

# News Bulletin

International Department of the Central Committee of the RKSM(b)



#13



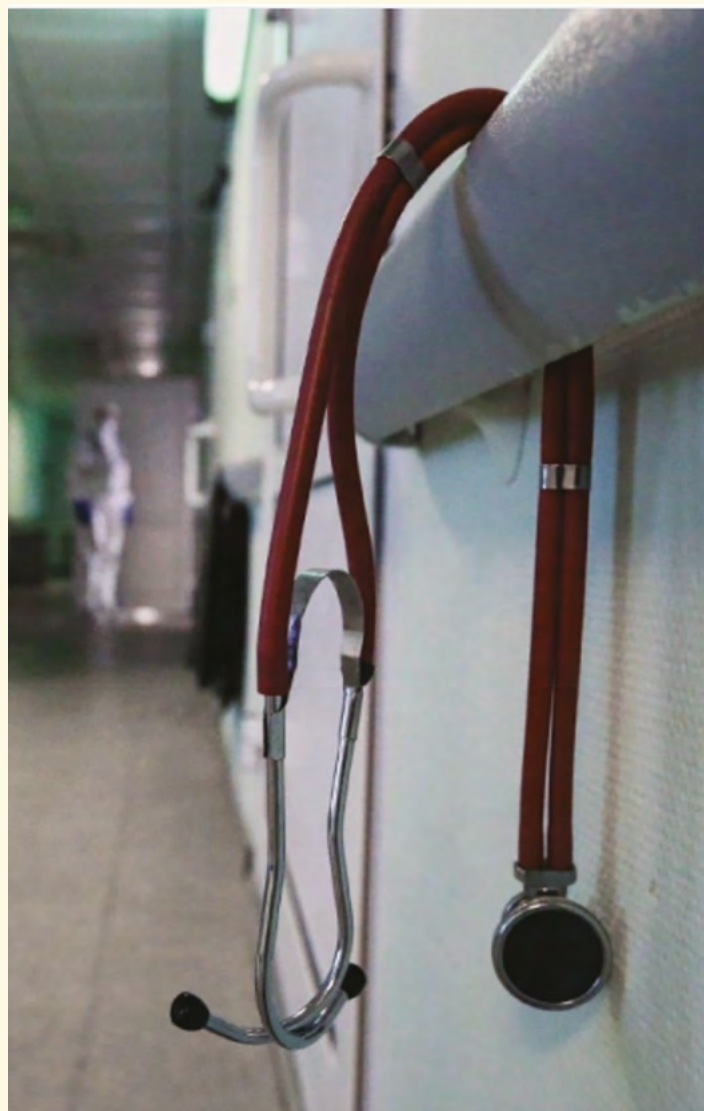
You are reading the thirteenth edition of the news bulletin composed by the International Department of the RKSM(b). Preparing it, we strived to offer you a perspective on the events in Russia, different from the one of mass-media. Hopefully, this will alleviate your analysis of the developments in Russia and strengthen our mutual international cooperation. You are free to use the bulletin as you deem appropriate, e.g. you can translate it and publish on your media or distribute among your activists. We will be glad to answer any of your questions and will appreciate your feedback.

## In-brief

### Mandatory work for graduated medics

The new law came into force on March 1, drastically changing conditions of budget-funded medical and pharmacological education. According to this law medical and pharmacological state-funded students are forced to sign a contract with state-controlled healthcare entities for up to three years of work under mentorship. Those who will refuse to sign such a contract or fail to fulfil their contract duties, will have to reimburse all budget expenses for their education and on top of it—to pay a fine twice as big as those expenses were.

The lawmakers justify their decision by lack of medical staff in public healthcare and even refer to similar policy applied during the Soviet era. Many medical experts, as well as students and their parents expressed their disapproval, pointing that it will discourage young people from choosing medical profession. Some students decided to terminate their education before the law came into force (it was signed in November). Critics of the new policy are insisting, that in Soviet Union, unlike in modern capitalist Russia, all education was free and apart from assignment, graduated students had a right to good work conditions, decent wages, free housing, cheap utilities, and many other forms of social support. A poll conducted in February 2025 among medical workers showed that 32% of respondents would not have become doctors if such a law had been in place during their education.





