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Weekly Wrap: Russia Deals With Undesirables

By Unfair Observer

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With the May holidays over, it is back to the everyday war for Mother Russia. Last week was marked by an atrocious, brutal, inhuman attack on the country, delivered by the Canadian ice hockey team, which dared to trounce the Russians in the World Championship finals. Luckily, the team found a way to retaliate by snubbing the Canucks on the congratulations. But otherwise it was business as usual — which in Russia means bans.

The Undesirables

The State Duma passed in the final reading a bill allowing for the expulsion from Russia of "undesirable foreign organizations." Undesirability will be decided by the Prosecutor General. Companies and NGOs may be sanctioned, and any locals who continue working for an undesirable face up to six years in prison. The OSCE begged Putin to veto the bill, which ensured it was signed into law.

Lawyers around the world must be reeling from the attempt to legalize desirability (or

the lack thereof). The courts are bypassed — the desires of a nation of 140 million will be decided by a single prosecutor. The law opens breathtaking possibilities — there are so many undesirable things from an official Russian viewpoint. Ukraine should be listed thus, as should the White House. Both should be fined and required to disband immediately. The likes of Alexei Navalny should be banned and ordered to disappear into thin air. As for that Canadian ice hockey team ...

It would be funny, however, if someone else were to come to power and declare all the people who passed undesirability laws undesirable.

Breed, Woman, Breed

The queen of moralists, lawmaker Yelena Mizulina (you know, the woman who asked the state for a bigger apartment because her cat was giving birth) finally found the root of all evil — abortions. State health care bankrolls cheap, grungy abortions for Russian women who cannot afford a private clinic. Mizulina, a mother of two, proposed banning the sinful practice — pay for it yourself, girl — and banning medical abortion pills.

Last week, we advocated polygamy for officials, because they already have it in Chechnya. But forcing millions of women in the provinces, where $300 a month is a coveted salary, to breed indiscriminately to fill the demographic gap is something else entirely. Beating a child, shouting at it, ignoring it, or mentally breaking it as a post-apocalyptic drill sergeant might are already popular parenting methods amid poor, overworked Russian mothers; if they are saddled with millions of real, not illusory, undesirables, this might very well produce a nation of neurotics.

Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko already called the bill "extremist." Perhaps she, unlike Mizulina, cares about women's rights. But maybe she just remembers that the 1917 revolution in Russia was kicked off by women, who took to the streets just because there was not enough bread in the capital. How about an abortion revolution?

The Invisible Math

Meanwhile St. Pete teenager Roman Krutovsky came in second place at the Intel ISEF 2015 Grand Awards in math, which is something like a Nobel Prize for high schoolers. A handful of Russian kids performed impressively in the rankings, to the utter indifference of the country's media (theorems are not twerking).

It's amazing that kids like these are popping up. But it's anyone's guess if they will one day triumph over the moralists and the prosecutors — or grab those prizes and apply to Oxford or MIT.

Unfair Observer is the pen name of a Russian journalist that The Moscow Times has invited to observe the most brain-dead weekly developments in Russia.

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