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Emigration From Rublyovka Is Tangible

By The Moscow Times

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This fall, many residents of cottage settlements on Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Shosse are finding themselves short on neighbors. "One neighbor has an apartment in London, and his family has already received passports. They are now living either [there] or at their dacha in France," said a businessman who lives in both Russia and Britain.

"My daughter goes to school here," said the wife of another businessman. "The [children of] Khodorkovskys, Beryozkins, Gromov's daughter, Alyoshkins from Sberbank and Dvorkovich all studied at this school. Previously, it was not possible to get in. Yet now the three groups of 60 students have turned into two groups of 24 students — the rest left the country."

"Some families are going abroad," said Lyubov Mashina, director of the private school President, which has been teaching students of Rublyovka families since 2003. Out of the 300 pupils who studied at the school last year, 21 families went abroad, Mashina said. In all, 7 percent of President's students have left. "I write them recommendations and see that they are intending to study outside of the country, primarily in England," she said.

An outflow of clients has also been noticed by Rublyovka's service industry.

"The working year for recruiting personnel begins at the same time as the school year — Sept. 1," said Viktor Astashov, director of Na Rubylovke domestic staffing company. "Each family here possesses the means to go to Cyprus or Greece for the summer, where they have a second home. Usually everyone returns around Sept. 1." This year, not all the families returned.

It looks like 2011 could be the worst year yet. Turnover fell 50 percent as compared with 2007, Astashov said. "I have friends who work in landscaping here and those who sell real estate — all of their incomes have left," he added.

There are possible political aspects to migration.

"For example," said Penny Lane Realty general director Georgy Dzagurov, "they cleared out the Luzhkov team, and a significant number of city functionaries fell out of favor." There were a lot of members of city institutions who were attached to the mayor's office. And as a result some go to the West, Dzagurov said.

"It is impossible to be an oligarch and not become friends with the authorities. Right? If your relationship with the authorities is good, why would you leave?" Astashov said.

"Those who got rich in the 1990s settled in Rublyovka. They are getting older, their children are moving abroad. As a general rule, children who studied abroad don't return," Astashov said.

Upon leaving the country, very few Rublyovka residents sell their homes. Realtors have not noticed any dramatic changes in sales. "The owners remain the same," a source told Vedomosti. "One drives by and sees that the windows are all empty, no one is there, there are no cars. If these people needed to sell their property, they would, and then some new Russian official would buy it."

"One of my acquaintances who left not long ago lives with his family in Italy. He returns on short trips to do business here. People are continuing to earn money here, but just to be safe they are striving to take their family and create a base in the West to have a dependable supply and logistical base there," the businessman's spouse said.

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