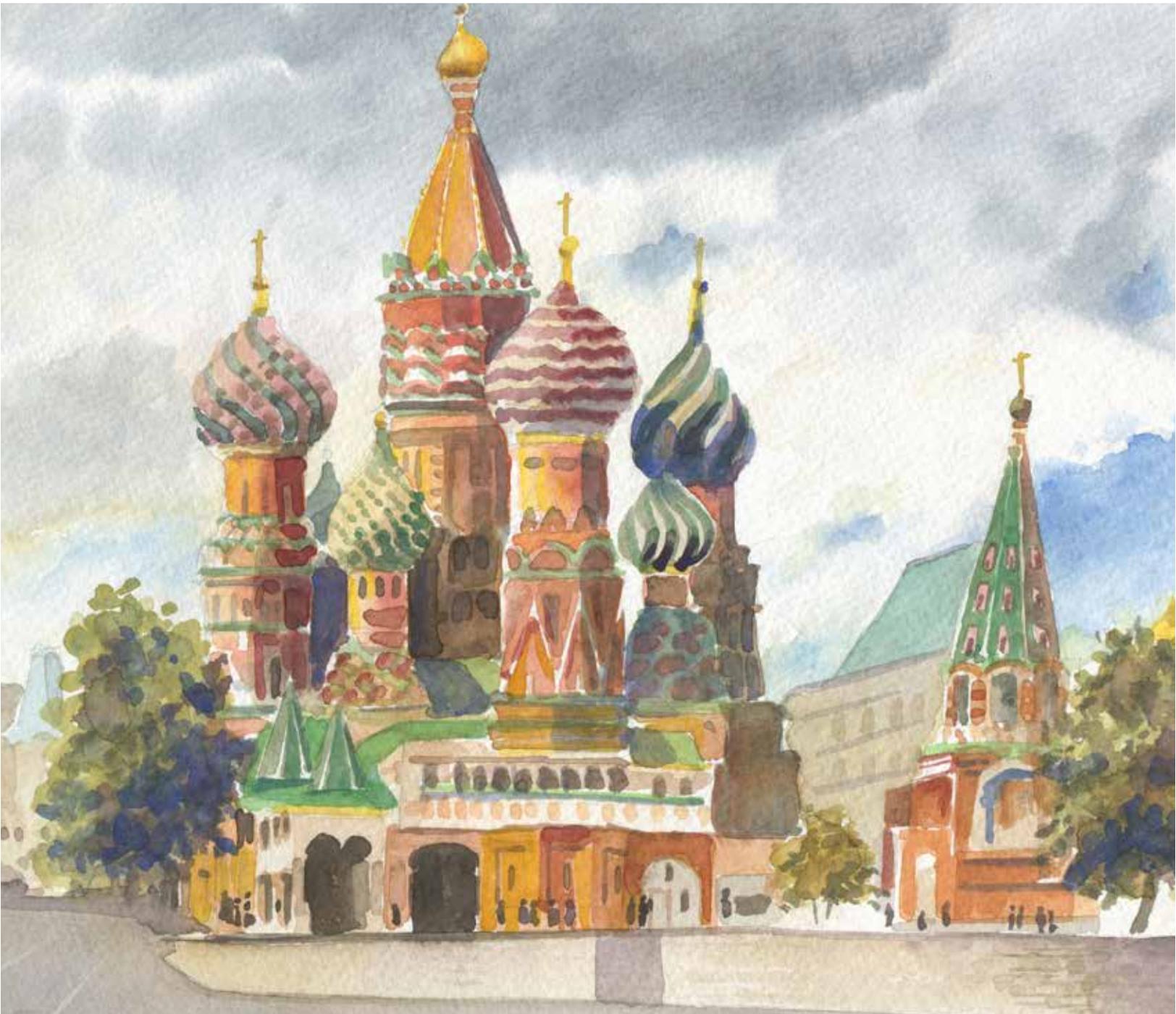


RUSSIA

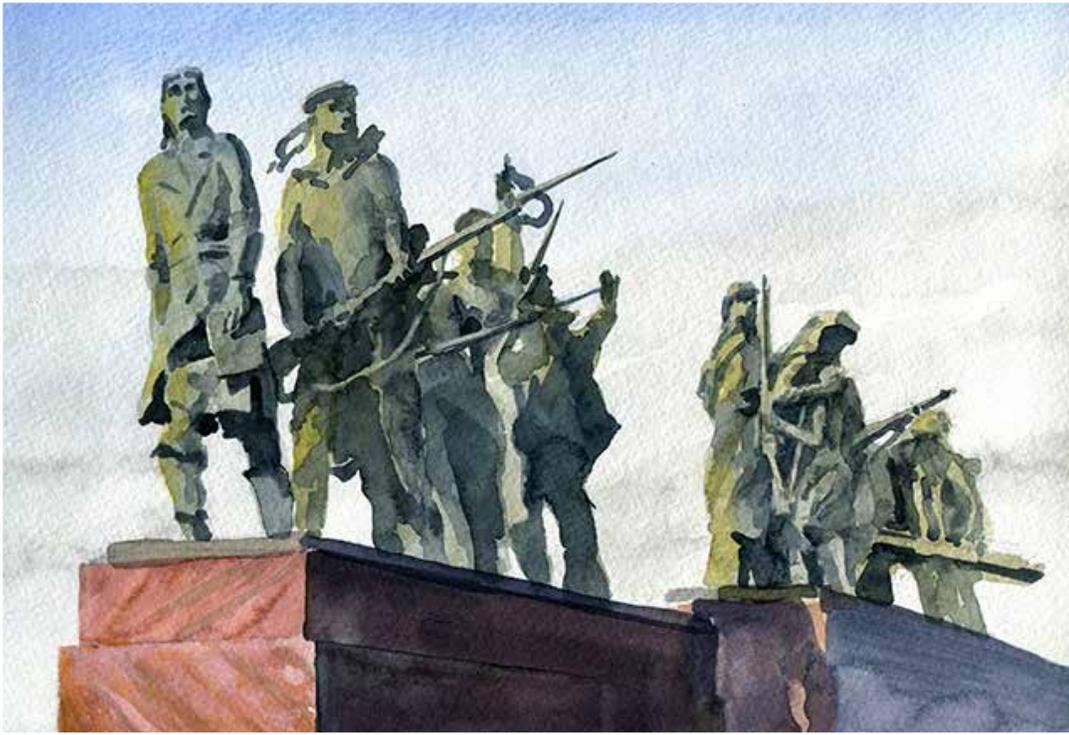
There's more to the former Soviet Union than vodka, a brutal history and leaden skies blanketing endless forests.

There are also an awful lot of people.

