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Russia

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Slanderous stitch-ups and arrests show that a massive political trial against leaders of the opposition is being prepared in Russia. Konstantin Lebedev (RSD) is in custody. Russian activists need international solidarity.

In Russia, the first half of October was marked by a tightening of repression against the opposition. For the moment, 19 people have been accused in the affair of the so-called "massive disturbances of public order" on May 6 [1]; most of them are at present in jail.

While arbitrary arrests of participants in the spring actions continue, it is already clear that a massive political trial against leaders of the opposition is being prepared. On October 5, one of the main Russian television channels, NTV, broadcast a film produced in the style "documentary investigation", containing unprecedented accusations against the opposition, especially against the best known figure of the left opposition, Sergei Udaltsov. In this propaganda film, done in the purest tradition of Joseph Goebbels, we learn that Udaltsov maintains links with foreign intelligence services and that the main activity of the Left Front which he heads is to scheme with external enemies of the country. As evidence, the film reproduced the recording of a conversation between Sergei Udaltsov, the Left Front activist Leonid Razvojaev, Russian Socialist Movement member Konstantin Lebedev and one of the closest advisors of the president of Georgia, Guivi Targamadze. The conversation particularly evokes a transfer of money from Georgia, in order to "destabilize" Russia. Although the faces are barely visible on the recording and the sound has been recorded and put on the video separately, barely two days later it was a pretext for a criminal action brought by the Investigating Committee of the Prosecutor's Office of the Federation - the body that is today taking the leading role in organizing the repression.

On 17 October, our comrade Konstantin Lebedev was arrested and Sergei Udaltsov was released after interrogation, subject to signing an undertaking not to leave the territory of Moscow. As for the third participant in "the case", Leonid Razvojaev, he applied for political asylum in Ukraine but was kidnapped in the centre of Kiev by employees of the Russian secret services. It should be noted that the Prosecutor's Office, although acting under the guise of a spy conspiracy, finally accused three individuals of "massive public order disturbances". The aim is to launch a potentially major trial, in which several cases will be treated together and all the activity of the movement's challenge to the regime will appear as a giant conspiracy.

It is important to note also that both the accused in the case of "espionage" and the majority of those arrested for their participation in "public order disturbances" on May 6 belong to different fractions of the left. On the eve of the implementation of new austerity measures in Russia, attacks against workers' rights and the pension reform, what frightens the Putin-Medvedev duo is the possibility of seeing the democratic movement that already exists unite with the elements of social protest.

The wave of repression that we are witnessing today is a stress test for the protest movement: either we will hold firm, or we will have to go through a new period of apathy and fear. Facing this unprecedented police pressure, we need the solidarity of our comrades in Europe and around the world. We ask for the organization of pickets for the immediate release of Konstantin Lebedev, the stopping of the criminal action against Sergei Udaltsov and Leonid Razvojaev and the release of political prisoners who took part in the protest on May 6 in Moscow. ?

The Russian Socialist movement was founded in March 2011 by two organizations, the Socialist Movement Vperiod ("Forward"), Russian section of the Fourth International, and Socialist Resistance. It is part of the Left Front, an alliance formed during the protests against the falsification of the elections in 2011 and 2012.

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[1] On Sunday May 6, 2012, Moscow, there was a demonstration of tens of thousands of people from the opposition against the nomination of Putin. Police beat protesters and made 400 arrests, including the leader of the Left Front, Sergei Udaltsov.