Yandex.Taxi cars in the parking lot. Photo by Sergey Bobylev | TASS

## Taxi Drivers Across Russia Strike Against Low Pay

On December 15, taxi drivers in many regions of Russia, as well as in Belarus and Kazakhstan, held a one-day strike against extremely low pay from Yandex, a monopoly in this market. For the drivers, Yandex Taxi allows only platform employment: options are self-employed, sole proprietor or “partner”. Hundreds of drivers refused to take rides for the whole day—they protested against poor working conditions. The strike helped make the problems of taxi drivers more visible and strengthened unity and solidarity among them.

Today, a disproportionate share of each fare paid by passengers is taken by the platform, while drivers are left with only a minimal income, even when they provide their own vehicles. At the same time, drivers bear full responsibility for passenger safety and service outcomes, yet every aspect of their work is tightly controlled and monitored. This combination of high responsibility and strict regulation gives the platform broad grounds to impose fines and penalties for even minor missteps, further reducing drivers’ already insufficient earnings. Forced to compensate for these losses, many drivers work excessively long hours without adequate rest, creating serious risks for themselves, their passengers, and other road users. The de-

mands of the striking drivers were clear and reasonable:

- Reduce the commission taken by the platforms
- Allow drivers to see the destination of a trip without paying extra
- Increase the minimum fare, which is currently only 69–79 roubles (depending on the exchange rate at most barely exceeds 1 USD)

The Russian Labour Front supported the strike from the beginning. Its activists helped prepare and distribute leaflets, shared information on social media, and explained why the strike was important for all workers.

The strike became an important first step in the long struggle for taxi drivers’ rights. The reaction from Yandex and its allies in the media showed this clearly. There were attempts to mock the strike in the local newspapers, to paint the drivers as being spoiled and lazy, demanding too much for their labour. In the chats taxi drivers used to organise, attempts were made to provoke ethnic divisions among them, and disrupt their communications. Yandex also tried to shift the weight of the strike onto the passengers by increasing the prices, to pit the customers against the striking drivers. Despite this pressure, drivers are determined to continue the fight. The next step is stronger organisation and collective action. In this struggle, they can count on the consistent support of the Russian Labour Front.

## Members of Marxist Group Receive Harsh Sentences

In Yekaterinburg, the Central District Military Court has issued some of the harshest political sentences in recent years. On 16 December, five participants in a Marxist discussion group from Ufa were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 16 to 22 years. They were convicted on charges of “terrorism” and “preparing the violent overthrow of state power,” accusations increasingly used in Russia against political and social activism.

For most of those convicted, the first seven to eight years of their sentences will be spent in prison rather than in a labour colony. After the verdict, the defendants protested in the courtroom, chanting “Fascism!” at their accusers and prosecutors. All defendants denied the charges and reported torture after their arrests.

The case concerns an openly operating Marxist study group that existed for six years. The group met weekly in a public space to discuss the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, as well as political economy, philosophy, and revolutionary history. Seminars and lectures were recorded and published online. Hundreds of people of different ages and political views participated over the years. The group was educational and public, not secretive.

Despite this, investigators described the group as a “terrorist organisation”. A police informant who infiltrated the group later became the main witness. Defence lawyers stated that this informant actively encouraged formal organisation and radical language, which the prosecution later used as evidence.

Another central element of the case was an official expert analysis of Vladimir Lenin’s writings.

Court-appointed experts argued that Lenin’s ideas about revolution and the overthrow of state power promote violent action. On this basis, ordinary discussions of Lenin’s texts, quotes from his writings, and recorded lectures were treated as proof of criminal intent. In effect, simply studying and discussing Lenin’s ideas can now be considered a crime. If reading and debating Lenin is treated as terrorism, how can Marxism be openly discussed at all?

