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# 25 Russian Words For 25 Years: Part Two

Michele A. Berdy's The Word's Worth

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**Dmitry Medvedev with a cup of "Rusiano" (Vladimir Rodionov / ITAR-TASS)**

This week I begin my trek through time in a traffic jam. The place: Moscow. The year: 2005. From there I make my way through the glamorous early ‘oughts toward the fraught teen years of this century, when politics began to shape everything, including the way we talk. Better fasten your seat belts — it’s a bumpy ride that no urban improvement program can fix.

2005 Пробка: cork, traffic jam; in Moscow the kind of traffic jam where you turn off the engine, do your taxes, give yourself a manicure, and finish an audio book to the accompaniment of 659 drivers hysterically honking their horns; пробки are worse in summer and when it rains or snows — that is, they are almost always worse than yesterday but not as bad as tomorrow

2006 Гламурный: any vulgar display of high fashion and wealth, often with sexual innuendo; also used to describe anything expensive and “in” among the rich and anonymous crowd; improbably used to describe anything attractive or fun, from kitchen tile to pre-Lenten Fast parties.

2007 Олбанский: Olbanian, aka Albanian, but actually an incredibly annoying form of writing in online forums that uses exaggerated phonetic spelling so that автор (author) is the barely recognizable аффтар and гыгыгыгыгыгыгыгы means LOL which is sometimes also ЛОЛ; not practiced or understood by most people over the age of puberty (physical or emotional)

2008 Пиндос: an American in derogatory slang of obscure origins; originally a hearty Greek pony, пиндос was once used to describe the Greek settlers in the Black Sea region, but the sound of the word — half comical and half obscene — made it an insult looking for a subject; one story has it that the Russian soldiers in Kosovo started using пиндос to describe the American soldiers bristling with equipment, packs, and weaponry because they looked like overburdened trail ponies; in any case, now пиндосы live in Пиндостан (Pindostan, aka U.S.A.)

2009 Перегрузка: Not reset; what someone with poor Russian skills stuck on a button so that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov could push it, smile, and

welcome in new era of cordial cooperation; unfortunately, the button should have been labeled перезагрузка (reboot) and перегрузка means an overload of the system; very unfortunately, Clinton and Lavrov pushed the перегрузка button anyway, causing relations to completely short-circuit and giving the alt-right another thing to blame Hillary for

2010 Полиция: police, the new name of the vast law enforcement agency once called Полиция in pre-Revolutionary Russia, then called Милиция (militia) in Soviet Russia to distinguish it from the Полиция, and now once again called Полиция to distinguish it from the Милиция — a process, perhaps endless, that entails changing every station name, every stamp, every bit of stationary, every badge, every uniform, every vehicle marking and so on in 89 regions across 11 time zones; that is, a very profitable endeavor

2011 Рокировка: castling, job swap at the top, in particular, the decision announced at the United Russia party convention in September 2011 for Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to run for president and President Dmitry Medvedev to revert to the role of prime minister; if instituted as part of the system, the Medvedev-Putin and Putin-Medvedev tandem may rule Russia until the end of time

2012: Оккупай: Occupy! what a few hundred protesters did in Moscow after a series of demonstrations against electoral falsification and for President Putin's resignation, first near the monument to the Kazakh poet Abai Kunanbayev — giving the world the melodious slogan Occupy Abai! — and then in various spots around the city; after a few arrests and the unlikelihood of any demands being met — as well as the oncoming cold weather — the movement activists quietly went home to occupy their warm apartments

2013 Чмо: schmuck, weirdo, bum, jerk; of highly debated origins, this word is an all-purpose insult that can refer to stupidly gullible neighbors, smelly drunk people by the metro station, dorky science majors at institutes and, apparently, every American president in history, but especially Barack Obama, who has been declared a чмо on thousands of Russian cars, fences and toilet walls

2014: Крымнаш: Crimea is Ours, turned into one word and a meme that means: We took back our land from the fascist junta and NATO and in the process showed the whole world that we're back in prime fighting form, up off our knees, and happy to push anyone out of the way of our national interests

2015 Ватник: a good ole boy, Russian style — the kind of fellow who gets all his news from Russian television and believes it, thinks Ukrainians are fascists and Americans are the devil incarnate, and generally thinks that everything Russian is the best — except for his car, sneakers, jeans, cell phone, contact lenses, computer, computer programs and apps, which were all Made in the U.S.A. but don't count because the Americans stole them from someone anyway

2016 Русиано: Rusiano — what Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev thinks Americano coffee should be called in Russia and anywhere in the world except the U.S. Down with American-style coffee! Er, no, that should be: Up with American-style coffee, down with calling it American-style coffee

2017 Благоустройство: beautification, as in urban beautification — the process of ripping up

all the outdoor urban beautification done the previous year and spending the entire three summer months — i.e., the only time Muscovites can enjoy the beautified outdoor urban environment — on replacing it, typically with badly installed tile blocks (all the better to catch your high heel on); 40-meter wide sidewalks (for strolling in bad weather); and specially imported trees that cost their weight in gold and die before ever sprouting a leaf; an urban project that has eliminated virtually all parking in the city center, caused daily 10-on-a-scale-of-10 traffic jams; and has the distinction of being the only urban project that has made Muscovites long for snow, slush, and freezing weather in which no благоустройство can be carried out

Start at the beginning with 25 Russian Words for 25 Years: Part One.

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