

Russia: Why is it important to express solidarity with Boris Kagarlitsky

Tuesday 1 August 2023, by [Russian Socialist Movement \(RSD\)](#) (Date first published: 31 July 2023).

After the arrest of Boris Kagarlitsky, the discussion followed whether it is worthwhile to express solidarity with him. We would like to share the opinion of our comrades from Posle. Media who explain the importance of international campaign to support Kagarlitsky in spite of his controversial political legacy.

On July 26, the FSB detained Boris Kagarlitsky, a well-known left-wing theorist, activist and commentator. Boris has been transferred from Moscow, his home city, to a pre-trial detention center in Syktyvkar, the Komi Republic, where he will be held at least until late September. Kagarlitsky is charged with “justification of terrorism” and may face up to 7 years in prison. Kagarlitsky’s colleagues from the Rabkor YouTube channel were also searched and interrogated in Moscow, Yekaterinburg and Penza. To us, it is clear that Kagarlitsky’s arrest is part of a new large-scale repressive campaign launched by the Kremlin to purge any critics of the war from the political landscape. Since February 2022, Boris has explicitly condemned Russian aggression, and we are certain this was the only real reason for his arrest.

Kagarlitsky’s political career began over 40 years ago and has been far from flawless. In the early 1980s, Kagarlitsky was a member of the “young socialists” underground group and suffered KGB’s repressions. Since the early 1990s, he has played a prominent role in the left-wing opposition, first to Yeltsin’s and then to Putin’s regime. His numerous books and public statements have greatly influenced several generations of Russian leftists, which is why Kagarlitsky should bear high responsibility for his assessments. In 2014, Kagarlitsky actively endorsed the annexation of Crimea and the creation of the so-called “people’s republics” in eastern Ukraine. Unfortunately, his position contributed to the disorientation of a part of the Russian left. These, as well as many other episodes in Kagarlitsky’s trajectory, are utterly unacceptable to the Posle collective. Our fundamental disagreements remain unresolved, and we are willing to discuss them with Boris. Though, only after his release.

It must be underscored that following the full-scale invasion by Russia, Kagarlitsky was one of the few Russian leftists who, while remaining in the country, condemned the war on Russia’s part publicly. Presumably, until now, it was only Kagarlitsky’s public stature that had kept the authorities from persecuting him. His arrest indicates that the Kremlin has expanded the scope of repression, and even more activists are currently at risk. This is why we are calling for an international campaign to support Kagarlitsky and all political prisoners in Russia.

[Click here](#) to subscribe to ESSF newsletters in English and/or French.

P.S.

Российское социалистическое движение

<https://www.facebook.com/russocmovement/posts/pfbid0T5ySa79YprpfZwSDifn62giFhJWSWn89tU2YnubuqmgshscHBVr7ch3omRb6UHLol>