The logic of repression has spread beyond the original group. At the end of December, a leftist activist, a figure better known for his role in 2011 protests than for any current activity, has been sentenced to six years in a high-security colony. He was convicted for simply publishing statements in support of the Ufa Marxist group. Several linguistic analyses, experts and defenders noted that there was no evidence of criminal activity in his posts, showing that even public solidarity with political prisoners can now be treated as a crime.

This case shows how Marxism-Leninism, communist ideas, and even discussions about revolution are being directly criminalised in Russia. Long prison sentences were imposed not for material actions, but for political views and theoretical discussions, with the clear aim of intimidating others and discouraging any similar activity. Under this logic, studying revolutionary theory, engaging in collective learning, and speaking openly about social change become acts of risk, while the boundary between permitted and forbidden political thought is deliberately left unclear.



Members of the Marxist group in Ufa. Photo by Artyom Putilov | Kommersant



# Plaque commemorating notable Hitler supporter unveiled at a state university in Yekaterinburg

On 5 February, metropolitan bishop Evgeny of Yekaterinburg took part in the opening ceremony at the Ural State University of Economics of a commemorative plaque to the “outstanding Russian historian of the Orthodox Church”, Anton Kartashev. The event was timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of his birth.

Kartashev, the last Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Governing Synod, emigrated out of Soviet Russia in 1919 due to his anti-communist beliefs. Those were so strong, that in 1941, when the Third Reich invaded the USSR, Kartashev warmly welcomed the invasion and praised Hitler above and beyond. To quote Kartashev’s letter to another infamous fascist-minded white émigré, Ivan Shmelyov:

“What a momentous day this Sunday turned out to be. It was, after all, the “day of all saints who shone forth in the Russian land.” Unconsciously, the “pagan” Hitler set out on this day to liberate holy Russia, whether he wanted to or not. This is punishment for

those who reviled the saints and a promise for us.

Something great and almost unbelievable has happened! Finally, Sovdepiia is kaput, and our emigration comes not to a bad end.

...And now, on the heads of our Ivans, the world hydra will be smashed! And the whole West will be saved from the Marxist slaughter of flesh and spirit!”

The unveiled plaque stirred up public controversy—the quoted letter is public knowledge. Subsequently, the plaque was taken down on 14 February. Nevertheless, this incident is another glaring example of the bourgeoisie heavily promoting Third Reich collaborators, Nazism and fascism supporters from the White movement as it strives to eradicate any sympathies towards communism. Kartashev is yet another name among Denikin, Krasnov, Ilyin and others.



Commemorative plaque to Kartashev. Photo by the Ural State University of Economics

# The government blocks Telegram

Telegram is the most popular instant messaging app in Russia. Since August 2025, voice and video calls in it, as well as in WhatsApp, don't work in Russia. In March 2026, restrictions were tightened further: now the messenger is available only via VPN or in-built proxy.

German Klimenko, Chairman of the Board of the Digital Economy Development Fund, cynically explained the aim of the restrictions in his comment to "Parlamentskaya gazeta", the parliament's official newspaper:

“The primary function of any messaging app is to create social connections. Consequently, to get people to stop using a messaging app, these connections must be severed. In 2018, when Telegram first clashed with Roskomnadzor, the latter managed to break about 10 percent of social connections: hypothetically, if I have a thousand contacts in my messenger, 100 stopped working, and 900 remained. Now the goal is to do the opposite: to make 900 drop off for one reason or another, while 100 remain. This is called

“social graph disruption.” If the messenger stops performing its primary function and connecting you with the vast majority of people, using it will simply lose its meaning”.

This is very well put and, with the enforcement of the so-called “white lists” (when only selected online services are available) and occasional complete shutdown of mobile internet, applies to the governmental policy in regard to communications in general: to disrupt social connections and allow only approved dissemination of information.

