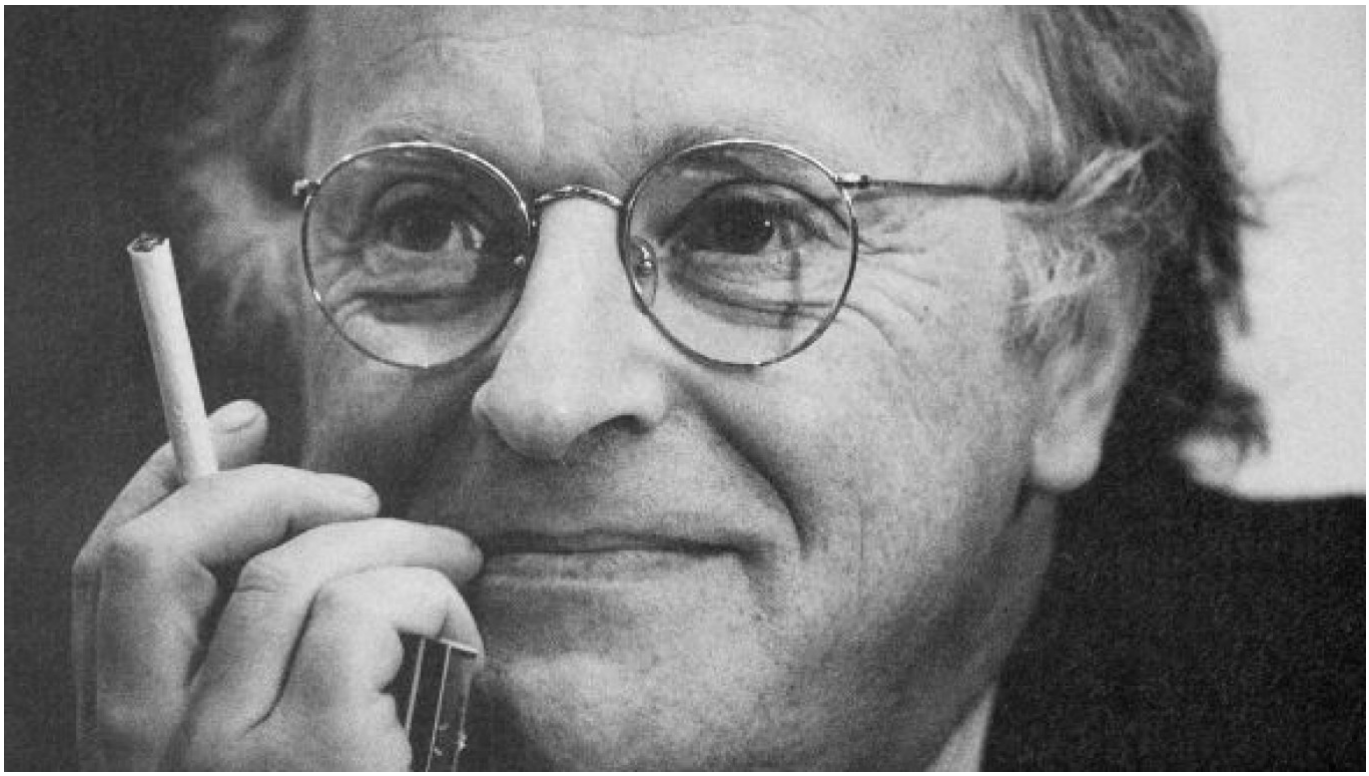
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U.S., St. Pete Unite Over Brodsky's Flat

By Irina Titova

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Josef Brodsky left Russia in 1972.

ST. PETERSBURG — The apartment-museum of Russian-born writer and Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Brodsky may open in St. Petersburg as a joint cultural project between Russia and the United States, city authorities said.

Vasily Kichedzhi, deputy governor of St. Petersburg, said city hall was ready to take an active part in opening a museum devoted to the poet, who emigrated to the United States in the 1970s. However, the project could be too expensive for the city budget, he was quoted by Interfax as saying.

The city would welcome a joint Russian-American project, Kichedzhi said during a visit to Brodsky's apartment together with Bruce Turner, American consul general to St. Petersburg, on Tuesday.

Kichedzhi said the long period of time Brodsky lived in the United States had a significant influence on the poet's creative works.

Currently, city hall is considering two options for opening the museum, by buying the last apartment room that it does not own from its occupant, a 74-year-old woman reportedly asking 17 million rubles ($562,000) for her 44-square-meter room — the most paid for any of the other four rooms was 10 million rubles ($330,000) — or make a separate entrance to Brodsky's rooms in the apartment.

The final occupant of the apartment and the city have reportedly been negotiating on the subject since 1999.

Before emigrating to the United States in the early 1970s, Brodsky lived in a communal apartment on Liteiny Prospekt. The communal apartment was a common theme of his work.

In 1964, the 23-year-old Brodsky was arrested and charged with "social parasitism." He was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972 and settled in the United States where he taught at various universities.

Brodsky was awarded the 1987 Nobel Prize for Literature for an "all-embracing authorship, imbued with clarity of thought and poetic intensity."

In an interview he was asked: "You are an American citizen who is receiving a prize for Russian-language poetry. Who are you, an American or a Russian?" He responded: "I am Jewish — a Russian poet and an English essayist."

Brodsky died of a heart attack in New York City in 1996. He was 55 years old.

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