of others' affairs and pull back from NATO.

However, experts disagree on Russia's feelings toward Trump's erratic behavior. According to Frolov, Russian officials harbor feelings of apprehension about his inexperience and vola-

tility. Oreshkin, meanwhile, sees Trump's unpredictability as a plus for Russia, a chance to increase feelings of chaos. One of Trump's advisers told Bloomberg "he wouldn't be surprised" if the Russians were behind the WikiLeaks scandal, but his campaign chairman described the claims as "pure obfuscation."

The Trump-Russia Connection

It is not the first time that the media have focused on Trump's links to Russia.

Several of Trump's advisers are very sympathetic to the Kremlin, publications claim, and his campaign chairman Paul Manafort served as an adviser to Russian-backed former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. Putin himself has been forthright in his praise of the Republican candidate.

Yet the connections are possibly overblown. "Manafort advised Yanukovich on media, not policy," says Frolov. "Moscow exerted pressure on Yanukovich to get rid of him because he was seen as an undue U.S. influence."

According to the analyst, Trump's advisers are "freaks who spread freaky opinions."

"U.S. expats like [Trump's foreign policy adviser] Carter Page love Putin, but they don't do it for money, they enjoy it," he said.

Political analyst Maria Lipman also questioned claims of unsavory ties, saying that opponents were simply alarmed at his newfound popularity and looking for ways to discredit him. "It looks like desperation, frustration and weakness," she says. "They are a mirror reflection of the Russian tactic of blaming outside sources for problems."


The U.S. media is easily manipulated, says Vasily Gatov, a media analyst and senior fellow at USC Annenberg's communication center. "As Russians blame Obama for everything, American media decided it should blame Putin for all sins, including the rise of Trump," he said. "Putin may want to screw Hillary but he's certainly not betting on Trump."

A more pertinent threat to U.S. interests comes from Trump's isolationist foreign policy. His populist voter base is pushing for a non-interventionist United States, which could undo alliances cultivated over decades.

Then it will be Trump who's playing into the hands of Russia, and not the other way around. **TMT**

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The FSB allegedly found a message on Shakro's phone: "We met with Nikandrov. He promised to sort everything soon."

\$5M

amount Shakro would pay to free henchmen.

15 years

Sentence facing investigator Denis Nikandrov for accepting a bribe.



"Young Shakro is one of the old school — a smart, blue collar gangster." **Mark Galeotti**, expert in Russian crime.



ARTYOM KOROTAYEV / TASS

Denis Nikandrov, deputy head of the Moscow branch of the Investigative Committee, being led through a courtroom after he was arrested for allegedly taking a \$1 million bribe to help a mafia clan.

An Investigator's Tale

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

The meteoric rise and sudden fall of a senior investigator shed light on the murky workings of Russia's law enforcement system.

On the morning of July 19, two dark blue minibuses drew up outside the offices of one of Russia's most powerful law enforcement agencies. Out sprang a group of gun-toting special forces and besuited agents of the FSB, the Russian secret service. They darted into the building and fanned out through its corridors.

They were hunting seven employees of the Investigative Committee, the country's main investigation authority. Most were found at their desks and arrested along with piles of seized documents. But a key suspect had reportedly been tipped off. Denis Nikandrov, the newly-appointed deputy head of the committee's Moscow branch, made it halfway across town before the FSB brought him in.

The arrests created an instant media sensation. The FSB claimed they had exposed a bribery scandal of extraordinary proportions. According to them, the detained officials had taken at least \$1 million from one of the country's most notorious gangsters to release his henchmen from jail.

More than that, the incident seemed to suggest that Russia's law enforcement agencies — whose power and influence has waxed under President Vladimir Putin — were at war.

At the center of the scandal was Nikandrov. Thirty-seven years old and already a major-general, his rise was meteoric; his fall was equally spectacular. His career has spanned Putin's period in power. It shows how a law enforcement system given huge power by Putin has all too often turned in on itself, and devoured its members.

Attack Dog

Denis Nikandrov looked all too normal behind the bars of the courtroom cage following his arrest. Tall and slim, he

sat in a dark suit with bags under his eyes, blinking behind the thick lenses of his frameless glasses.

But in reality, he was a hit man. Over his short career, he was unleashed on one high-profile case after another, using them to achieve rapid promotions. Many of the cases he spearheaded subsequently fell apart, and their subjects eventually exonerated. But that was not the point. Nikandrov was used as a weapon. Superiors would give him a target. His job was to take the target down, fast.

What's more, he was apparently unscrupulous in his methods, with his career dogged by accusations that he pressured people to provide evidence. "He's not the sort of person who'll spend a year on a detailed investigation," says Mark Galeotti, an expert on the Russian security services. "He knows the results he wants, he goes in and he finds the evidence."

One of the first to be on the sharp end of Nikandrov was Yevgeny Ishchenko, the mayor of Volgograd in the mid-2000s. Nikandrov, then a young local investigator, showered Ishchenko with accusations and locked him up for a year before a court threw most of them out. "He was never interested in the truth," says Ishchenko. "He followed a goal — in my case, to remove me from city hall."

Still in his twenties, Nikandrov was promoted to Moscow, where he took a role gathering evidence against the oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky for a second trial over the bankrupted Yukos oil firm. Almost immediately, he was thrown a massive opportunity.

In 2008, senior investigator Dmitry Dovgy fell out with his boss. Shortly afterward, he was accused of taking a bribe. Most of his colleagues refused to take the case, Dovgy says.

Nikandrov, who at that time was "run-of-the-mill, nothing special," took the job.

He pursued it ruthlessly. Dovgy was thrown in a jail cell with a mass murderer and taken to and from the courtroom in a van full of gangsters, while Nikandrov fished around for a witness willing to implicate him.

According to Andrei Grivtsov, a former senior investigator who knew Nikandrov, the case he produced was highly flaky. He failed to document that a bribe had changed hands. Yet a court still found him guilty. "I heard that Nikandrov was very proud of the Dovgy case," Grivtsov said. "He said he'd sent the guy to court for a bribe without proving he'd taken one."

Dovgy thinks Nikandrov was "driven by a thirst for power." The case certainly transformed his career. He was given rapid-fire promotions. In 2011, the Investigative Committee was made into a stand-alone agency, run by Alexander Bastyrykin, a university classmate of Putin's. Nikandrov became one of its team of elite investigators — "one of Bastyrykin's attack dogs," says Galeotti. In his early thirties, he was a major general with real authority.

In his new position, Nikandrov took on one of the biggest cases of the decade — revealing an underground casino ring supposedly operating with the protection of the senior state prosecutors. The case was incendiary. By the time it eventually fell apart four years later, it had forced numerous senior officials to resign. Most onlookers consider the case a blatant attack — part of a clan war between investigators and prosecutors, with little to do with objective justice.

Nikandrov was riding high. But the power may have

Continued on Page 11 →

Out & About



July 28 – August 3, 2016

7

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



Laflafel's focus is on simple, healthy fare and a menu that reflects seasonality. The Middle Eastern fusion cafe also boasts several dishes suitable for vegans.

Good Mood Food at Laflafel

By [Joseph Ozment](#) artsreporter@imedia.ru

Middle Eastern fusion in hipster paradise

Laflafel began life as a small market stall and Kosher food delivery service. Fast forward four years and several reincarnations and it's now a bustling restaurant full of zest and warmth tucked on a side street between Chistiye Prudy and Kurskaya. The wholesome eatery serves up Middle and Far Eastern dishes in a hip, minimalist interior. Think warm welcomes and hummus packed with the flavor of tahini and olive oil.