The reason for implementation of this policy stems from the class nature of the Russian society. Proletariat's strength lies in its ideological conviction, unity, and organisation. Therefore, any community not directly controlled by the bourgeois authorities, whether it is audience of Telegram channels, a residents' initiative group, a literary club, an independent trade union, or a civic organisation, is perceived by them as a threat and must be divided, fragmented or replaced by a fake entity.



# In-depth



In front of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, October 1993

## The Inevitable Decline of the CPRF

In the previous issue, #12, one piece of news was failure of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) in regional elections. In this issue, we would like to offer a deeper dive on the decline of the said party.

### Birth by Compromise

The decline of the CPRF is the logical result of its three-decade integration into Russia's bourgeois political system. Created in 1993 as a legal party under the new, capitalist post-Soviet constitution, the party has since its birth systematically traded revolutionary socialism for the privileges of a managed opposition. Through decades of compromise and retreat from class struggle, the party has become part of the state it once claimed to oppose. Its growing irrelevance is the logical result. Its true role is not to challenge the system, but to contain social discontent within safe, controlled channels.

Founded not long before the violent dissolution of the Supreme Soviet, the CPRF accepted the

rules of the bourgeois order from the start. During the 1993 constitutional crisis, it did not agitate for people to take to the streets and started to distance itself from the Supreme Soviet. *The pivotal capitulation was the 1996 presidential election. Facing a deeply unpopular Boris Yeltsin in a campaign notorious for manipulation and fraud, Gennady Zyuganov conceded defeat despite significant mass support and disavowed any "street action", like protests, in reaction to the result. This act confirmed the party's submission to the political establishment. Its later participation in coalition governments, such as Yevgeny Primakov's in 1998, abandoning for a time its criticism of privatisation, showed a preference for securing minor ministerial posts over principled opposition.* Under Zyuganov, the party ideologically diluted Marxism-Leninism, merging Soviet nostalgia with nationalism, Russian Orthodox conservatism, and statism. In 2016, Zyuganov described the path forward for CPRF as "high spirituality and a sense of patriotism". This exact synthesis paved the way for its full alignment with the bourgeois state.

### The Absent Vanguard

This ideological shift is reflected in the party's passive social base and its absence from genuine class conflict. According to the data collected by the CPRF themselves, in 2022–2024, they managed

to consistently achieve a rating higher than 10% only among those aged 60 and higher. During the same period, their vote share was higher than average only among those with higher education. The CPRF's core electorate is the oldest of any party, and the largest group in it are pensioners. Not surprisingly, from this aspect as well, the party's proclaimed revolutionary goals remain hollow, as the CPRF's "working-class" image has never translated into organising real labour activism. *It does not rally workers on the factory floor, build independent unions, or have a history of calling strikes. In numerous recent labour conflicts, the CPRF has been largely absent. For example, during the 2023 nationwide strike by Wildberries employees over pay and degrading working conditions, the party offered only a limp statement of solidarity, with no material help or follow-up legislation. More lately, there wasn't any support for the taxi drivers strike,* described in the "in-brief" section of the current bulletin issue. The pattern of the party bosses is clear: the CPRF will attend pre-authorized rallies like May Day marches, but will not support an independent strike movement that might threaten their privileged position. This disconnect between radical rhetoric and legalistic practice reduces the party to managing nostalgia, offering a harmless outlet for protest sentiment.

## Crisis Managers

*The CPRF's actions during political crises consistently reveal its loyalty to the system. In each critical moment, the leadership has worked to contain popular mobilisation within state-tolerated limits.*

The 2018 Pension Reform Protests: While leading parliamentary opposition and organising sanctioned rallies, the party focused its strategy on a legally futile referendum. In order to obtain legal permission to hold protests in some cities, the local CPRF representatives promised not to criticise the head of state, Vladimir Putin. Any access to these protests by speakers whom the CPRF did not control, like leaders of independent trade unions, was restricted. This effort channelled mass anger into a dead end, helping to dissipate the protests once the reform passed.

