

The university campus in Moscow through years: diversity in transformation

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Hypothesis:

The remains of 'Friendship of Nations' policy can be used to create a cosmopolitan canopy (a place that provides an opportunity for diverse strangers to come together and be exposed to each other).



The Moscow university campus
"Moscow made us friends"

Abstract:

In my research, I focused on a very specific and special place within Moscow, the campus of the People's Friendship University of Russia. In the USSR, it was a physical topos, real-life implementation of 'Friendship of Nations' policy; foreign students came here to study in Moscow and then left. Today, it has turned into a neighborhood with shops, cafes and restaurants where Russians are technically able to come. By observing the activities within this area, I looked at the interaction of two concepts: the "Friendship of Nations" policy and some characteristics of the cosmopolitan canopy. Taking into account the high level of intolerance in Moscow and the fact that in the nearest future a lot of newcomers will arrive here, the transformation experience of the campus can be used to understand how to create in Moscow a less hostile environment toward ethnic difference and build a functioning model of a multicultural community.

My research is divided into two parts. In the first part, I traced back the history to understand the effect of the Friendship of Nations policy on the idea of ethnicity in the USSR and how it influenced today's situation. In the second part, I am focusing on Moscow as the geographical center of this policy and observing the area of campus that reveals the interaction between the remains of the Soviet past and the conception of the so-called cosmopolitan canopy.

Part I Diversity under control: 'Friendship of Nations' policy in the USSR

My historical research was aimed at analyzing how the Soviet ethnical policy was created. To understand this, I traced back to Stalin's 'Friendship of Nations' concept, which was introduced in 1938. This concept was the basis of the official policy regarding ethnic difference within the Soviet Union from 1938 until it collapsed in 1991.

According to ethnologist Sergei Sokolovski's essay *Structures of Russian political discourse on nationality problems*,

“the term ‘nation’ itself is interpreted in Russian academic, political, and public realms exclusively as ethnic nation. The concept still bears the stamp of Stalin’s definition of a nation as a community of people with objective characteristics (common territory, economy, language, and phisic organization)”¹ .

¹Sokolovski S., *Structures of Russian political discourse on nationality problems*.-M.:1997.-P.6.

In comparison with western European countries where all people are first regarded as citizens of the state and only then ethnic characteristics such as language, culture and traditions follow, in Russia first part is somehow missing. This fact breeds the danger of using ethnic differences to explain reasons why someone does not like the behavior of other people. But ethnicity cannot be changed, it can be only accepted or expelled. So, such an interpretation creates the basis for the intolerant attitude towards ethnic difference. This lack of political nation concept in modern Russia marks the fact that the latter is still not a nation state per se. I would like to present as an example a recent incident in Chelyabinsk, a Russian city in the Urals, which shows very well the fact that ethnicity is often used to explain behavior. The police asked the director of lyceum 31 to provide information about those students who originate from the Caucasus in order to arrange “preventive anti-criminal measures”. The director refused, answering that they ‘only have one ethnicity at their school which is math’. This request contradicts Article 26 of the Russian Federation Constitution that declares that Russian citizens cannot be forced to show their ethnicity and they have the right to decline to disclose this information².

²Ria.ru, Скандал вокруг запроса об учениках-кавказцев в Челябинске (23.05.2012)

Introducing the new principle 'Friendship of nations', Stalin was aiming to replace the old concept of the family of nations with a new one. It was done in several ways. First, according to the fact that during Soviet times it was obligatory for every person to belong to any ethnicity officially approved by the Communist party, the ethnicity could be easily replaced if it did not match the official list.

Moreover, national identity was not something flexible. The social life of the Soviet person depended on what ethnicity he or she belonged to. It was obligatory to point out your ethnicity in all documents (ID, military card, employment record book and even the school class register). At the same time, there was no freedom of choice in this field. According to the resolution of the NKVD enacted on April 2, 1938, ethnicity was inherited strictly from parents.

It led to doubled-sided phenomena: some people tried to hide their ethnicity to escape persecution (for example, Germans and Greeks were regarded as enemies of the state because potentially they could have links with western capitalist countries); other people were resisting the Soviet power by fighting for their national identity.