The menu is eclectic. Dishes range from traditional Israeli to Indian. A small number of vegetarian mains are complemented by a board of specials — the select menu ensuring that food always

arrives at your table soon after ordering.

The soup of the day — on this occasion sambar, the south Indian lentil-based favorite — costs 170 rubles and is served in its own cast iron pot. Specials change daily: rich hummus served with pita and salad (290 rubles) and a falafel burger that will delight burger enthusiasts and vegetarians alike (299 rubles).

The palak paneer (380 rubles) offers a vibrant pop of color to your table. A fragrant sauce made from spinach, garam masala and garlic mixed with chunks of protein-rich paneer cheese make it as tasty as it is eye-catching. Those hankering

for something less heavy should try the sweet yet spicy Israeli latkes (290 rubles) — addictive little potato cakes served hot from the skillet.

Vegans are also well catered for. A favorite is Laflafel's signature Spielberg (340 rubles), a Russian-style falafel cutlet served with a generous portion of hummus and a mound of vegetables.

The sparsely decorated setting is pleasantly informal: two rooms make it easy to gather with friends, or enjoy some quiet time with a book as the staff spin vinyl records in the background. Lounge at the rustic bar and sip on an iced latte or a masala tea as you enjoy the bustle around you.

It's very much a community spirit. You'll likely be served by one of the owners and on Fridays Laflafel celebrates the Jewish sabbath by baking a symbolic challah which is broken and shared with the cafe's guests.

Laflafel's no frills, no fuss approach means that while its dishes are authentically exotic, they remain very approachable. We know where we will be heading for our falafel fix in future. **TMT**

+7 (499) 346 7385
facebook.com/laflafel
16 Maly Kazyonny Pereulok
Metro Kurskaya

NEWS & OPENINGS



SE SYAN VEY

Se Syan Vey

Chinese food without the grease

This new Chinese bistro fits right into the hip urban neighborhood it inhabits on the site of the Trekhgornaya factory. The atmosphere is extremely casual, but the local lunch crowd doesn't reveal just how good the food is. Watch out for the sparrowgrass salad and the eggplant with soy sauce then dive into one of the inviting noodle dishes with your chopsticks.

+7 (499) 643 8337

facebook.com/sesianwei
15 Rochdelskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 13
Metro Krasnopresnenskaya, Ulitsa 1905 Goda



PETT PIERRE'S

Petit Pierre Cafe

Charming French restaurant

Channel your inner Bardot at Gallic newcomer Petit Pierre's. Along with a picturesque view of the river and a less picturesque view of the famous statue of Peter the Great, you can enjoy classic dishes like escargots (450 rubles), bistro-style steak (790 rubles) or comforting French onion soup (350 rubles). Pair with a glass of smooth red and pretend you're in Paris.

+7 (926) 721 5545

facebook.com/pierrecafe2016
15/2 Prechistenskaya Naberezhnaya
Metro Kropotkinskaya



SVOI LYUDI

Svoi Lyudi

Upscale fish supper

A gigantic Kamchatkan crab welcomes you with a steely stare from its tank at this seafood deli and kitchen. Grab a craft beer from the bar as you peruse the starters: red salmon under a "royal" fur coat with a caviar crown (300 rubles), or zingy tuna tartar (320 rubles). Mains include swordfish steak (900 rubles) and fillet of sole (590 rubles). Bring your own wine to cut down on costs.

+7 (495) 374 6065

svoilyudi.com
31/35 Ulitsa Fridrikha Engelsa
Metro Baumanskaya



FUNKY FOOD

Funky Food

A slight case of style over substance

While the only funky thing about this restaurant is the interior—the food being a pretty ubiquitous blend of pan-Asian dishes and grill items—it's pleasant enough. Plus points for offering diners a cloth bib and plastic gloves to avoid ruining a party frock when devouring the royal cheeseburger (650 rubles). Minus points for the slightly haphazard table service.

+7 (499) 243 1727

facebook.com/funkyfoodmoscow
17 Kutuzovskiy Prospekt
Metro Kievskaya

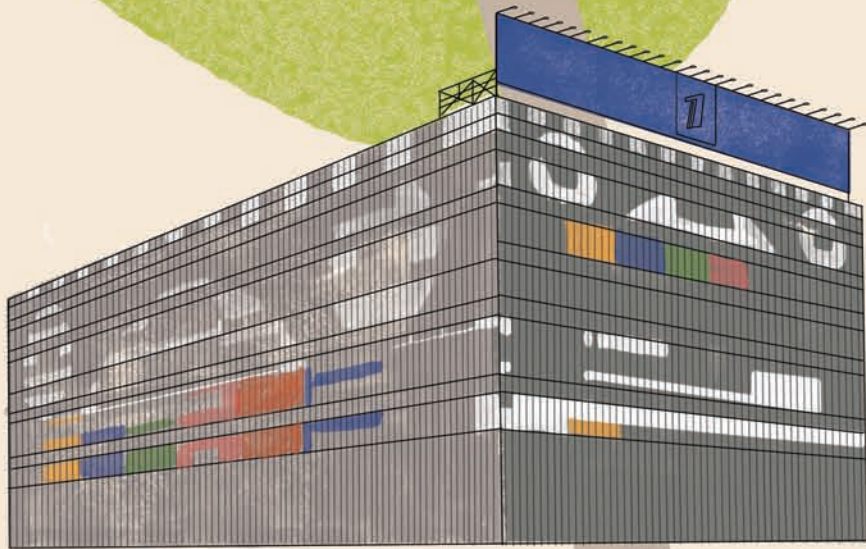
Take it and go!

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!**

7. Ostankino Television Tower

The structure that dominates this neighborhood is the enormous Ostankino television tower, which transmits dozens of television channels and radio stations. When it was completed in 1967, it was the tallest freestanding structure in the world at just over 540 meters high. A decade later it was superseded by the Canadian CN Tower and a few more since then, but it remains the tallest in all of Europe. It is famous for many reasons: for the cool colors that light it up at night, for a spectacular fire in 2000 that knocked out virtually all television and a lot of radio for several days, and for the 1960s space age style. Near the top was a restaurant called Sedmoye Nebo (Seventh Heaven) that slowly turned, giving diners a full 360-degree view of the city over the course of dinner. The restaurant has not reclaimed its previous glory, but you can take an excursion up to the viewing platform. If heights scare you, take the monorail back to the VDNKh metro station and go home under ground, as nature intended.