The 2022 Invasion of Ukraine: The war triggered the party's complete assimilation into state ideology. The CPRF leadership gave unwavering support, with Zyuganov framing the conflict in nationalist terms, calling Ukraine a "cancer tumour that will consume all of Europe".

The party's support for the war directly caused the systematic repression of its dissenting voices. When officials like Primorye regional deputy Leonid Vasyukevich or Perm city deputy Sergey Medvedev, or Moscow deputy Evgeny Stupin voiced an-

ti-war positions, the reaction was swift. They were publicly denounced, removed from committees, and expelled. This internal purge eliminated any space for whatever was left of a class-based, internationalist position within the CPRF.

## Party in Wartime

Since the beginning of the war, the party has been shaken by a series of internal scandals and splits. These conflicts have been especially visible in what should have been its most active and militant layer—the youth organization, the Leninist Communist Youth Union (LKSM). *In spring of 2022, in several regions, including Moscow and Orenburg, groups of young activists left the party en masse, citing frustration with the leadership's abandonment of any real struggle for communism.* In their statements, they described a deep ideological and organisational decay within the party. According to these critics, even the party's formal democratic structures have largely ceased to function. The Congress (theoretically the highest decision-making body) no longer exercises meaningful control over the leadership. Real authority rests with a small group around the Central Committee. At the same time, the leadership has become increasingly detached from the party's regional base. Senior figures, many of whom have spent decades in comfortable parliamentary positions, rarely travel outside Moscow or engage directly with local activists. This growing distance has intensified anger among younger communists. Many cite *statements by Zyuganov himself as evidence of the party's ideological retreat. In particular, his calls for reconciliation between the "Reds" and the "Whites" of the Russian Civil War, including appeals to forgive the crimes of the White Terror,* have been widely interpreted by activists as a rejection of the fundamental historical and class divisions that defined that struggle.

The outcome of this thirty-year evolution is a profound and accelerating decline. Having fully become a "party of war" on top of its history of letting down social and labour protests, the CPRF has alienated its protest electorate. Its more traditional supporters are driven away by the CPRF's failure to at least convincingly perform the role of opposition. For example, their *faction in the parliament could not even vote against a bill easing restrictions on child labour, choosing to abstain instead.* On the law obligating medical students to work for state-controlled healthcare entities for up to three years after graduation (see "in-brief" section of the present issue) the Duma faction, party itself or its youth wing, the LKSM, haven't presented any meaningful pushback either. These examples are indicative of ignoring the needs and problems of the Russian youth.





Zyuganov, the incumbent, first and only general secretary of the CPRF, has been a loyal political supporter of the Russian Orthodox Church. Photo by Kommersant

As a result, the CRPF's support has collapsed to historic lows of around 10%, and it has lost its traditional second-place status in several regions (these results of last year's local elections were covered in the 12th edition of our bulletin). The Kremlin now exercises micromanagement over its candidates, such as when it refused to let ex-presidential candidate Pavel Grudinin get into the Duma.

*The party offers no compelling vision for the future, no strategy for class struggle, and has exhausted its historical role as a safe repository for popular discontent.*

## The Dead End of Managed Opposition

In conclusion, the CPRF's political decay is the logical fulfilment of its original purpose. The party was deliberately created within the new bourgeois state to perform a specific function: to safely channel and demobilise socialist energy, redirect-

ing working-class discontent into the empty arena of parliamentary procedure. Its unwavering support for imperialist war and its ruthless purges of internal dissent are the latest expression of this role. By fully integrating itself into the architecture of the Russian capitalist state, the CPRF has become a loyal instrument of the ruling bourgeoisie. In exchange, its leadership has secured stable, well-paid and politically safe positions within the system, positions they now defend at almost any cost. What the party has gained in security, however, it has lost in political substance. It has lost the trust of the working class, the ability to organise any serious political struggle, and the authority to speak in the name of socialism. In doing so, it has abandoned the principles it once claimed to uphold: the ideals of communism, the practice of democratic centralism, and the internationalist tradition of the workers' movement.

