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Russia

# On political crisis in Moscow

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**The events of the past month in Moscow have led to a political crisis on a national scale. Its distinguishing feature is the inability of the authorities to govern as usual, combining political methods and repression for maintaining stability. The mechanism of maintaining legitimate power through controlled elections with low turnout and the predictable victory of United Russia no longer works.**

The first warning signal for the Kremlin were last year's regional elections, where pro-regime candidates for governor collapsed in Vladimir, Khakassia, and Vladivostok. Protest votes there were not only connected with regional agendas, but, first of all, with general discontent with growing poverty and reforms undoing social provisions—in the first place, with the raising of the retirement age. The upcoming elections in Moscow and other regions 8th of September deepen and radicalize this tendency.

The blunt refusal to allow independent candidates in elections (including left and social activists, like Sergei Tsukasov) is the direct result of their real chances to win. The active campaign of gathering signatures in various neighborhoods has shown the growing number of protest voters, whose arrival at voting places on September 8 could bring down the city government's desired outcome.

The first street actions also showed a high level of mobilization. After the mass demonstration of July 20, the authorities rely only on force, which only leads them further to a dead end.

The following protests—not liberal-bourgeois, as some “left patriots” insist, but democratic, uniting different social and political groups. On their outcome hinges not only whether ordinary residents of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities influence the decision making in their cities, but the relation of forces between workers and the oligarchic elite on the scale of the entire country.

Today we are fighting not only for fair elections, but for the participation of the masses in politics—with the help of elections, strikes, rallies, and all forms of self-organization. But even limited popular rule frightens the ruling oligarchy, raising the spectre of social revolution.

The Kremlin is already using the model of the massive police provocation on Bolotnaya Square seven years ago, declaring peaceful protests as riots organized from outside. As in 2012, the main victims of repression are arbitrarily chosen ordinary participants in the rallies. The main message of the Federal security service and police - each person who goes into the street can end up in jail. Seven years ago, this partially worked, but today that's not a fact.

Growing impoverishment and social discontent increasingly draws into the protest movement not only the lower middle class, which was prevalent at the Bolotnaya protests in 2012, but the working class, the youth, and the residents of the regions beyond the capital. Many of them already have nothing to lose.

The main lessons of 2011-2012s protests —the necessity of a broad social coalition and clear demands on social issues — must be grasped. The duty of the left is not only to unconditionally support the popular movement, but also to bring into the protests demands for social justice, and the complete removal of big business from power. The RSD calls on all democratic forces, free trade unions, and ecological and urban protection movements to a coordination of actions, to broadening the geography of the protests and to mutual solidarity.

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The “Moscow case” must end and its 13 prisoners must be released!

Candidates disqualified for political reasons should be registered!

Otherwise the elections to the Moscow City parliament, which have been devastated by the city government, must be cancelled and conducted later “with maximum transparency, without the use of “administrative resources”, fraud and discriminatory filters.

The system of “managed democracy” as a way of defending the authorities from society “to the dustbin of history!

*PS:*

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