15 Ulitsa Akademika Korolyova

**6. Ostankino TeleCenter**

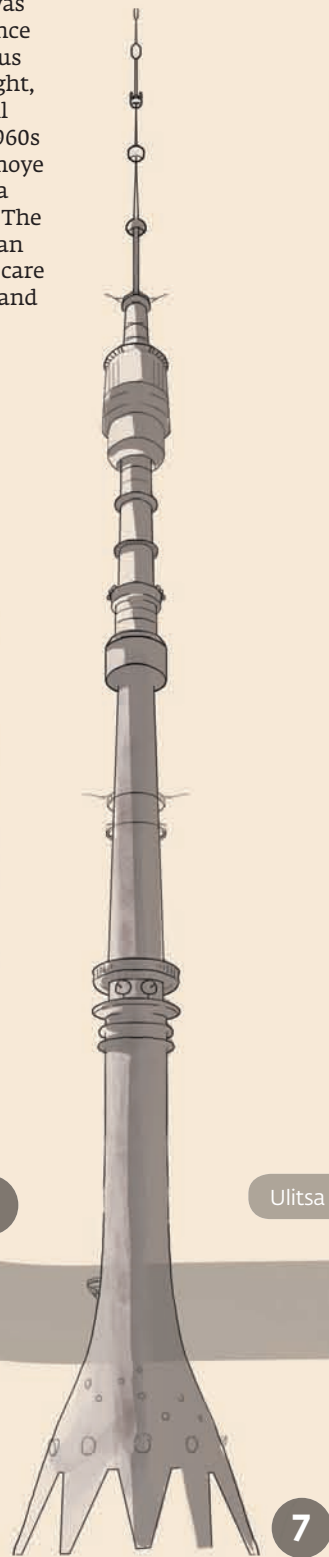
Beyond the Ostankino Pond by the church is a huge cement and glass building that is the heart of Russia's television industry. Built from 1964 to 1967, the Ostankino TeleCenter consists of several buildings for television and radio production and broadcast. Here Channel 1, NTV, and other channels produce and broadcast their shows, and another 200 or so companies use the facilities. This is where you come to be in an audience for a talk show, or this is where you walk the miles of corridors to be made up and have a microphone attached to you if you're a guest on one of the shows. Reconstructed after the battles of the 1993 coup attempt, the center seems to have left that tragic chapter behind. No admittance without lots of clearance. But standing outside, gawking, and hoping to see a celebrity is definitely allowed.

12 Ulitsa Akademika Korolyova

**5. Ostankino Estate Museum**

After you have happily gorged on donuts, cross 1st Ostankinskaya Ulitsa and look through the gates at the pink Ostankino Palace, covered with scaffolding as it undergoes major repairs. Built by Count Nikolai Sheremetev in 1797 after he grew bored with the family manse at Kuskovo — such a bore! — this estate was designed to be a summer Theater Palace. It was a kind of elaborate stage set for his guests, with ballrooms and reception areas and little nooks perfect for gossip and trysts. Inside this big theater nestles a little theater — the oldest extant wooden house theater in the world, with clever machines to make the sound of wind and rain, moveable columns, and a floor that could cover the entire seating area and turn it into a ballroom while the guest sipped champagne. While work to save it is under way, stop in the Church of the Life-Giving Trinity, built in 1682, and gaze at the extraordinary iconostasis, miraculously preserved in place all these years.

5 1st Ostankinskaya Ulitsa



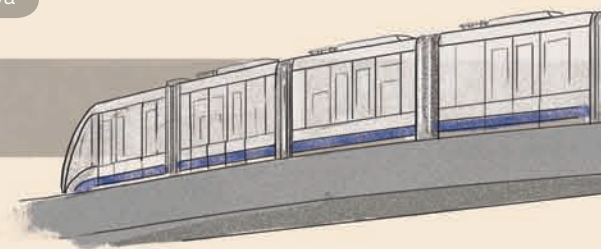
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Ulitsa Akademika Korolyova

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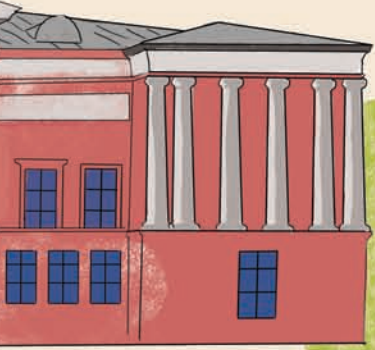


Around Ostankino and VDNKh

TV and the Space Age Meet History

By Michele A. Berdy m.berdy@imedia.ru | Illustration by Yelena Rasputina

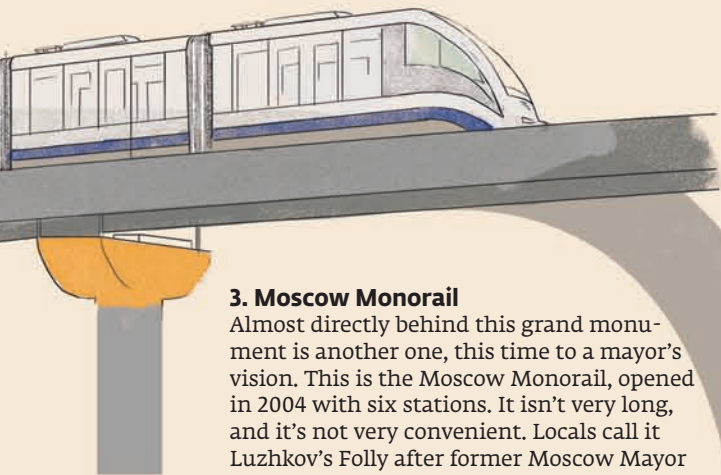
A tour of the Ostankino-VDNKh neighborhood with science museums, rare architecture, the heart of Russian TV, and the city's best donuts



4. Ponchiki

Get off the monorail at the second stop (Ulitsa Akademika Korolyova) and continue to walk in the same direction until Novomoskovskaya Ulitsa. Turn right and walk to the intersection with 1st Ostankinskaya Ulitsa. On the left you'll see a little pink building with a red roof and, possibly, a line in front. Actually, first you'll smell the divine scent of fried dough before you even see this neighborhood landmark. This is the best place for donuts, called *ponchiki* (пончики) in Moscow. The staff make the donuts with a "special recipe" and use equipment dating from the 1950s when the place opened. These donuts are crisp on the outside, tender on the inside, sprinkled with powdered sugar and love. Buy and eat. You are welcome.

11st Ostankinskaya Ulitsa



3. Moscow Monorail

Almost directly behind this grand monument is another one, this time to a mayor's vision. This is the Moscow Monorail, opened in 2004 with six stations. It isn't very long, and it's not very convenient. Locals call it Luzhkov's Folly after former Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov, who pushed through the project. But use your regular metro card to take a short ride. It does offer fine views of the park and Moscow, and it fits in with the 1960s vibe that dominates parts of this neighborhood.

Prodolny Proyezd and Ulitsa Sergeya Eisensteina

3

2

1

2. Worker and Collective Farm Girl

After your short trip into outer space, walk past the main entrance to VDNKh Park and continue to the right toward the giant 70-meter-high statue of the Worker and Collective Farm Girl, marching majestically into the bright future. Made by Vera Mukhina for the 1937 International Exposition in Paris, the sculpture is one of the iconic symbols of the Soviet era. In the podium that holds it aloft is a newly opened museum dedicated to the monument and woman who made it. The airy and modernist space displays photographs, models of this and other sculptures, and personal items of the artist.

123 Prospekt Mira

1. Cosmonautics Museum

When you exit the VDNKh metro station, head for the giant, 100-meter rocket flying off into space. This monument, built in 1964, celebrates Soviet spaceflight. Before entering the museum in its base, you might wander around the Alley of Cosmonauts under the rocket, where you can see busts of the first men and women in space and some of the scientists and dreamers who made spaceflight possible. Inside, the museum is largely dedicated to Yury Gagarin's pioneering flight into outer space, but with some exhibits about other spaceflights. Highlight: Belka and Strelka, the first dogs to successfully travel to space and return safely, are here, stuffed for posterity, in their doggie space suits.