A military card; a birth certificate, source: www.caraimica.org

Thus, in contrast to the nation-state model, Stalin's ethnic policy was an example of the imperial model that implied non-flexible links to ethnicity (or religion as it was in Imperial Russia). According to historian Terry Martin's book 'The Affirmative Action Empire'¹, the Soviet model was unique in the sense that it supported ethnic minorities' interests such as national cultures and traditions even more than Russians'. It contributed to the development of non-political components of ethnic minorities' national identities. At the same time, national elites were suppressed if their actions were aimed at promoting their national interests more than state interests. So,

¹Martin, Terry. The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939. Cornell University Press, 2001

ethnic minorities were forced to look different but not to think different.

Second, creation of the Soviet "Family of Nations" involved dismantling and restructuring existing families and cultures. This dismantling process involved physical, social and psychological violence. According to the NKVD act enacted in 1937, children of three to 15 years of age whose parents were imprisoned were sent to state-run orphanages. Children who were 15-years-old and above were sent to camps. They usually were given new names.

Third, people were replaced physically. There were several stages of the so-called forced migration that was aimed at national minorities living at the border areas of the USSR such as Baltic people, Western Ukrainians and Byelorussians, Finns, Poles, Caucasus people and Koreans among others. These border peoples were classified as potential "enemies of the state." Border "cleanup" operations were held in 1931-38, 1940-41, 1941-45 and 1947-52. According to the information that I received from 'Memorial', an organization that is dealing with Stalin's terror, in total about 2.8 million people were replaced during these years². People were expelled from their native lands and sent to very remote, under-populated areas such as Western Siberia, the Far East and the Soviet Asian republics. The national communities were also split into many smaller parts and dispersed over the whole country. Due to the inhuman deportation conditions a lot of people died or if they stayed alive during the trip people could die because they were not able to adapt to the new way of living. For instance, if according to the All-Union Census in 1939 there were 143,432 Finns in the USSR, by 1959 their population had decreased drastically to 97,717. At the same time, in place of the deported nations the empty regions were inhabited by the Red Army. So-called 'Red Army kolkhozes' appeared on the border areas of the USSR.

² Полян Павел, Не по своей воле: история и география принудительных миграций в Советском Союзе - М.: О.Г.И., Мемориал, 2001.

What was the place of Russian nationality within the Soviet state?

Did Russians have any privileges in comparison to other Soviet nations? Answering these questions I took into account the well-known fact that until 1990 the Russian Soviet Republic was the only Soviet republic that did not have its own representative institute. It is often used to prove the opinion that Russians were more suppressed than other peoples in the USSR. But there were reasons not to create a Russian Communist party. According to the book *140 talks with Molotov*, Vyacheslav Molotov said, "We did not forget to create the Communist party of RSFSR. There was no place for it"³.

³ Чуев Феликс, Сто сорок бесед с Молотовым: Из дневника Ф. Чуева - М.: ТЕПРА, 1991, с. 268.

¹Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Cornell University Press, 2001

How could it happen? We should trace back to Lenin's policy regarding ethnic difference that was aimed at suppressing "Russian great-power chauvinism." Lenin's goal was to redress the ills of Russian imperialism, increase equality among nations, and prevent future dominance of the Russian Soviet Republic in the USSR. The policy implied creating more and more nationalities within the Soviet Union and giving them representative rights. In the 1930s, Stalin turned from this utopian model to the policy of national consolidation. It led to a decrease in the number of officially recognized nationalities in the USSR from 200 in 1926 to 60 in 1939. And if in 1933 there were 5,300 national selsoviets (local national minorities' representative institution) in 1940 the Soviet of Nationalities was the only institution representing national minorities' interests. Today, historians describe the policy of national consolidation as the "Russification" policy¹.

² Учительская газета, 4 августа 1938 г

Conducting repressive policy against national minorities in border areas, Stalin needed the strong center he could rely on to build his system. According to all political rhetoric from those times, 'Russia is the first among equals' and the Russian Soviet republic was put above other nations in the USSR. Russian language was the only official language obligatory for all Soviet peoples. In 1938, the *Uchitel'skaya* newspaper wrote that 'the great Russian language of Lenin and Stalin, Pushkin and Herzen...is close to all Soviet people'².

