



The History of GUM

Lead-in

- 1 Look at the pictures of Russian leaders of the 20th century. Make guesses about the role they played in the history of the biggest Russian retailer – the State Department Store (GUM). Listen and check.

Reading & Listening

- 2 Listen and for statements 1 - 6 write the name of the Russian leader. Then, read and check.

- 1 When he died, Red square was blocked for three days.
- 2 He introduced the new economic policy in Russia (NEP).
- 3 When he was in power, GUM became the largest shopping centre in the former USSR.
- 4 When he was the Russian leader, GUM had 11 sections.
- 5 When he was in the Kremlin, GUM was privatised.
- 6 He was the man behind perestroika and glasnost.

- 3 Read the text and find an English saying. What is its Russian equivalent?

- 4 Read and find five ways in which GUM is referred to in the text. Then explain the words in bold. Give the Russian equivalents for:

- register of complaints
- price tags
- print shop
- household utensils

- 5 Match the pictures A-F to GUM's departments (1 - 6).

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1 Footwear | 4 Tableware |
| 2 Utensils | 5 Knitwear |
| 3 Gifts | 6 Haberdashery |



Speaking

In pairs, choose one of the Russian leaders in the pictures and tell your partner what was happening to GUM when he was in power.





Nicholas II

1890-1893 FOUNDATION OF THE UPPER GALLERY: Originally, GUM was known as the Upper Gallery. It was designed by architect Pomerantsev and forms the North-Eastern border of Red Square. The building has three longitudinal **arcades** – three storeys each – and a deep **basement**. The unique glass roof, designed by engineer Shukhov, covered an area **leased** to as many as 1,000 shops.



Vladimir Lenin

1893-1917 NEW CENTURY – NEW DEMANDS: Price lists and the first **register of complaints** and suggestions were introduced in the Upper Gallery for the first time in the history of Moscow. Prior to that, salesmen used to quote prices themselves to each customer. **Price tags** left no room for **bargains** or **negotiations**, which had been a favourite Russian pastime for centuries.

1917-1920 ON A SHARP HISTORICAL TURN: After its nationalisation in 1917, business at the Upper Gallery began declining and it **ceased** trading in early 1918. It started the monotonous life of a government building, **housing** numerous Soviet organisations and **bureaus**. Given an overall **lack** of any food or goods, shops were no longer necessary. The building became cold and **dull** with no lights as the power plant in the basement was flooded.



Joseph Stalin

1921-1931 NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP): In 1921, after Vladimir Lenin introduced NEP, the Upper Gallery was re-opened as a trading centre and was renamed GUM (pronounced 'goom'), which in Russian stands for the State Department Store, but GUM was only a **shadow** of the former **marble** glory of the Upper Gallery.

1931-1941 INDUSTRIALISATION AND A PLANNED ECONOMY: In the 1930s, Joseph Stalin **abandoned** NEP in favour of a planned economy. GUM was again populated by government clerks. A **print shop** for the Soviet of People's Commissars (*Sovnarcom*) was moved into GUM's building. GUM might have disappeared altogether during this period because one of Stalin's plans was to **demolish** it to double the size of Red Square. Luckily, this was **put on hold** and never implemented.



Nikita Khrushchov

1941-1945 WORLD WAR II: Despite massive evacuation of Muscovites and state enterprises, GUM carried on its own monotonous life. Not surprisingly, being in Red Square, it was bombed by the Nazis many times, but it survived and it **witnessed** the Victory Parade of 1945.

1943-1953 POST-WAR YEARS: The country was **healing its wounds**, but instead of restoring GUM, various plans were discussed on how to change the look of Red Square, such as whether to build a huge monument or to put up a luxurious wall with **stands** for people to watch parades in Red Square from. Fortunately, something seemed to go wrong every time and none of those plans succeeded so GUM stayed where it was and kept being used for offices.



Leonid Brezhnev

1954-1964 A 'THAW': In March 1953, in preparation for Stalin's **funeral**, Red Square was blocked and **encircled** by KGB officers for three days. Several months later the government made a decision to move all the offices from GUM and **resume** trade there. The year of 1953 is considered to be the second birth of the mall. Under Khrushchov, the restored sales areas of the mall now consisted of 11 sections: textiles, ready-made clothes, footwear, **knitwear**, underwear, **household utensils**, furniture, carpets, **furs** and hats, **stationery**, toys and souvenirs. The number of items offered for sale **amounted to** over 30,000.



Mikhail Gorbachov

1965-1985 YEARS OF STAGNATION: Under Brezhnev, when decisions made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party were not up for discussion, an order was given: 'Remove GUM from close to the **sacred** objects of the Soviet people: The Mausoleum and Kremlin!' This could well have been the end of GUM. However, the wife of a high-ranking communist leader was so used to buying her fur coats and other clothes at GUM that, having heard the rumours, she spoke to her husband and at the next meeting he **naively** remarked: "They say someone plans to close GUM." The next day the Minister of Trade received a phone call which 'advised' him to stop the earlier top-secret activities. So, GUM survived one more time and in the 1970s became the largest shopping centre of the former USSR and one of the largest malls in the world.



Boris Yeltsin

1985-... PERESTROIKA AND NEW REALITIES: Although it was struggling along with the rest of the country in the early days of Gorbachov's perestroika, GUM managed to **keep afloat** and re-structured itself. Then, 100 years after it was built, when Yeltsin sat in the Kremlin, it was privatised and once again became a mall where merchants of all trades could offer their products to customers. It was completely **renovated** for the 850th anniversary of Moscow and is now the leading Russian retailer. Visit GUM's website: www.gum.ru to see it for yourself.