111 Prospekt Mira

Prospekt Mira



Philipp Bonkatz, Business Development Manager at Lufthansa Group
“For a perfect Friday evening I start at **Pivbar** at Mayakovskaya with one of their eclectic international beers and a burger. Later on I head to **Time Out Bar**, which boasts magnificent rooftop views over the city and great beats from the DJ.”



LOCALWAY.RU

Cycling the City: Moscow's Best Biking Routes

With its traffic-choked roads and minimal biking infrastructure, Moscow has traditionally been seen as a city hostile to those on two wheels. But change is afoot. Several new bike lanes, renovated parks and the increasingly popular Velobike project mean that people won't fix you with an incredulous look these days if you pedal past them at speed. So whether it's family fun in the park, a challenging workout or some off-piste exploration of the city you're after, the only limit is the one you set yourself. Oh — and the roadworks.



GUIDE.RU

Embassy Row

A ride on the diplomatic side

This route puts you right in the heart of the city, along with cars and construction — so be careful. Start at Krasnopresnenskaya metro station and cycle through the quiet Presnensky district, passing one of Stalin's Seven Sisters at Barrikadnaya. Then go down Malaya Nikitskaya and double back onto Bolshaya Nikitskaya, admiring the embassies of Brazil, Spain, and Tajikistan on the way. Stop off en route at Gorky's astonishing Art Nouveau mansion on Malaya Nikitskaya and take a few minutes to gawk at the beautiful Bolshoye Vozneseniye church. Head down Nikitsky

Bulvar, remaining aware of the ongoing construction work around Arbat. Continue onto Gogolevsky Bulvar, and end up at the golden domes of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

Start: Krasnopresnenskaya metro station

End: Cathedral of Christ the Savior

Approximate distance: 5 km



SVOPI.RU

VDNKh and Beyond

Soviet grandeur and stunning nature

If the sights and sounds of the city center are wearing you down, you don't need to go far for a little breathing room in northeast Moscow. Head to VDNKh and rent a bike from one of several Velobike stations near the park's en-

trance to start your adventure. Cycle through VDNKh and take in the park's beautiful pavilions before escaping into nature at the far end of the territory. Where VDNKh stops, two of Moscow's greenest parks start: Ostankino, and the Moscow Academy of Science's Botanical Garden. Each has seemingly endless bike trails and some breathtaking scenery to boot. You'll find yourself stopping a few times to take in some of the prettier scenes. Take a picnic and some friends to make a day of it. It's the kind of route that can be as easy and relaxed as you like, or extended for sporting enthusiasts.

Start: VDNKh

End: Moscow Academy of Science's Botanical Garden

Approximate distance: 10 km



UNEXPLORED-MOSCOW.RU

Sokolniki Park and Losiny Ostrov

Get lost in nature

This route starts off in one of Moscow's most bike-friendly parks — Sokolniki. With dedicated cycling lanes in all pedestrian areas and plenty of avenues to explore, it is easy to ride around for hours taking in the sights. Once you've had your fill of Sokolniki, bike to the back of the park, cross the river and enter Losiny Ostrov National Park (Elk Island). It is so named for the abundance of elk inhabiting the forest, which was once a hunting ground for tsars such as Ivan the Terrible. Not all parts of the park are open to the public and only some areas allow cycling, so be cognizant and keep your eyes on the signs. The fact that only some of trails are paved makes this both a workout and an adventure. There's no better place to escape the heat of the city and experience a little bit of wilderness. Just be careful to keep an eye on where you came from — it's easy to get lost in the rambling forests and paths.

Start: Sokolniki Park

End: Losiny Ostrov National Park

Approximate distance: 12 km or more



MUZEON.RU

Along the Embankment

Riverside views

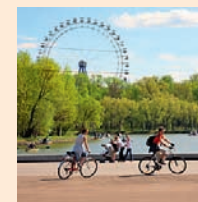
The perfect route for a sunny weekend, this easy and popular ride takes in the best sights along the Moscow River. Start at Vorobyovy Gory metro station and head straight for the dedicated bike lane which runs for several kilometers along the river. On your travels look out for Russia's Defense Ministry and the stunning Christ the Savior Cathedral. Weave through the crowds of sun-seekers, rollerbladers and skateboarders on the embankment, then stray into Gorky Park to enjoy a spot of culture at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. End your journey at Muzeon Arts Park and reward yourself with a well-deserved beer across the bridge at Strelka bar. The flat embankment and width of the paths make this great for families with kids or recreational cyclists. Just remember it will be slow-going

with the hordes of people enjoying the riverside view at the weekend.

Start: Vorobyovy Gory metro station

End: Muzeon Arts Park

Approximate distance: 5 km



WORLD-TRAVEL.RU

Izmailovsky Park to Kuskovsky Forest Park

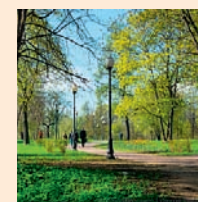
Lakes, nature and a country estate

Begin at Partizanskaya metro station and head immediately south into Izmailovsky, a historical Moscow park very conducive to cycling. Head down Glavnaya Alleya — on a wide trail next to the road — before wandering off onto any one of the side trails that splits off from it to see some of the park's stunning lakes. If you're looking for family fun, limit your excursion to Izmailovsky as the wide paths and relatively flat park make it perfect for kids on wheels. Those in the mood for some Russian aristocratic history should continue down Glavnaya Alleya and then take one of the crossings across Shosse Entuziastov. Take a right down 1st Vladimirskaya Ulitsa, then follow signs for Kuskovo once on Perovskaya Ulitsa. Once you reach this park, explore the surroundings or find somewhere to leave your bike then take a tour of the Kuskovo manor, once home to the Sheremetev family.

Start: Partizanskaya metro station

End: Kuskovsky Forest Park

Approximate distance: 9 km



TRAVELMOSCOW.COM

Along the Yauza

Parks, monasteries and life along the river

If you're looking to explore a new part of Moscow and you're a relatively strong cyclist, this could be the weekend challenge for you. Start at the magnificently named Sad Budushchego (Garden of the Future) near Botanicheskoy Sad metro station. Cycle south through the park, cross the river via the bridge and turn left then follow a trail parallel to the river out of the park. Continue under the Rostokinsky bridge and admire the aqueduct, which was built under the reign of Catherine the Great. Emerge from your historical reverie and follow the Yauza River, traversing Sokolniki Park and continuing down the river onto Naberzhnaya Gannushkina. Take a moment on your travels admire the transformation of the embankment, Lefortovskiy Park and the 16th-century Andronikov monastery, home to the Andrei Rublev Museum of Early Russian Art. Tired yet? You're nearly there. Continue down the river until you reach the Kotelnicheskaya embankment building — one of the Stalinist skyscrapers. While it's quite a distance and you may need to cross a couple of roads, the trails through the paths and the embankment are mainly flat and offer perfect conditions for cyclists.

Start: Sad Budushchego

End: Kotelnicheskaya embankment building

Approximate distance: 14 km

The Moscow Times
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“This is part of a sanction, a cleansing of the ranks.” **Dmitry Peskov**, Kremlin spokesman.



2011

Investigative Committee is made autonomous



“This of course throws a shadow on the SK, but the self cleansing will continue!” **Vladimir Markin**, Investigative Committee spokesman.

7

Investigative Committee employees arrested in an FSB sting on July 19.

← Continued from Page 6

gone to his head. He’s a classic model, says Galeotti: “The young guy who’s breaking really well precisely because he’s been unleashed on cases where the state wanted him to succeed. He probably got arrogant and complacent and thought he was bulletproof.”