Watercolors painted on location by Michael Killelea



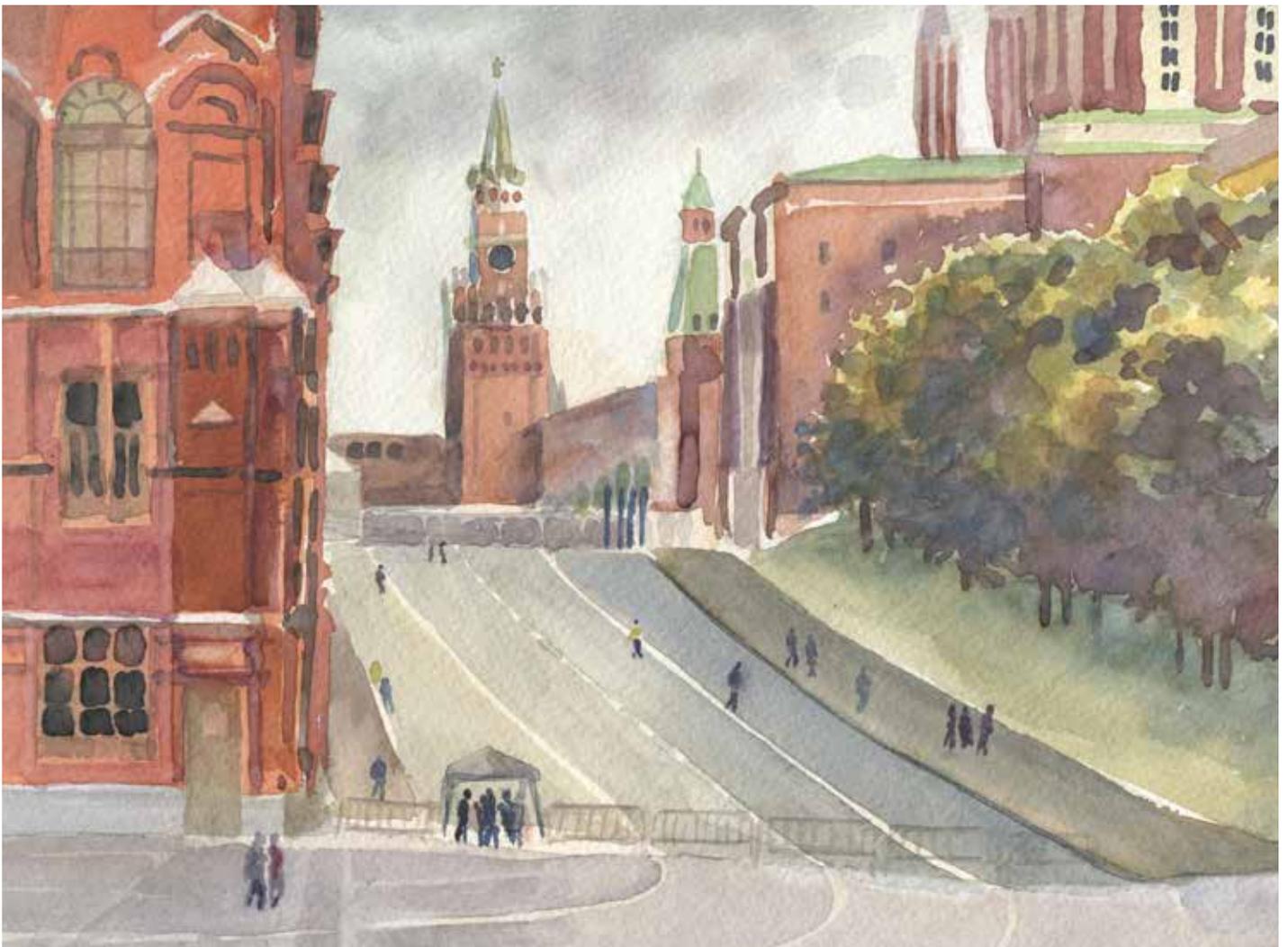
Onion domes crown the iconic St. Basil's in Red Square, adding a whimsical element to an otherwise stern skyline.

