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Amid spreading protests, Russia is scrambling to work out a new Middle East policy

Sands

RIA Novosti/Andrey Rudakov

of change

Lidia Okorokova
The Moscow News

More North African and Middle Eastern countries have joined the wave of popular revolutions that have already seen leaders in Tunisia and Egypt step down. Protests are growing in Libya and

Bahrain, while opposition members are also gathering in Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq and Iran.

While citizens of these countries are protesting against authoritarian regimes, Russia has not yet shown any significant interest in the regional unrest. Since the end of the Soviet Union, Russia has lost its

viable influence in both the Middle East and North Africa. But its foreign policy will change after the unrest, experts say.

Russia's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on February 23, stressing that Russia's main priority in the region is securing the safety of Russian citizens and working to consolidate

the Russian position in accordance with the new status quo.

At present, the main players in the Middle East and North Africa are the US and the EU, but it is not yet clear what paths of political and economic development new regional governments will choose. And Russia has yet to decide on the right foreign policy

steps to satisfy its own political ambitions and help stabilise the situation.

"It's in Russia's main interest to build relations with any regime that will be installed in these countries, whether liberal or Islamist," Alexei Vasilyev, head of the Africa Institute at the Russian Academy of Science, told The Moscow News. ▶ [page 3](#)

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A fig leaf for the fearful



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Fellini's inspiration

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The Crazy Horse comes to town

Moscow audiences can see what makes Parisian cabaret shows the talk of the town

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Waiting for Putin

In United Russia's reception rooms Russians are once again petitioning the tsar

Anna Arutunyan
The Moscow News

Sergei Kvitko just wanted Vladimir Putin to fix his gas.

In United Russia's plush headquarters near Prospekt Mira, Kvitko, a 41-year-old mine rescue worker from the Tula region, sat on a couch in a spacious waiting room, waiting in turn to put his complaint at the reception offices for the party's chairman.

"Vladimir Vladimirovich always says that money is being spent on gasification," said Kvitko, who supports his family of five on a salary of 13,000 roubles per month.

But in his mining town in the Tula region, dozens of home owners still have to rely on firewood – chopping logs in the cold mornings to start up the stove. "I think he will help. And if he doesn't, then no one else will give us gas."

Reviving a Soviet-era tradition

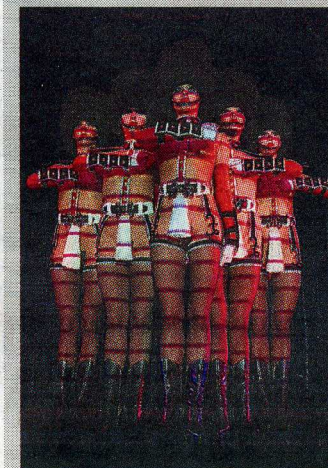
It was that reasoning that helped revive a Soviet-era practice of public reception offices in 2008, when Putin stepped down from the presidency and assumed the title of chairman of the pro-Kremlin United Russia party.

And it was that reasoning that had Putin touring single-industry towns like Pikalyovo when crisis struck in 2009, and personally monitoring how homes were being built for fire victims during last summer's heat wave.

During his Wednesday trip, Putin promised visitors at a regional reception office in Kaliningrad to urgently tackle housing and health issues in the area.

Putin cannot, however, be everywhere at once. So he had United Russia mobilise efforts for a venue where any citizen could meet with him by proxy, says Alexei Anisimov, the United Russia official in charge of Moscow's central reception office.

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and restaurant news to:

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Day & Night

The week in arts & entertainment



Courtesy of Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow



Filming of the fountain
scene in 'La Dolce Vita',
1960

Federico Fellini, March 1955

The inspiration behind

Rome est un bien bel endroit
pour attendre
la fin du monde



Federico Fellini

The art and dreams of an Italian film director revealed

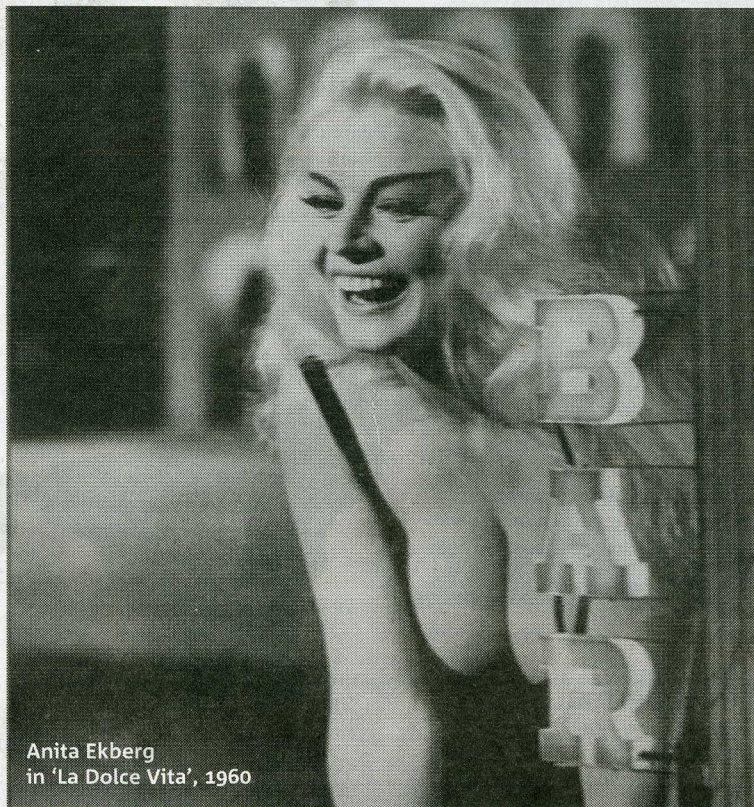
Elena Kirillova
The Moscow News

'Fellini. Grand-parade'
To May 10 at the Moscow House of Photography, 16 Ul. Ostozhenka, m. Kropotkinskaya, www.mdf.ru
Tue.-Sun. noon-9 pm, closed Mon.

As part of the Year of Italy in Russia, the "Fellini. Grand-parade" exhibition has come to Moscow, to reveal the

life and work of legendary film director Federico Fellini (1920-1993), the man credited with introducing the world to "dolce vita" and "paparazzi". This exhibition was first presented in Paris in 2009.

The exhibition consists of four major parts: Fellini and popular culture, Fellini at work, the city of women and the man's role, and Fellini's biography. It is as Italian as can be, full of joy, colours, busty women and sounds – a lot of things that inspired the legendary director,



Anita Ekberg
in 'La Dolce Vita', 1960



Giulietta Mazina, Fellini's wife,
in 'The Road', 1954

who once said "I don't give a damn about objectivity".

The curator of the exhibition, Sam Stourdze, has done a huge job, gathering together everything that he could get from personal archives, photographers, co-workers and others who knew Fellini. The "Grand-parade" is a review of all the art of which the director was fond, of his times, magazines, posters, people that inspired him, photos and interviews, accompanied by video-extracts from his films and documentaries about him, including an amateur film about his directing of the movie "La Dolce Vita", and Fellini's personal drawings.

Being a talented caricature artist, Fellini used to draw his characters in

costume before starting a film. He believed that costumes help to tell the character's story. Among the drawings there are two large and intricate "dream book" albums, which are made public for the first time in this exhibition. In these albums Fellini, following the advice of his psychologist, drew and described his dreams, which now provide us with a unique chance to see the fantasies, obsessions and fears of the genius. Many of these grotesque, eccentric and funny figures later appeared in his films.

'...pulsing,
mysterious,
vibrant
with life'



A dream drawn by Federico Fellini, from the 'Book of Dreams', 1975



A French poster for the film 'Roma', 1972

In one of his last interviews, Fellini told Bright Lights Film Journal that he enjoyed observing something that was the absolute truth not because it resembled life, but because it was true as an image for itself, as a gesture, and therefore vital. Vitality was the most important thing about art for him. "I think the expression of an artist's work finds consensus when, whoever enjoys it, feels as if they're receiving a charge of energy, like a growing plant does, of something pulsing, mysterious, vibrant with life," he said.

The same could be said about the exhibition "Fellini. Grand-parade". ■

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