But, as it turned out, he wasn’t.

The Shoot-out

Nikandrov’s spectacular demise began last year with a banal dispute between two women, one of whom hired the other to refurbish her Moscow restaurant, then refused to pay the bill.

The amount was trifling — according to some reports a mere 2 million rubles (\$30,000). But these women were socialites with connections in high places. Neither was willing to forgive and forget.

So the designer reached out to a friend — the wife of one of Russia’s most notorious mafia bosses, a Georgian thug known as Shakro Molodoi, or Young Shakro. Apparently unaware of the events he was setting in motion, Shakro agreed to do his wife a favor.

One night in December, Shakro’s men descended on a restaurant demanding money. They were led by a man called Andrei Kochiukov — who goes by the name “the Italian” and has the reputation of a madman. The owner stalled for time while she called for support. She phoned a former high-ranking policeman and sharpshooter turned problem-solver-for-hire, Eduard Budantsev. But when he arrived with a couple of heavies, things quickly turned ugly. Someone punched him in the face, and in the subsequent shoot-out Budantsev killed two people. Broken-jawed, he was arrested, along with the Italian and one of his thugs.

That could have been the end of it, but Shakro wouldn’t leave his henchmen in jail. To get them out, he hired Dmitry Zvontsev, a private security man with links to the security services, and supposedly gave him a budget of \$5 million for bribes.

Zvontsev, according to the FSB, went to his contact, the head of internal security at the Investigative Committee, Mikhail Maximenko. But Maximenko wasn’t an investigator, and couldn’t solve the problem. So he went to Nikandrov, who had been appointed deputy head of the committee’s



Alexander Bastrykin has dominated the Investigative Committee since its inception. He propelled Nikandrov up the ranks, assigning him a series of high-profile and controversial cases.

phone calls, read messages, and even filmed meetings from drones in the sky.

Hours after he left jail, the Italian was re-arrested. Then, on July 12, special forces stormed Shakro’s mansion in suburban Moscow. Zvontsev, the middleman, was also arrested. He quickly spilled the beans, and was put under witness protection.

The FSB now had what it needed. A few days later, they came for Nikandrov, Maximenko and five others.

Who Rules?

The move was shocking. Such public arrests of senior law enforcement officials are extremely rare. Senior people are usually untouchable, and the internecine conflicts between agencies are shrouded in secrecy. So why did it happen?

Nikandrov’s actions may have simply been too blatant. Corruption is of course rife in the Investigative Committee, just as it is across Russian law enforcement. Must supplement their salaries — taking money to speed or slow cases, or keep names off documents and out of court hearings, or to provide information for money. But taking a million dollars to crudely fiddle some paperwork for a mafia boss whose record of violent crime stretches back to the Soviet era is, as Galeotti puts it, “taking the piss.”

Moreover, it was a betrayal. Nikandrov was siding with the criminals against the cops, says Alexei Kondaurov, a former KGB officer. It violated a principle, Kondaurov said: “If Budantsev goes down and the thieves get off free, who’s ruling the

country?”

The arrests also appear to fit into a broader crackdown on corruption that has accelerated in recent months, incriminating, firing and jailing governors, high ranked officials, and now even Investigative Committee itself. Nikandrov’s arrest is part of an ongoing “cleansing of the ranks,” says Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

This cleansing is meant to send a signal, says Yekaterina Schulmann, an expert on Russian government, that with the country in a deep recession, loyalty alone is no longer

enough. Corrupt officials must observe some modesty and make sure their institutions are not simply a dead weight on the country. “Steal a little bit less, do your job a little bit better,” in Galeotti’s phrase.

Then again, Nikandrov’s arrest may also be a power play by rivals to Investigative Committee, with its more than 20,000 staff and direct line to the president. This could be aimed directly at Nikandrov — revenge, perhaps, by prosecutors still angry at his ruthless investigation into the casinos they allegedly protected — or at Bastrykin, its boss. In any case, it appears to underscore the growing dominance of the FSB among Russia’s law enforcement armies when it comes to the fight against corruption.

Comeuppance

Whatever was driving events, Nikandrov has been devoured by the system he served. His career looks to be over.

The FSB has demanded the paperwork of every case Nikandrov worked on so they can investigate for wrongdoing. Law enforcement sources have already slipped information to Life News, a tabloid, that Nikandrov accepted money to end a corruption investigation into senior executives of the Moscow Metro by forcing the offending investigator to resign then slamming him in jail anyway on fabricated bribery charges.

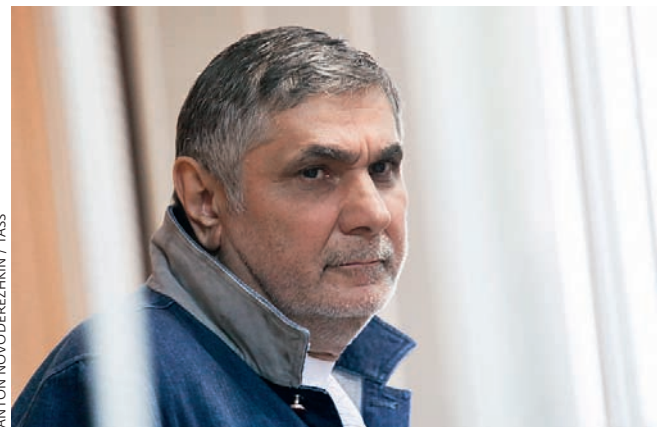
Bastrykin, meanwhile, has renounced Nikandrov and his arrested colleagues, saying their actions were a “betrayal of the memory of colleagues who have died in the line duty.”

Nikandrov now faces up to 15 years in jail and a fine of up to 70 times the size of the bribe — a massive \$70 million.

But there is no telling where the case could go from here. The suspects have denied the charges and their lawyers say the cases are flawed and unclear, and that legal procedure has been violated. Of course, the entire episode could be a fabrication.

Whether Nikandrov was really corrupt is unknown. But most people agree that the facts don’t matter. “Not everything here will be decided by law, proof, jurisprudence,” says Grivtsov. “There are big people, big connections. This is how it will be decided.”

Dovgy, meanwhile, is watching the case from the sidelines. He was recently freed after serving six and a half years in jail. “I always knew there was some higher justice, divine justice,” he says, apparently without bitterness. “Nikandrov is feeling the evil he did to others, including me.” **TMT**



Moscow branch in May. Nikandrov supposedly accepted a \$1-million advance to have Shakro’s men released.

The mechanism was simple. Nikandrov ordered underlings to soften the charges against the Italian and his associate, and then “forget” to extend their arrest. When the original six-month detention order expired in June, the thugs walked out of prison.

So far, so good. But then everything went wrong. Unbeknownst to Nikandrov and the others, the FSB had apparently been watching them for months. They had taped

Nikandrov, first deputy head of the Main Investigations Department of the Investigative Committee’s Moscow Branch



ARTYOM KOROTAYEV / TASS

Denis Nikandrov, deputy head of the Moscow branch of the Investigative Committee.

- The 37-year-old major general rose rapidly up the ranks of Russian law enforcement, spearheading cases against the mayor and police chief of Volgograd, jailing his own boss for bribery and investigating illegal casinos.
- When the Investigative Committee was formed in 2011, Nikandrov became one of its team of elite investigators.
- He was arrested in June for allegedly taking a \$1-million bribe from a crime lord, and now faces 15 years in jail.



