

Russia: “Let the Streets Speak!”

Friday 9 December 2011, by [Russian Socialist Movement \(RSD\)](#) (Date first published: 6 December 2011).

This statement by the Russian Socialist Movement (RSD) [1] on the situation following the recent elections was published on 6 December 2011.

The most boring election campaign in the past twenty years has ended with a crushing moral defeat for the establishment. It hardly matters whether United Russia will gain a super-majority in the Duma or has to share seats with LDPR or A Just Russia. What matters is that, despite all the invocations of stability, all the clever scenarios and vote rigging, the Russian people have loudly declared their right to change. The elections have powerfully demonstrated a lack of confidence in the entire political system as embodied by the “party of swindlers and thieves.” Amidst the suffocating atmosphere of stagnation and hopelessness something new can be sensed in the air. Is it a quickly passing Thaw? An Arab Spring? A February Revolution?

From now on, we are faced with an old regime that is unpopular and illegitimate in the eyes of the active part of society, a regime that will inevitably attempt to govern in the old way even as this becomes more and more problematic. On the other hand, we see a huge mass of people who hate the party of swindlers and thieves. What is more, these people publicly humiliated the regime on December 4, only to be cruelly deceived once again. Finally, we have an utterly false and impotent “systemic” opposition, an opposition that people voted for according to the “anyone but them” principle, and whose electoral success was bad news even for itself. As part of the establishment, the systemic parties will undoubtedly seek to form blocs and coalitions with United Russia. The only question is whether they will be able to settle on a price. Echoing Dmitry Medvedev, Sergei Neverov, secretary of the United Russia General Council Presidium, has already said that the party is counting on forming strategic alliances with LDPR and A Just Russia. “This will be [...] a parliament in which there is serious discussion,” he said. “The opposition are not enemies. The opposition are people who have an alternative opinion, a different opinion. And if this opinion coincides [with ours] on certain questions, then they’re welcome! We’re ready to cooperate,” said Andrei Vorobyov, chair of United Russia’s central executive committee. He opened wide his liberal arms even as police on the streets of Moscow and Petersburg were beating up demonstrators protesting election fraud.

“Politics is the art of compromise, an art that allows one to find a balance between different political groups,” Nikolai Levichev, the chair of A Just Russia, diplomatically declared a few hours after the vote. “Vladimir Putin has spoken of the need to overcome social inequality. We agree with this, but everything depends on what paths are proposed. If these paths don’t suit us, then there will be no coalition.” Hence, the head of the “party of swindlers and thieves” is pursuing the same good ends as A Just Russia, only the paths taken are a bit different. Well, well, we’ll see what happens next.

Igor Lebedev, leader of the LDPR faction in the Duma, is even more straightforward, engaging in outright bargaining, without any ideological embellishments. “We are ready for conversation and reasonable dialogue, but only as equal partners, not as stooges.”

It is obvious that, with such an “opposition,” working people should not expect any progressive changes in their lives. There has never been and never will be anything in the histories of these

parties, including the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, other than treachery. The handful of trade unionists and social activists who have made it into the Duma and the regional parliaments on the Communist and Just Russia lists will be unable to affect the essence of their policies. The most they can do is to lend support as they are able to the extra-parliamentary movement, as such people as Oleg Shein, Oleg Smolin, and several others have done in past Dumas. At a time when genuine trade unions and civic movements are weak, and pressure from the repressive security forces will grow, this is important albeit secondary.

Now the streets must become the arena of political struggle. Russia will either take its place in the global anti-capitalist movement, or again sink into apathy and stagnation. Voting for “anyone but them” should be replaced by the struggle for clearly perceived social interests. New, independent political forces must replace the old corrupt parties. If the left wants to be such a force, it must become a party of action. We must confront nationalist populism, which derives political capital from anti-immigrant rhetoric, with the simple, clear idea of the struggle against the bourgeoisie and the parasitic bureaucracy inseparable from it, against the rich bastards who have commissioned the hideous farce known as Russian politics!

The Russian Socialist Movement’s appeal: “Everyone into the streets! Russia for working people!”

These should be your demands:

Cancel the results of the fake elections!

An end to repression: the police and the army on the side of the people!

The president and government must resign!

No coalitions and agreements between opposition parties and United Russia!

Free elections involving all parties and social movements!

Freedom of rallies, marches and strikes!

Free education and healthcare: suspend Federal Law No. 83 and other anti-social laws!

Nationalization of banks, oil and gas resources!

Progressive taxation: let the rich pay for their crisis!

Price controls on consumer goods!

Worker control in the workplace: worker participation in management and distribution of profits!

Revolution – Democracy – Socialism!

Russian Socialist Movement

P.S.

* This statement was first published in English at Chtodelat News:

<http://chtodelat.wordpress.com/2011/12/07/russian-socialist-movement-let-the-streets-speak/>

* For the Russian original see:

http://anticapitalist.ru/skryitoe/pust_govoryat_uliczyi!.html

* The Russian Socialist Movement was formed in 2011 by the fusion of Vpered (Forward, Russian section of the Fourth International) and Sotsialisticheskoye Soprotivleniye (Socialist Resistance).

Footnotes

[1] See on ESSF (article 23666): [Russian socialists regroup to deepen struggle for new left party](#)