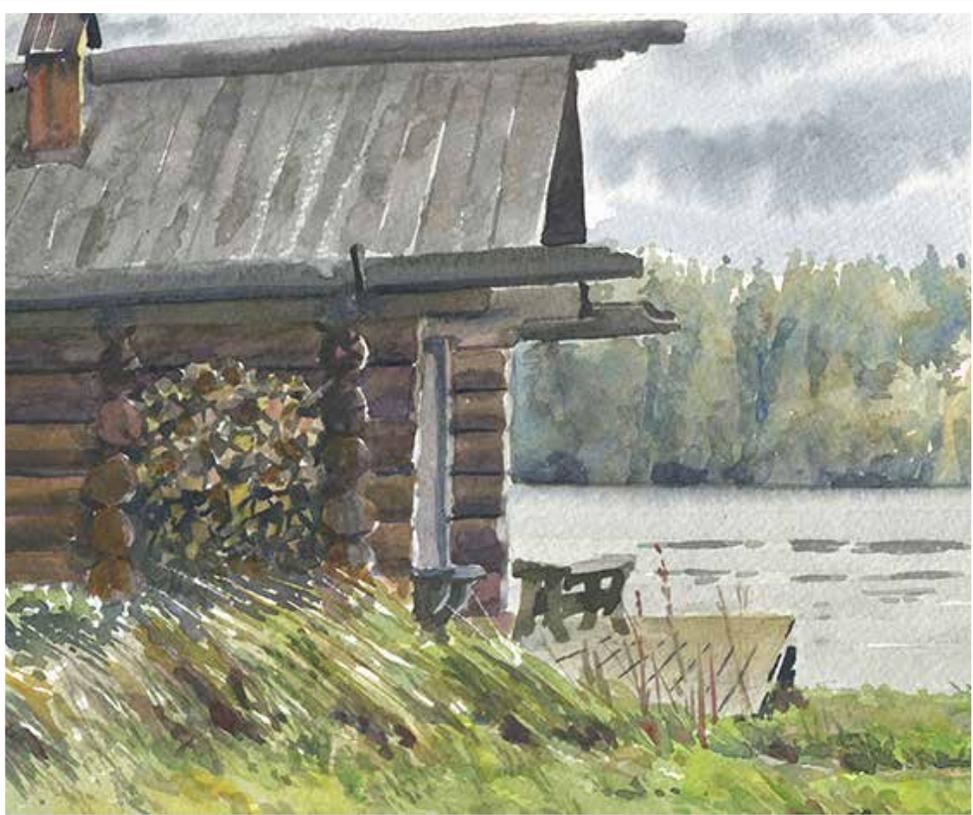


The MILITARY

A powerful sculpture (left) honors Russia's WWII sacrifices in St. Petersburg. The Soviet Union lost 35 million people in that war.

Parading its military might through Red Square (below) has been a cold war spectator sport for 50 years. Kremlin walls loom to the right while Lenin's tomb awaits ahead.