So Stalin's 'Friendship of Nations' policy was aimed at creating a strong Russian center. But here it is also important to stress what 'Russian' meant:



G. Myasodeev, *Zemstvo is having lunch*

While old pre-revolutionary "Russianness" was suppressed,



E. Arczhynyan, *March ahead, Komsomol tribe!*

a new idea of Russians as the leaders of the Soviet state lay at the core of the Soviet Union's nation-building project.

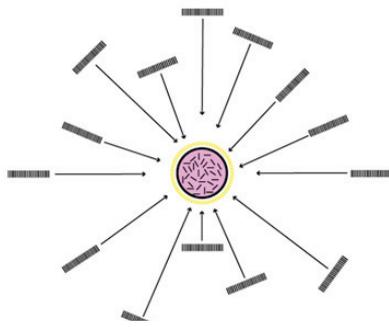
In this way, the Russian Soviet Republic did not need any local representative institution; it got the right to satisfy Russian national interest at the larger scale, within the entire USSR.

Thus, in the USSR the "Soviet" nationality idea coexisted with the strong idea of ethnicity, so that the state consisted not of citizens (nationals) but of ethnical nations – which is of course very coherent with the aforementioned empire model of nationality. At the same time, the Soviet policy regarding ethnic difference was based on the idea of Russian nation's central place within the Soviet state while some of ethnic minorities such as Germans, Finns, Greeks and Caucasus peoples were regarded as the 'enemy of the state'. Several generations of Soviet people were brought up with this idea.

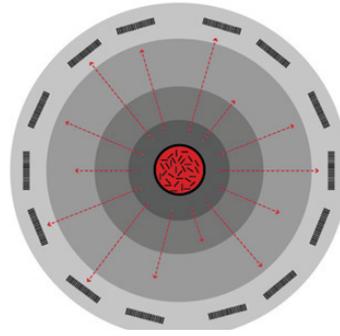
Moscow as the geographical center of 'Friendship of Nations' policy

Within the Soviet system, Moscow was the geographical center of the 'Friendship of Nations' policy. This fact bred the Moscow paradox. On one hand, as 'the heart of the USSR' and headquarters of the Communist party, Moscow was the center from which other republics were kept under tight control. On the other hand, in some cases for ethnic minorities' representatives Moscow was regarded as being more liberal than other cities in the USSR. In Moscow, some ethnic minorities felt that they had more freedom and that they could escape from potential persecution in their native republics.

The Soviet Moscow Paradox



The multinational community



The center of the authoritarian state

According to Ukrainian poet and public figure Pavlo Movchana, “as a famous proverb says ‘In Moscow they cut your nails but in Kiev, they cut the finger.’ [In Soviet times] I published all my main articles in Moscow because in Kiev everything was under total control...”¹

Ukrainian historian Andrei Portnov gave some other examples of the paradox.² In his lecture about Soviet Ukrainian historiography, he points out a very interesting fact: in 1957 an academic periodical titled *The History of Ukraine* was published. In the same year *The History of the USSR* appeared. It is notable that in contrast to other Soviet republics *The History of Russia* was never published; “Russian” was always equal to “Soviet”. What is more, as was the case with the Russian Communist Party, which was only created in 1993, there was also no Russian Academy of Science – unlike the Ukrainian Academy of Science or similar institutions in other Soviet republics. The Soviet Academy of Science aimed to represent the interests of Russian academic communities within the state. In this context, Andrei Portnov also speaks about some facts that prove the Soviet Moscow Paradox.

Despite the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s there was tough pressure on dissidents in Moscow and Leningrad, so much so that some of them were forced to leave cities to escape from different kinds of repressions (for example, Soviet writer Sergei Dovlatov left Leningrad for Tallinn, the capital of the Estonian Soviet republic to find more freedom there), there were examples showing that dissidents from other Soviet republics could do things in Moscow that were impossible to do in their native republics. Mykola Kovalsky, a Soviet and Ukrainian historian, could not defend his thesis in either Kiev or Lvov because he was regarded as a ‘bourgeois nationalist’ there. At the same time, he could do it in Moscow.

