

Gays, Eggs and Twitter at May Day Rallies

By [Alexandra Odynova](#)

May 02, 2011



Left Front members marching Sunday in Moscow with a poster of Putin holding Medvedev in an icon-like pose. **Sergey Ponomarev**

Gays crashed a Communist rally, ultranationalists protested migration and the president's Twitter account, the mayor got pelted with eggs, and hipsters rallied for raccoon power during unusually colorful celebrations of the May Day holiday in Moscow.

Police said only several of the 40,000 people to rally in Moscow on Sunday were briefly detained, Interfax reported. But about 50 anarchists were held in St. Petersburg.

Mayor Sergei Sobyenin was targeted with eggs and mayonnaise while addressing the city's biggest rally of 25,000 people gathered in front of City Hall on Tverskaya Ulitsa for a joint event by the ruling United Russia party and trade unions, The Other Russia opposition coalition said on its web site.

The sole successful strike saw an egg grazing Sobyenin's pant leg, the statement said, adding that, to the mayor's credit, he did not interrupt his speech. The incident went ignored by state-owned media covering the rally.

A brief scuffle broke out at the second-biggest rally, staged downtown by the Communist Party, when about 100 gay rights activists unfurled rainbow banners and attempted to join the main crowd of 4,500 people, Interfax said.

Riot police separated the two groups and held two gay activists for questioning, Interfax said.

Hundreds of ultranationalists staged a rally in northern Moscow, waving black, yellow and white banners associated with imperial Russia and chanting slogans such as "Migrant, time to go home," "Down with the Yiddish yoke" and "Twitter! Medvedev! Lies!" — the latter a reference to President Dmitry Medvedev's fondness for blogging.

Police did not intervene with the sanctioned rally, which was accompanied by a car with loudspeakers, anti-xenophobia watchdog Sova [said](#). The banned Movement Against Illegal Immigration [said](#) on its web site that some 2,000 protesters attended the rally, but Sova put their number at 600, unchanged from last year.

The liberal [Yabloko](#) party marked the holiday by staging a picnic on the artificial isle Fantasy Island in western Moscow, which houses luxury real estate owned by tycoons and senior officials.

Critics have long accused developers of illegal construction on the island, and Sunday's event protested the fact that cottages block free access to the coastline, which is a violation of environmental legislation, the party said on its web site. It said activists had to use boats to reach the isle's coast.

In St. Petersburg, police detained some 50 anarchists who tried to join a sanctioned trade union rally, the news web site Fontanka.ru reported. Many detainees wore masks imitating the anarchist vigilante from the graphic novel "V for Vendetta" and carried knives and brass knuckles.

Among the more unusual events were flash mobs called Monstratsia — a play on the Russian word for rally that comes to roughly mean "monsterization." The event, initiated by performance artist Artyom Loskutov in Novosibirsk in 2004, spread this year to cover Moscow and some 20 cities in Russia and abroad.

Monstratsias, usually timed to official holidays, require participants to carry nonsensical banners and chant meaningless slogans. This year's crop in Moscow included offerings such as "Yummy," "Gas, Oil, May," "We could be working instead" and "Power to Raccoons."

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