"We've balanced the desire and need for collective responsibility versus the right to individual justice."
Thomas Bach, IOC president.

7

Russian swimmers
suspended by FINA

67

Russian track-and-field
athletes suspended
by the IAAF.



In WADA's latest report published in mid-July, independent commissioner Richard McLaren alleged a system of state-sponsored doping across Russian sport before and after the Sochi Games in 2014.



Alexei Fyodorov taking part in competition. The triple jumper won't be participating in the Games in Rio.

The Ones Left Behind

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

Russia's unexpected narrow escape from an Olympic blanket ban was met with jubilation by officials. Yet for some Russian athletes, it was the final nail in the coffin.

When the Olympic Games kick off on Aug. 5, triple jumper Alexei Fyodorov won't be present. He'll be in his home town of Smolensk, more than 10,000 kilometers away from Brazil's Rio de Janeiro.

The Olympic dream runs in Fyodorov's family. Alexei's father is also his coach. His mother teaches young athletes.

And yet, during the Games, the television will likely be off. "I don't think I can handle watching," says Fyodorov.

Russian officials and the media widely celebrated the International Olympic Committee's decision on Sunday not to impose a blanket ban on the Russian team. But for track-and-field athletes, it dealt a final blow to their lifelong dream of participating in the Olympics.

The IOC left it up to individual international federations to decide whether or not Russian athletes would be allowed to compete within their disciplines. In the case of Russian athletics, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) had already made that call in June, when it ruled to uphold a competition ban. With less than two weeks to go until the Olympics kick off, the road to Rio was closed.

First, there was relief.

"When you're always waiting for something, it becomes difficult to sleep," 25-year-old Fyodorov says in a conversation over Skype several days after the IOC's ruling. "But when I heard their decision, poof! I felt an instant wave of tiredness wash over me," he says.

That night, he slept deeper than he had in months.

"Thanks for the Funeral"

Ever since Russian track-and-field athletes were banned from competition following damning allegations by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) of an alleged state-sponsored system to cover up widespread doping, their lives have been dominated by one question: Would the ban

be lifted in time for the Rio Olympics?

The answer always seemed just one ruling away. First came the IAAF's decision in June to keep in place the ban first imposed late last year. It left only a narrow window open for athletes who had lived and trained abroad and so could prove they had not been "tainted" by Russia's alleged doping culture. In practice, it meant that only long jumper Daria Klishina qualified. Other athletes like Fyodorov didn't stand a chance.

"We should've all quickly jumped into a time machine, traveled back to 2014, then moved abroad and spent two years there. Then we would have been allowed to compete," says Fyodorov, with more than a hint of cynicism.

A collective appeal from Russian athletes at the Lausanne Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to contest the IAAF ban brought little change. On July 21, the court rejected the challenge, crushing the hopes of 67 athletes.



MICHAEL DALDER / REUTERS

"Thanks for the funeral," celebrated pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva was reported as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

Meanwhile, athletes' prospects took a further nosedive with WADA's latest report. Independent commissioner Richard McLaren confirmed the involvement of top Russian sports officials and said the cover-up had been applied across Russian sport for years. International sports officials were now calling for a blanket ban.

"We understood that it was all going downhill," says Fyodorov. "You just wondered: when is it going to finally end?"

When it did end, on July 24, with the decision of the IOC, Russian sports officials were visibly relieved at having narrowly avoided an Olympic disaster.

Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said he was "grateful" for the IOC's "distinction between collective responsibility and the rights of concrete athletes." Other than Russia's weightlifters — which, like track-and-field athletes have been mired in allegations of doping — Mutko said he was "absolutely sure" most of Russia's Olympic team would qualify.

But the jubilation might have come too soon. In its ruling, the IOC said rules would be extra stringent: No Russian who had ever been handed a doping violation should be allowed to compete, even if they had served their sanction. That rule's first victim was Yulia Stepanova, the Russian whistleblower who played a key role in uncovering the extent of the doping and then fled to the United States.

More exclusions have followed: Since Sunday, at least 37 Olympic hopefuls have been suspended by their respective federations.

A two-time Olympic medalist in the pole vault, Yelena Isinbayeva said on Instagram after the IOC ruling: "No one fought for or defended my rights."



"We are grateful. We understand the complexity the IOC was facing."
Vitaly Mutko on decision to leave bans to International Federations.

Aug. 5

Starting date of the Rio Olympics



So far, suspensions have included Russian heavyweight lifters, swimmers and kayakers. Star tennis player Maria Sharapova will also be absent from the Games over a meldonium suspension.

40

could be the final number of Russian athletes at Rio, according to The Telegraph.



That includes seven Russian swimmers, one of whom is Yulia Yefimova, who twice failed a doping test. Yefimova has since vowed to appeal the ban at CAS.

Meanwhile, Russian track-and-field athletes can only watch from the sidelines and sigh: They know what it feels like.

Cracks Appear

A spokesperson for the Russian Athletic Federation (RusAF) said athletes were too upset to comment. "It's hard enough as it is," she said. But their despair has trickled through in media reports and on social media.

"I can't imagine how to continue living," Yevgeny Trofimov, the coach of two-time Olympic medalist Yelena Isinbayeva told the R-sport website. "Our hopes for the triumph of common sense have been buried."

The double response — jubilation from officials and despair among athletes — has, for the first time, revealed cracks in the country's common front of defiance. Athletes are angry, including at their own government.

"Our defense was weak, I would say absent," said Isinbayeva, who would have been an Olympic medal contender and has until now been unwavering in her patriotism. "No one fought for and defended my rights," she said on Instagram.

Her trainer later clarified: "She was surprised at the [Russian] leadership's reaction to the IOC decision. They held up their hands and that's it," he told Sports.ru.

In a rare display of public criticism, Fyodorov goes a step further. "Our own leadership, our officials, have really let us down. The blame lies with them," he said. "It is because of them that this scandal erupted. They didn't do enough to get us to the Games."

Fyodorov is also not sure anything is being done to seriously reform sport to give him a shot at resuming his career. Like most Russian athletes, the triple jumper says he never witnessed any doping practices. He has a clean record. But the endless reports and allegations of the past months, including detailed allegations of the involvement of Russia's Sports Ministry, have made him question his assumptions about his country. "Where there is smoke, there is fire," he says.

His distrust doesn't only extend to Russian officials. The IAAF used to be "something higher, something holy," to him, he says. But he no longer knows whether athletics officials

"There will be athletes who have used doping from Russia in Rio," former Russian Anti-Doping Agency official Vitaly Stepanov told the BBC.

are on his side. The same applies to WADA. Lately he's been unable to shake a feeling of fear, bordering on paranoia, that something could happen with samples taken from him which are now in the agency's custody.

"It's as if there's an inquisition going on, not to help honest athletes but, above all, to castigate dirty ones," he says. "If they can punish me now, even though I've never violated doping rules, could they also try to punish me by taking my sample and tampering with it? I just can't shake this feeling of fear that someone could set me up," he says, the concern visible on his face. "I am just a pawn and they could break my fate just like that."

Fighting Spirit

RusAF has organized a tournament at a central Moscow stadium for those left behind. The defiantly named "Stars of 2016" tournament starts on July 28. Most of Russia's track-and-field team will attend — if only to distract themselves from the harsh reality.

"Training has become my panacea," says Fyodorov. Following the IOC's decision, there was a moment of silence at home. Then, he says, his father, and coach, looked him in the eyes and said in a clear, determined voice: "Our work is going to continue."