Dnepropetrovsk, a city in Ukraine, was a closed city because of the fact that there was a university there specializing in educating experts for the space industry. Due to the fact that in the USSR everything that had connections with the defense industry was declared to be closed, scientific work within the university was controlled by Moscow directly. The university even had its own publishing house independent from the Kiev bureaucracy. So, this separation helped some scientists to publish their books there, while Kiev publishing houses, for example, could have easily forbidden publication of these books. For example, for Mykola Kovalsky (who was already mentioned him above) it was only possible to publish his works about Ukrainian history in Dnepropetrovsk due to the city's direct connections with Moscow. In other Ukrainian publishing houses, there was a directive to establish a list of the forbidden authors and words that were regarded as ‘bourgeois nationalist’. According to this list, Mykola Kovalsky could not publish anything in Ukraine. So,

ethnic minorities’ representatives who were regarded to be dissidents in their native republics because of Moscow repressive policy came to Moscow to escape from this policy.

¹ Шкода Оксана, «Сегодня студенты не учатся, а проходят курс лекций», «Между строк: всеукраинский общественно-политический еженедельник» (<http://mezdustrok.com.ua/content/segodnya-studenty-ne-uchatsya-prohodyat-kurs-lekciy>)

² Портнов Андрей, О советской историографии по-украински, видео. Сайт Ab Imperio, 28.10.2011 (<http://net.abimperio.net/node/2215>)

Post-Soviet era

After the collapse of the USSR, the part of the Moscow paradox that held Soviet Moscow together as a multi-ethnic, international center disappeared; Moscow stopped being an authoritarian control center for all Soviet republics and could not control them anymore. At the same time, the second part depicting Moscow as a multinational community stayed in place; the new Moscow became more open and gave more chances for people to come here. It led to the fact that

the paradox transformed into a new anxiety:
now the question was: “Who is a real
Muscovite”.

¹ «Москвичи хотят избирать мэра самостоятельно - опрос жителей столицы о проблемах города, борьбе с пробками и некоторых инициативах С. Собянина». Пресс-выпуск «Левада-Центра» 23.11.2011 (<http://www.levada.ru/23-11-2011/moskvichi-khotyat-izbirat-mera-samostoyatelno-opros-zhitelei-stolitsy-o-problemax-goroda>)

² Анна Софронова, Путин предложил ввести уголовную ответственность за отсутствие регистрации, RB.ru, 28.12.2010 (<http://www.rb.ru/article/putin-predlozil-vvesti-ugolovnyu-otvetstvennost-za-otsutstvie-registratsii/6616967.html>)

³ «Путин: жесткий ответ "вызывающему поведению" мигрантов», Русская служба BBC, 23.01.2012 (http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2012/01/120122_putin_migration_issues_article.shtml)

Today creating ‘we are Muscovites’ by eliminating ethnic difference consolidates people to confront the external threat such as migration – notably including migration from the ethnically different regions of Russia. According to the sociological survey made by the Levada-center in October-November 2011, Muscovites stressed the increasing amount of migrants from Caucasus and Central Asia as the main city problem of their concern.¹

Intolerance toward newcomers is supported by officials and the overall attitude toward otherness. The migration policy is aimed at not supporting or at least tolerating migrants but at fighting “illegal migration”, which in most cases includes absolutely legal immigration from ethnically different regions of the same country. For example, in 2010 Putin proposed to introduce criminal liability for absence of registration.² In 2012, he repeated it in his pre-election statement.³

Due to repressive registration policy it is more complicated for migrants to work and live here legally. The existence of labor and part-time residence quotas in Moscow feeds corruption. The following example illustrates the fact that officials are interested in preserving this policy. According to information that I obtained in an interview with human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina, the founder of NGO ‘Grazhdanskoe Sodeistvie’, in 2006 labor quotas were not abolished but extended to 6 million guest workers, and the number of illegal workers decreased tenfold due to the fact that the number of labor migrants was less than 2 million. But in 2007, the rules were tightened, spurring yet another increase in the levels of the illegal migration.

