

'Founding Father' of Russian Public Opinion Polls Dead at 67

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The  Moscow Times

Boris Dubin, one of the pioneers of the study of Russian public opinion, died in Moscow on Wednesday, culture news site Colta.ru reported.

The cause of death and funeral details for the sociologist, who died single at the age of 67, had not been reported by the time of publication.

Dubin was a pupil and close associate of Yury Levada, the head since 1988 of the Soviet Union's first pollster VTsIOM center.

VTsIOM was the first organization to study the opinion of the masses in Russia, most notably with the sweeping Homo Soveticus studies, which monitored major societal trends over the course of many years. Five installments of these studies were conducted between 1989 and 2008.

The state-run organization is now positioned among Russia's top three pollsters, alongside the also state-run Public Opinion Foundation and the independent Levada Center, which was

created by Levada, Dubin and their affiliates in 2003 following a scandalous split in VTsIOM's ranks.

Dubin's role in both pollsters proved instrumental, having supervised until 2012 Levada Center's key department that handled socio-political studies.

Unheard of prior to perestroika, political opinion polls are now widely recognized as one of the key factors influencing Kremlin policies.

Dubin was also hailed by critics and supporters alike as a shining example of old-school Soviet intelligentsia in the best sense of the word, at once intelligent, tactful, deeply moral and respectful of his opponents.

A graduate of the philological faculty at the prestigious Moscow State University, Dubin belonged to underground poetry circles in the 1970s. He won recognition as a translator, rendering into Russian works by Spanish medieval and Baroque poets and modern Spanish-language authors, most notably "magical realist" Jorge Luis Borges.

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