Even without the Olympics, there are many international tournaments to train for. And when the moment comes that

Seven Russian swimmers have been suspended by the international federation. Breaststroke specialist Yulia Yefimova has vowed to appeal the ban.



ELAINE THOMPSON / AP

Russian athletes will be allowed back on the track, he wants to be ready.

He is scared of what he will find, fearing Russian athletes won't be able to shake off the shroud of suspicion even if the IAAF's ban is lifted. "I imagine that moment when I finally step out onto the field," he says. "And I really fear that people will start hissing and yelling unpleasant things from the tribunes, just because of the colors of my flag."

It is at moments like those that he draws inspiration from his city, he says. Smolensk suffered huge losses during several wars, including World War II, but its residents pride themselves on their resilience.

"An unbending spirit will overcome anything," he says, citing the city's motto. Even, his eyes seem to say, the largest doping scandal in history. **TMT**

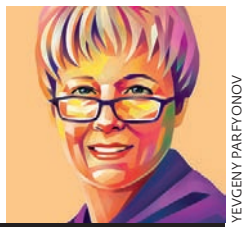
THE WORD'S WORTH

Close, But No Cigar

Эффективный: showy

By Michele A. Berdy

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



YEVGENY PARYONOV

As I was listening to a radio show about the customs of official charged with corruption, I heard one of those great Russian language distinctions. Discussing a film clip of said official standing in his closet by piles of cash, the host asked an expert guest if this was a good way to fight corruption. Ну, я бы сказал — не эффективный, а эффектный. (Well, I'd say not so much effective as ... effective?)

Ah, my favorite Russian mind-bender: Paronyms.

Paronyms are words that derived from the same root word but have different meanings. They can be hard to catch — you have to listen very closely. They are also sometimes difficult to define and often miserable to translate.

In this case, it's not hard to translate эффективный if you just forget how much it sounds like English. It really means: showy, creating an effect. So the guest said that Operation Cash Closet was not an effective way to deal with corruption, but was just for show. But of course, you lose the nice rhetorical device of near repetition: эффективный — эффектный.

Learn a couple of these and you'll sound smart and even poetic. For example, here's a lovely distinction: автобиографический and автобиографичный, easily recognized as autobiographical. But the first one refers to something that is totally an autobiography: Эта автобиографическая книга, не шахматная, но шахматы пронизывают ее насквозь (The book is an autobiography, not a chess book, but chess pervades it.) The second refers to something that has elements of autobiography, uses some aspects of the author's life, but is not a strict autobiography: Сцена знакомства Мастера и Маргариты автобиографична — не столько в событийном, сколько в психологическом аспекте (The scene where the Master and Margarita meet was taken in part from real life — not so much the events as the psychological aspects of it.)

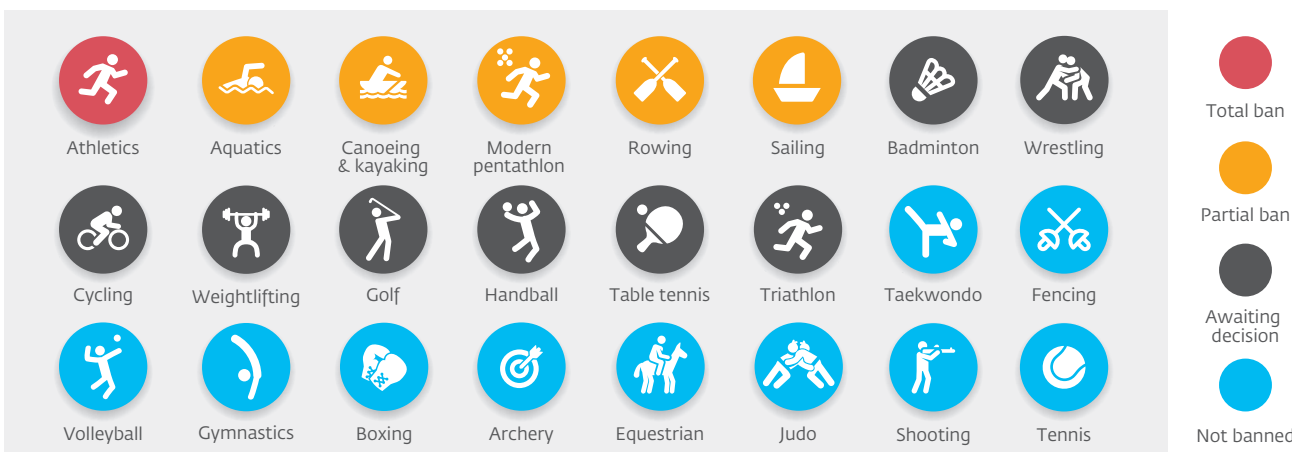
Or take благотворительный and благотворный. They both come from the root благо, which means a blessing, a benefit, or the common good. But one word means actions to aid those in need, and the other means actions that are useful and have a positive influence. Каждый месяц она едет в метро и получает продуктовый паек в благотворительной американской организации (Every month she takes the metro to get a food ration at an American charitable organization.) Умеренные физические нагрузки и здоровое питание благотворно влияют на здоровье (Moderate physical exercise and a healthy diet are beneficial to health.)

I like the paronyms that make a distinction between doing something and having something done, like малопонятливый and малопонятный. Once again, it's easy to see the root words embedded in these near twins: мало (little) and понять (to understand). But the first is a person who understands little, and the second is a thing that can be little understood. That is, the first is someone who doesn't have the sense God gave a goose, and the second is a text or statement that doesn't make much sense. So you might say: Не то что студент малопонятливый, а текст малопонятный (It's not that the student is dimwitted, it's that the text doesn't make much sense.)

For your linguistic pleasure, there are even paronymous verbs, like толстить and толстеть. The first makes you fat or look fat; the second is you getting fat. Я не толстею! Просто эта юбка меня толстит. (I'm not gaining weight. This skirt just makes me look fat.)

Very useful distinctions. **TMT**

Russian athletes' Rio Olympics status as of July 27



Source: Sports' governing bodies

Tips for Life

The Moscow Times
No. 5765

Advice, answers and
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CULTURE

Can you help me understand Anna Karenina?

TMT: You mean understand the motivations and behavior of one of Leo Tolstoy's most complex and passionate protagonists? That's rather a tall ask. Pass.

What we can help you with is navigating the often confusing world of the 19th century Russian novel.

First off, why does everyone have so many names?

Let's take Kitty, the young debutante who becomes Levin's wife, as an example. Formally known as Princess Yekaterina Alexandrovna Shcherbatskaya — try and say that in a hurry — Kitty can be alternately Princess Shcherbatskaya, Kitty, Katya or

Yekaterina depending on who's speaking where.

It gets even more confusing when diminutives — used to express fondness — don't seem to fit with their name at all. Prince Stepan Arkadyevich Oblonsky becomes "Stiva" while his wife Princess Darya Alexandrovna Oblonskaya becomes "Dolly" around friends and family.

The rule is that in society, when characters are referring to one another in polite terms, they may either use a character's title and surname — "Prince Vronsky" — or by their first name and patronymic — Darya Alexandrovna. Characters will use diminutives when friendly or family members.

This dismembering and reassembling of names may be a total pain when you're trying to work out who's saying what to whom, but it provides a useful insight into character's relations with one another and the outside world. So pay attention.

Next off, why are there so many princes and princesses?