Speaking about the popular attitude toward newcomers, TV shows and movies often depict them in two ways: they are making jokes about them (such as the comedy TV show ‘Nasha Russia’) or show migrants in a negative way. This shot from Chlebnikov’s movie ‘Help gone mad’ about life in a Moscow microrayon shows today’s reality very well.

‘Nasha Russia’, a comic show on TNT channel

“Help gone mad’ by Boris Hlebnikov, 2009



Taking into account the intolerant attitude of Muscovites towards newcomers, the question is how to make Moscow a more open and friendly city. Here I am coming to the second part of my research where I focused on a very special area in the city, the campus of Russian Friendship of Nations University.

Part II

Diversity on its own: the university campus as a model of a modern cosmopolitan canopy

I chose this area to research the effect of the “Friendship of Nations” policy within the city. The campus was a physical topos, a real-life implementation of this policy. In Soviet times, it was just space for students from Third World countries who were invited to come to Moscow to study here for free. During the Cold War, the Soviet government was conducting policy aimed at educating the elite from Africa, Latin America and Asia to grow its own cadres loyal to the USSR. Students stayed in Moscow only for the time of their study and then they left. The campus was a place for them just to spend five to six years in Moscow. But now the situation has changed. The campus has turned into a real neighborhood where people are living their normal lives.

Researching the area, I made the hypothesis that the remains of 'Friendship of Nations' policy can be used to create a cosmopolitan canopy. I posed the following questions: What's left of the 'Friendship of Nations' policy here? How is this principle still working within the area (if it is still at work)? What new characteristics of the cosmopolitan canopy has the area acquired since the collapse of the USSR?

Before going further I want to explain what a cosmopolitan canopy is. According to social scientist Elijah Anderson's essay *The Cosmopolitan Canopy*, “urban public spaces of big cities have become more riven by issues of race, poverty and crime. In navigating such spaces, people often feign ignorance of the diverse mix of strangers they encounter. Yet there remain numerous and densely populated spaces within the city that provides an opportunity for people of different background to come together and be exposed to one another. People come to this neutral and cosmopolitan setting expecting diverse people to get along. And all strangers get an opportunity to express their own identities with respect to others present”.¹

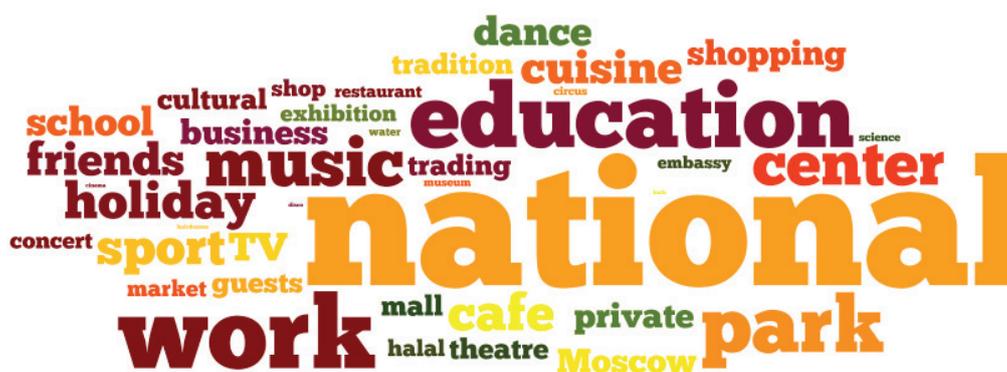
¹Anderson E., *The Cosmopolitan canopy*.- *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* September 2004 595., p.15.

So, if the campus has turned into a neighborhood with shops, cafes and restaurants where technically Russians are able to come, my intention was to look at the interaction of two concepts within this area – 'Friendship of Nations' traditions and some characteristics of the cosmopolitan canopy.

My methodology was observation and interviews with the residents of the area. I was observing the everyday activities within the campus to answer questions about who is a resident of this area, why people are coming here and what traditions from the Soviet past are still kept by the residents.

