

Call from Russian social movements and associations to participate in the Russian Social Forum and demonstration against G8 in Saint-Petersburg

Information letter to Western activists

Organization Committee of the Russian Social Forum (RSF) and Counter-summit G8 call for the most possible massive participation of Western delegates from social movements. The common RSF declaration ("No to liberal policy in Russia and in the world") has been signed during European assemblies preparing the ESF and during the WSF. It's the second year the Russian Social Forum takes place. Only the rise of social and protest movements which occurred in the past two years made such an event possible. Massive venue of foreign participants would make the RSF-2006 an international event which will contribute to the development of the struggles in the country, to the creation of solidarity networks and to the exit of Russian social movements from their international isolation.

Manifestations from the 11th to 15th of July in Saint-Petersburg

11-12 of July: seminars, organized by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation

13-14 of July: Russian Social Forum

15 of July: demonstration and meetings

From the Russian part, we are waiting for the participation of a thousand of activists from the most part of the regions, who represent associative movements, NGO, movements for housing rights, ecologist movements, leftist movements, unions, networks such as "Union of coordinating soviets", intellectuals, anarchists, youth movements, human rights' movements, and so on.

RSF is organized in the respect of the Porto-Alegre Charter's principals (excluding, for example, the participation of political parties). The demonstration is planed to be prepared in common with political oppositional forces.

Organization committee is negotiating with the Russian authorities to have guarantees from the Russian government so that the RSF and the demo won't be repressed. An agreement (oral) has been reached.

Negotiations are still going on.

The RSF program is in preparation. The principal themes are these:

1) 3 themes in the G8 agenda

- opposition to commercialization of education, achievement of the program «Education for all»
- campaign for safe, accessible and ecologically clean energies
- access to medical assistance: for a social reform of the health policy

2) international themes in link with local reality:

- struggle against housing rights' violations, for a popular and democratic housing policy
- campaign against attack on social rights, especially concerning older people
- professional union solidarity, especially between West and East
- human rights' defense and democratic resistance in front of the power repressive tendency and the rise of social inequalities
- struggle against nationalism, chauvinism, racism and fascism
- building an alternative to neoliberalism
- which perspectives for left anticapitalist and internationalist movements?

International networks and representatives of foreign organizations are invited to send their proposals: either concerning already existing themes, either proposing organizing seminars on other themes. Proposal are requested to be sent to the Institute "Collective Action" (info@ikd.ru) up to the 14th of July.

Logistic questions

- In order to get your visa to Russia we have to send to you an invitation to the Russian Consulate of our country. So please communicate the next information: Name, surname, organization, date of born, addresses (professional and home), phone number, passport number, date of delivery and expiration, profession.
- The RSF organization Committee having few resources, it will help in priority the coming of Russian activists from regions. So the foreign delegations are demanded to come on their own. The RSF Committee is trying to organized a tents' camp in the proximity of the Forum. And negotiations are going on with universities to have cheap rooms to rent. The hotels in Saint-Petersburg are quite expensive, but the organizers can reserve some rooms in hotels if there is a demand. The food will be organized at the Forum and will not cost much.

Practical-political questions

- The RSF Organization Committee is doing all its best to guarantee the security of the participants, especially of the foreign ones. But it's worth knowing that Russian authorities are far more hostile to protest action than in the West, and police forces are more eager to use brutal methods. A juridical center will be organized at the Forum. And the Russian government up to now is assuring of its willingness to respect the right to manifest.

- Main forces preparing the Forum are associations, social movement activists, leftist and internationalist activists independent from the Communist party of the Russian Federation. Among the more well known in the West Russian activists taking part in the process – Boris Kagarlitski, Alexander Bouzgalin, Oleg Shein, Lev Ponomarev. General principle of the Porto-Alegre Charter will be strictly respected in the Forum. Some negotiations are going on with some political parties (Yabloko, Communist party, Civic Front Yuri Kasparov's Civic Front and so on) on the matter of their possible participation in the demo, so that it could be a massive event. Another important point is that the RSF will take place in the strict independence from the Russian government, which is not the case of other events organized in line with G8, such as, for example, the "civic G8" organized with presidential administrative resources.

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