This is actually an easy one. Reserving the title of prince or princess for the son

or daughter of a king is a very British tradition. Across different world cultures it generally indicates a high rank of nobility, such as a duke/duchess or count/countess.

Князь and the female equivalent княгиня are generally translated as prince and princess in Russian novels — the highest rank that can be held by a noble who is not a member of the imperial family. One can become a princess by marrying a prince, but if you're not a prince and you marry a princess you'll still be untitled. Got it?

You may think you've got a handle on things until all of a sudden everyone starts speaking French. Confusion abounds. You double-check you're reading Tolstoy and not Victor Hugo. You download a dictionary app and try to understand what on earth is going on.

There's a relatively straightforward explanation. French was the language of the Russian court, and many high-society families also used it as the language for their personal relations with one another. In fact some upper class Russians could barely speak their native language at all.

While French demonstrated their nobility, it also allowed them to speak freely about personal matters in front of their domestic staff without the worry of being overheard. Did you notice that Vronsky is always talking to Anna in French? Partially because that was the norm but also because it was a useful way of planning a lovers' tryst in front of the footman.

Tolstoy's use of French in Anna Karenina is interesting. Some of the more superficial characters like Countess Lidia Ivanovna and Countess Vronsky are shown to prefer speaking in French — a possible hint by Tolstoy at their vapid and frivolous natures. Tolstoy seems to insinuate that the more "morally loose" characters have become too westernized — hence their love of the Gallic tongue. Meanwhile, Levin feels using French is a rejection of the nobility's Russian heritage and expresses confusion at Dolly talking to her children in the language.

More confused than when you started reading this? Promise us you'll stay away from train stations for the rest of the day.

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All Singing, All Dancing Multimedia Show Beneath Moscow's Iconic Cathedral

By [Andrei Muchnik](#) artsreporter@imedia.ru

When you hear mention of a show at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the ill-fated performance by Pussy Riot in 2012 can't help but come to mind. But it turns out there is an entirely different concert venue called the Church Council Hall located below the main cathedral's building. Start your adventure into the world of the Russian arts from the embankment entrance.

Its offering this summer is an innovative folk art production with the unlikely name "Trinity. History Alive." Don't worry, you won't be fed propaganda — either political or religious. The multimedia show gives you a space to learn about or revisit Russia's traditions of fine art, music and dancing — to the backdrop of animated masterpieces by Kustodiev,

Repin, Kuindzhi, Polenov, Levitan and other Russian masters from the collections of the Tretyakov State Gallery.

Through song and dance you're taken on a whirlwind tour of Russia's cultural heritage, aided by over 300 tailor-made costumes in traditional Russian styles from ages past. Some of Russia's best ensembles have come along for the ride, with participating groups including the State Academic Orchestra of Soloists "Russkiye Uzory," the State Music and Dance Ensemble "Sadko," the Moscow State Dance Ensemble "Russkiye Sezony," and the Sudakov Moscow State Choir.

On the program are works from some of Russia's best know composers including Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Rachmani-

nov, Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Schnittke. The campanile of Kolokola Rossiye (Bells of Russia) ensemble appear on stage at one point to demonstrate their traditional flat bells, used as bass instruments in the performance. If the show hasn't satiated your thirst for Russian culture, head upstairs to the dining chambers to sample some traditional Russian food. It's the perfect cultural pick if you have guests visiting for the weekend or are simply looking for something fun and fancy free this summer. **TMT**

Church Council Hall

15 Ulitsa Volkhonka
Metro Kropotkinskaya
Through Aug. 28
Tickets 1,000 rubles (\$16)

Top Picks for the Weekend and Beyond



PETROVSKY PALACE

Petrovsky Palace Concerts

Opera under the Stars

On Wednesday evenings for the rest of the summer — and perhaps into September if the weather is cooperative — the Petrovsky Palace is hosting open-air concerts by the stars of the Bolshoi Theater. The Palace, a round neo-gothic brick and stonework castle that was once on the outskirts of the city, was built in 1780 as a luxurious rest stop for monarchs. The royal families traveling from St. Petersburg would stop here to refresh themselves before their ceremonial entrance into Moscow and the Kremlin. A part of the Air Force Engineering Academy in the Soviet period, it is now part of the Moscow city administration and an event venue, with a hotel and restaurant. Opera Wednesdays begin at 7 p.m. with champagne and snacks followed by the concert at 8 p.m. It's pricey at nearly 5,000 rubles a ticket, but the setting and singers are a rare pleasure.

Petrovsky Palace

petroffpalace.mos.ru

40 Leningradsky Prospekt. Metro Dinamo



VDNKH

Theater, Dance and Music Festival at VDNKh

Quirky celebration of the arts

This weekend "Vdokhnoveniye" (Inspiration) festival kicks off at VDNKh. Last year the event attracted more than five million spectators and with American guitar virtuoso Steve Vai and Finnish band Apocalyptica confirmed for this year, it's set to be bigger and better than ever before. Each day of the festival is dedicated to a different art: theater, dance and music. Visitors can visit sets, watch performances, participate in flash mobs and enjoy a huge closing concert on Monday night.

VDNKh

vdnh.ru/events/razvlecheniya/festival-vdokhnovenie-2016/

199 Prospekt Mira. Metro VDNKh
July 30–Aug. 1

Laughter Wellness Workshop

Laughology teacher training

All the smog getting you down? Have an interest in therapeutic practices but want to learn

something new? Sebastien Gendry, the creator of the Laughter Wellness method, will be running the first ever Laughter Wellness teacher training workshop in Moscow this weekend. Having starred on the Oprah Winfrey Show Sebastien is now out to bring the untapped force of side-splitting laughter to Russia. Corporate sessions will be available over the weekend — contact the organizer for pricing. The event is being organized by Moscow-based Rita Rozenal, herself a laughologist

+7 (926) 375 7002

ritarozental.wix.com/rita-rozenal
Workshop runs July 30-31



AFISHA PICNIC

Afisha Picnic

Dance until you drop

Summertime institution Afisha Picnic comes to Moscow this Saturday. A one-day music festival that takes place in the beautiful grounds of Kolomeskoye park — a former tsar's estate — headliners this year include English electronic music duo The Chemical Brothers and Russian rockers Leningrad. Watch out for Benjamin

Clementine, who went from busking in the Paris metro to winning the prestigious Mercury prize last year. Tickets cost 4,000 rubles.

Kolomenskoye Park

picnic.afisha.ru

39 Prospekt Andropova. Metro Kolomenskaya
July 30

Movie Night at Muzeon

Before there were talkies

During August Muzeon Arts Park will continue its tradition of showing silent films with new musical accompaniment provided by musicians from Russia and abroad. This year celebrates the avant-garde, beginning on Aug. 2 with "Storm Over Asia" (also called "The Heir to Genghis Khan") directed in 1928 by Vsevolod Pudovkin and based on a script by Osip Brik and Ivan Novokshonov. And the program ends with the rarely shown "A Kiss From Mary Pickford," made in 1927 by Soviet director Sergei Komarov with cameo appearances by Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, who were visiting the Soviet Union. Among the accompanists will be the Swedish group Nacka Forum, Umberto from the United States, as well as Russian musicians Holypalms, Kate NV and Foresteppe. The performances begin at 9 p.m. on Tuesday evenings.

Muzeon Arts Park

muzeon.ru

2 Krymsky Val
Metro Park Kultury, Oktyabrskaya