What defined my choice of activities? Besides the methodology proposed by Elijah Anderson in his essay, I also decided to analyze interviews that I made with the residents of the area and use the materials from *Bolshoi Gorod* magazine (the special edition dedicated to diasporas in Moscow) to understand the activities through which people are brought together, that lead to communication and collaboration among people of different social and ethnic backgrounds. So, I was looking at the activities that can create conditions for a cosmopolitan canopy to be established.¹

¹«Диапоры Москвы», «Большой город», 16.05.2012 (<http://www.bg.ru/diaspora/>)



The campus

My acquaintance with the area started from the special event that is a continuity of the Friendship of Nations traditions. I came to the festival where students from different diaspora communities were representing their national cultures and traditions by selling national souvenirs, wearing traditional clothes, dancing and playing folk music. This tradition started in 1987 and since then has become an annual event. Each year in the beginning of May the university holds this event.

The festival is usually open to outsiders and attracts a lot of people not from the university. This year the festival was dedicated to May 9. Victory Day celebrations contained the official part of the festival: students were giving flowers to veterans, singing war-time songs and dancing war-time dances. That is why most of outsiders were veterans and journalists. While observing the area, I witnessed how journalists were taking the interviews. Coming from the idea that their main goal was to show the atmosphere of 'Friendship of Nations', they were making reportages depicting foreign students in national clothes saying that they “love Moscow very much”

Photos of guests and participants that were taken during the festival



At the same time, students and their guests were enjoying themselves without paying any attention to what was going on at the main scene. The atmosphere was very warm and friendly and it was no problem to make new friends. I met people from Syria, Colombia, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, other Russian cities and Moscow. Sunnat, a student from Uzbekistan, told me that he usually comes here to take pictures of the festival. He also told me that almost all foreign students belong to their diaspora communities. For them this is a good tool of integration into the city life:

I don't belong to my Uzbek diaspora. I think it is amorphous. But, for example, for students from the Caucasus it is almost obligatory to be together with their diaspora. There are many different Caucasus communities within the university. The Kazakstani diaspora is also very big. But they are not present here at the festival. Here there are only more 'exotic' diasporas from African, Latin American and Asian countries.

In this way, the festival keeps the tradition but does not reflect the true image of the university and the area.

Besides dancing and playing folk music, the main activity during the festival bringing people together was trading. Trading as an activity is widely present within this area.

After the collapse of the USSR the university administration has started to rent out the spaces inside the campus for shops, cafes and etc. to private people.

These people are usually graduates from the university who stayed in Moscow and decided to launch their own business.

There is a famous shop of Indian spices inside the campus. I came here at two o'clock in the afternoon, and it was full of people, not students, who were buying Indian food and cosmetics. A shop assistant named Begainym told me that the shop was opened 15 years ago. The owner of the shop is an alumnus from India. Begainym came from Kyrgyzstan, and now she is working in the shop but next year she is planning to enter the university. I was also told that besides Indian food within the campus there is a shop of souvenirs and clothes from Peru in the basement of one of the buildings and a kiosk with traditional Syrian deserts and spices.

The campus is also famous by its variety of cafes and restaurants with different national cuisines from Lebanon, India, China etc. It is a good example of the cosmopolitan canopy. There are always people here regardless of the time. They are not only students; there are a lot of Muscovites who are coming because of the prices and the tasty food. All these cafes within the campus differ from other Moscow cafes specializing in Asian or Arabic food, not only because of the cheap prices that allow a greater variety of people to come but also by the fact that they do not translate their food tradition specially for visitors. It means that they are cooking their national cuisines according to their recipes not adapting them to the Russian food tradition. But what is most famous here is a waterpipe that sells for only for 300 rubles (in comparison with other prices in Moscow of around 800 rubles, it is too cheap) but is of high quality. It attracts a lot of people to campus cafes. So, the cosmopolitan canopy works: people are coming to these cafes expecting diverse people to get along. While smoking the water pipe, for example, people are getting a chance to slowdown themselves, observing, and, in effect, doing their own folk ethnography with respect to others present. It can thus be a profoundly humanizing experience because people are inclined to express common civility in these places.