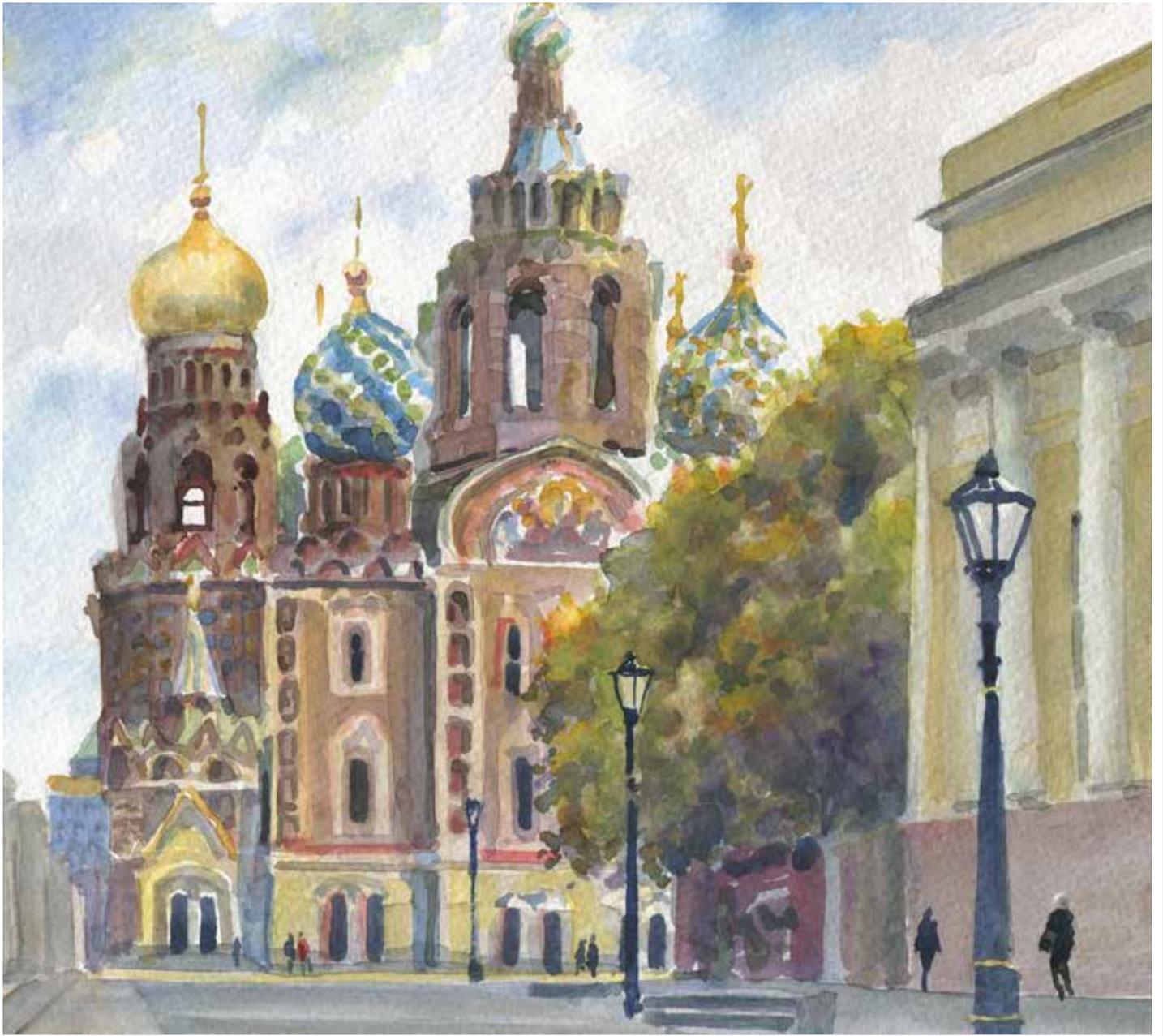


The WEATHER

When the sun shines, the spirit of the Tsars smiles on this hard land they loved so much. But those spirits aren't always smiling.

The tired village of Uglich (top) sulks under a misty pall unable to rise above its troubled history.

River cruise caravans disgorge passengers at the make-believe village of Mandrogy (left) on an island in the Svir River. Visitors get "free time" to buy souvenirs in the shops and cabins of craftspeople, the only inhabitants on the island.



The CHURCH

This striking church in St. Petersburg, commonly known as “Our Saviour on the Spilled Blood,” was built on the site where Tzar Alexander III was murdered, a site as sanguine and colorful as Russia’s history. But it hasn’t kept people from enjoying more liberalized religious restrictions.



Mike Killelea has traveled extensively with paint and brushes in hand, recording his impressions and marveling at the people he meets. Art is quite a translation tool.

His work can be seen online at www.killeleart.com and he can be reached at art@killeleart.com.