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Russia solidarity

Solidarity against repression!

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Two months ago, we, representatives of the Russian left, asked for your solidarity in the face of the coming wave of political repressions in Russia [\[1\]](#)

Alas, today this call is even more urgent than before. It is no longer an exaggeration to compare the political trials taking place right now to the prosecution of Russian populists in the late nineteenth century. The number of possible sentences resulting from the so-called “riots” of May 6, 2012 has steadily climbed over twenty, and the majority of the detainees have spent many months in jail awaiting trial.

Their names are Vladimir Akimenkov, Oleg Arkhipenkov, Andrei Barabanov, Fyodor Bakhov, Yaroslav Belousov, Alexandra Dukhainina, Stepan Zimin, Ilya Gushyn, Nikolai Kavkazskii, Alexander Kamesnskii, Leonid Koviazin, Mikhail Kosenko, Sergei Krivov, Konstantin Lebedev, Maksim Luzianin, Denis Lutskevich, Aleksei Polikhovich, Leonid Razvozhayev, and Artem Savelov.

The aim of the prosecution is self-evident: to break the will for political struggle of those unhappy with the current political regime and to systematically demolish the existing political opposition—a significant portion of which is situated on the political left. The Investigative Committee—a structure accountable only to president Putin—has constructed the case as a wide-ranging conspiracy stretching from rank-and-file street protestors to established politicians. Thus on March 10th 2013, the Committee merged two trials: the May 6th “riots” (with nineteen detainees, two people under cognizance not to leave, and ten hiding outside of Russia) and the “organizing of unrest” with which our comrades Konstantin Lebedev, Leonid Razvozhayev, and Sergei Udaltsov have been charged.

The list of detainees continues to grow. Just recently, on February 7th, the 24-year-old Ilya Gushchin was arrested and accused of using violence against a policeman during the May 6th “riots.” A little earlier, on January 17th, while facing similar charges and imminent deportation from the Netherlands back to Russia, Alexander Dolmatov took his own life.

On February 9th, Sergei Udaltsov’s status changed from cognizance not to leave to house arrest. This means that his channels of communication with the outside world have been cut off, and that even the tiniest infraction will land him in jail.

In addition, the prosecution and the judges guided by the Kremlin keep on placing pressure on the detainees, further risking their health and lives.

Thus, for example, the eyesight of Vladimir Akimenkov, 25, has continued to worsen since his arrest on June 10th, 2012. Akimenkov, a Left Front activist, suffers from innate defective vision, which has deteriorated in prison conditions and may soon turn into a permanent loss of vision. Akimenkov’s own lawyer, human rights activists, as well as over 3,000 petitioners have asked the authorities to release him. However, the prosecution and the courts have remained firm and extended Akimenkov’s arrest until May 6th 2013.

Another accused, Michael Kosenko, 37, has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder since his military service. Instead of granting him access to medication or releasing him, the court is preparing to send him to “forced treatment” in a prison hospital.

Leonid Razvozhayev, 40, a co-ordinator of the Left Front, has been abducted from Ukrainian soil by unknown parties

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and delivered to Moscow. After the abduction, a confession appears to have been extorted from Razvozzhaev under threat of torture and harm to his family. Once in prison, he renounced his “confessions,” but his words are still being actively used against others. Currently, Razvozzhaev has been transferred to the Siberian city of Irkutsk, where his freedom to communicate with relatives and lawyers is severely limited.

The trial will most likely begin in earnest in April. The prosecutor will claim the existence of a massive anti-state conspiracy in which the accused will be said to have played various roles. We have little doubt that this trial will be biased and unjust. Unless fought against, its probable outcome will be the broken lives of dozens of people (the charges foresee imprisonment up to eight years), conspiratorial hysterics in the state-run media, and a carte blanche for new repressions.

Your solidarity now is crucial for us. On the eve of this shameful trial on 28 of February - 3 of March, we ask you to stage protests in front of any consulates of the Russian Federation in your countries, to disseminate information about the political trials and to urge your government and relevant NGOs to act however possible.

The Russian Socialist Movement

The Left Front

[1] [Appeal in Russian](#), in English see [“We, representatives of the Russian radical left, turned to you with a call for solidarity”](#) and [“Free Russian political prisoners! An international call for solidarity with victims of repression in Russia”](#).