Photos that were taken in the Indian shop and different cafes in the campus

I met Nastya and Anya in the Beirut café. They are also students but from Moscow State Institute of International Affairs. They like coming here during their breaks between lectures to have lunch because it is of course cheap and tasty. Anya also spoke about the special atmosphere here:

We usually come to these cafes without men. But no one here is trying to pick us up, nobody's rude with us. The atmosphere is very friendly even despite the fact that the male population is dominating here. I like this area, it is funny here maybe because of the diversity of people.

Next to Beirut café there is a so-called 'Interclub', the Soviet heritage within the campus. It is like Dom Kultury (House of Culture during Soviet times) where different cultural events are held such as the concert of Lebanese music or the week of Tanzanian culture, etc. I came here to visit the rehearsal of the ensemble called 'The Rhythms of Friendship'. The entrance is usually open to everyone; there were no problem to come in. On the ground floor, there were announcements about different activities that are taking place in the Interclub. I paid attention to the fact that not only students but also everyone who is interested in learning global folk dances is invited to dance here.

The Interclub (the first photo);
The ensemble in 1972 (the second photo);
The ensemble in 2012 (the third photo)



The ensemble was founded 40 years ago and has a long history. They were performing at all important stages of the USSR, including the State Kremlin Palace. I spoke with the head of the ensemble, Anastasia, who is also a PG student at the university:

We have 40 people in our ensemble. Maybe it is symbolic because we just celebrated the 40th anniversary. We don't have a lot of foreigners, about 10 people, mostly men. Foreign girls don't come to us to dance but I don't know why. I don't know how to explain this fact. But I don't think that it is because of the language. I remember one story when one foreign student came to us to dance but he didn't know Russian at all because he just came to Moscow. And once during the rehearsal he exclaimed: - Hurrah! I can understand you! I understand everything! So, the dance even helps in learning the language.

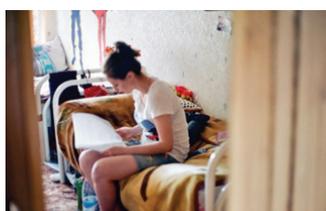
At the rehearsal I also met Katya who came from a small town in Moscow region and now lives on the campus and studies at the university. She brought me to her room in the student building to see the interior. She also told me about the housing policy:

Before entering the university some girls frightened me that it is not safe to live here in the campus with all these foreigners, especially they warned me about African guys as if they were raping Russian girls. I have been living here for six months and can say that all this gossip is nonsense. Even if someone wants to do any crime within the campus area it's impossible. Look around. Here there are video cameras everywhere, in streets and inside the buildings. Nothing can happen. And people are friendly here. Actually, we are forbidden to express any intolerance. You will be expelled from the university at once. But I don't know any such examples. I think if you entered this university you should understand that you are going to study with people of different nationalities.

In the room I'm living together with Russian girls but it is more an exception from the rule. In most cases students are mixed according to their nationalities as it was in the USSR. There should be someone who knows Russian to help foreigners learn the language I guess. But if you don't like your roommates it's possible to change rooms. But it's better if you are able to pay money. I'll explain. There are several types of student buildings depending on conditions. We should pay for staying here. For so-called barracks people are paying 700 rubles per year. I'm living in better conditions so I'm paying 4,000 rubles per month. The most expensive price is 5,000 rubles. So, if you are able to pay money you can move easily.

But not all rooms are for students. The administration rented out some rooms to families. It's cheaper for them than to rent a flat in any other Moscow district. Also it is comfortable to live here for families. It is safe and here we have everything so that you have no need to leave the campus unless you want to.

Katya in her room (the first photo);
The room for 700 rub per year (the second photo);
The campus at 5 p.m. on a week day (the third photo)



Here I also met people who came from the nearest microrayon that is connected with the campus by a park with a lake. This park is widely used by students, other residents of the campus and also by people from this microrayon. When one student from Guinea-Bissau was guiding me around the area we walked across the park. Students, young mums with their babies, old women and people with their dogs were walking around or sitting on benches. When I came there on Sunday everything was occupied by people who were doing barbeque, both students and the microrayon's residents. The lake is also widely used by everyone just to sit to read a book or to fish. So, this is also a good example of the cosmopolitan canopy, the notion of which I gave above.

