

# Moscowstan

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Of Moscow's 12 million residents, 2.5 million are migrants, and 18 percent of all births in the capital are the children of those migrants. According to the Investigative Committee, migrants are responsible for one-sixth of all murders and one-third of all rapes in Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin and his regime have essentially built a slave society in Russia run by an elite group of government officials who have become business barons. This society is administered by the state bureaucratic proletariat and maintained with the manual labor of migrant slaves who have no rights or citizenship.

From time to time, the proletariat rebels and the slaves become restless, as happened recently in Biryulyovo, a district in the southern part of Moscow. After such incidents, the authorities work to appease the rioters. The occasional pogrom is actually integral to the system because it serves to intimidate the laborers and renders them powerless and submissive.

Meanwhile, Russia's liberal left opposes the introduction of a visa regime for laborers coming from Central Asia, arguing that such ethnic profiling and nationalist ideas should be confined to the fascists.

But Russia is already beset by this problem. We saw it in Biryulyovo. The notorious Pokrovskaya wholesale fruit and vegetable market is a teeming mass of 10,000 migrants, Caucasians and a motley crew of criminals. It is high time that we abandon the idealistic notion that migrants only come to Moscow to find employment. They come to Moscow because they would die of hunger in their native villages. They come to Moscow for the same reason that the poor flocked to London in the time of Charles Dickens.

Biryulyovo is the bottom of the barrel. This is a place where it is unsafe to go outside at night, where entire classrooms of children cannot speak Russian. It is also the district where Mayor Sergei Sobyenin outperformed his rivals with 62 percent of the vote, as opposed to 19 percent for opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The authorities correctly observe that residents of the ghetto always support the party of power. But they are also the ones who rob stores and overturn cars on the streets.

Any self-respecting country would never even let something like the Pokrovskaya market develop. Such phenomena are more typical of Rwanda or Nigeria. Democratic states would never tolerate a massive marketplace rife with illegal activity, criminals and tax evaders, all protected by local officials on the take.

The Pokrovskaya market illustrates the mistaken notion that migrant workers are cheap labor. Although the market's owners pay next to nothing for their migrant labor, Russian taxpayers pay through their noses for their health care and education without any corresponding contribution to the tax base. So much for "cheap labor."

The crowd's livid reaction to the recent murder of 25-year-old Yegor Shcherbakov was only a chance event. But there is nothing coincidental about the methodical way that the Putin regime imports slave labor to turn the rest of Russia into a privileged class and a compliant proletariat — both of whom remain dependent on the largesse of leaders. If nothing is done to change that policy, within a decade or two the capital will be transformed into Moscowstan.

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*The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.*

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