Gaos, a student from Guinea-Bissau, spoke about the park as his favorite place in Moscow:

You know, Moscow is not a comfortable city, especially for a black guy. But this is my district. I feel safe here. Of course, Moscow is very big and a beautiful city but people still don't accept newcomers. You don't allow us to express ourselves. I don't like going by metro. Too many people. I prefer to stay here to watch TV or walk in the park. I'm walking around the park with my friends or with you now. It's beautiful and calm here.



Photos that were taken while walking around the park

When I crossed the park I discovered the school and several sport grounds that are also widely used both by students and the microrayon's residents. Sport is another activity that brings people together here. Sunnat, a student from Uzbekistan, told me:

We are doing a lot of sports here: football, volleyball, baseball, cricket, basketball, skiing and etc. Indians, for example, cannot live without the cricket, they playing it all the time. Arabs like trying every new sport. They can play everything. Now I'm going to meet my friends to play volleyball. I think we will call Latin Americans to join us.



Photos that were taken in the sportgrounds

Thus, through interviews and observations I gave several examples of activities such as trading, doing sport, holding holidays, dancing, eating in cafes and walking around the park within the area. All these examples reveal both the continuity of the 'Friendship of Nations' policy and characteristics of the cosmopolitan canopy. Here the Soviet rhetoric 'Friendship of Nations' is still used to provide security and keep the peace within the area. At the same time, the campus is turning into a neighborhood that is open to Muscovites and can be used by them as a place to have lunch or go for a walk.

Being guests in Moscow foreign students create a tolerant environment within the campus.

When Muscovites are coming here they are already aware of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area; if they decide to choose it as a place to spend their free time in most cases they are not going to express intolerance. It can lead to a local cosmopolitanism that implies that you get an opportunity to learn about the outer world without crossing the border but with the help of such densely populated spaces with the high level of cultural and ethnical diversity. But there should be also a component that would give people an opportunity to show their folk ethnography and expose this side to one to another. At the same time, this component should create a relaxing atmosphere to distract excessive attention from the diversity if it is disturbing for someone. In other words, it should soften the diversity within the space and give an opportunity to people of different background and ethnicity to come together.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 'Friendship of Nations' principle was introduced in an attempt to combine nationalists' interests with socialists' political interests in the USSR. It consisted of two contradictory policies. The first policy was aimed to conduct affirmative actions towards ethnic difference within the state by promoting ethnic minorities' non-political components such as cultures and traditions. The second policy was repressive, aimed at suppressing national elites in Soviet republics if their activities contradicted the mainstream. When these policies faced each other the latter prevailed over the former.

At the same time, if looking at the first policy aimed to support ethnic minorities' interests, it can remind one of some principles of multiculturalism. The state's affirmative actions toward ethnic minorities were aimed at promoting their cultures and traditions, and it also gave them an opportunity, though limited, to represent their national interests within the state.

Coming to the example of the campus that was a physical implementation of the 'Friendship of Nations' principle within the city, its affirmative action policy has been manifested through those traditions that were preserved within the campus area. Through holding holidays, festivals, fairs, trading and taking part in sport competitions etc. people were brought together. Moreover, the ideology of 'Friendship of Nations' officially prevented from expressing intolerance so that it could not grow to large scale. A similar situation has been preserved until now. At the same time, due to the fact that the area became open for strangers, new characteristics of the cosmopolitan canopy were added to this existing background. So, this experience can be very interesting because of its paradox. On the one hand, it is Soviet heritage that we have within the city; it is the continuity of 'Friendship of Nation' policy. Some of its mechanisms are providing a top-down approach for maintaining a secure environment and preventing intolerance. On the other hand, now this is a neighborhood with a lot of new activities within one space. Taking into account that in the nearest future a lot of newcomers will arrive in Moscow and it could soon turn into a multicultural megacity like other world capitals,

this experience can be used to
understand how to create in Moscow
less hostile environment towards ethnic
difference and build functioning model
of a multicultural community.

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