

Party Loses 5th Bid for Registration

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A fifth registration attempt by the leftist Rot Front party was rejected on the grounds that its emblem, a clenched fist over a red star, can be seen as a "symbol of extremism."

The group was also told its title constitutes copyright infringement as there exists a Soviet-era confection company with the same name, Rot Front leader Sergei Udaltsov told The Moscow Times on Tuesday.

The fist and the star imply extremism because they symbolize both "the military component of the Soviet Union and the fight against the current governmental structure," Rot Front said in a statement, adding that the interpretation was done by the presidential Heraldic Council.

A raised fist became a global symbol of proletarian unity in the 1930s. The symbol has since been known as "Rot Front."

The Justice Ministry also cited procedural violations during the party's founding. Four previous registration requests were rejected on the pretext that the party's charter violates political legislation.

A written inquiry to the ministry went unanswered Tuesday.

Udaltsov said the ministry's interpretation of the Rot Front moniker was just a pretext.

"It's an abnormal situation. The bureaucracy just finds new ways to block our registration," he said by telephone. "The authorities fear independent parties because they see us as a threat to stability — not to the stability of the country, but to their stability."

He promised to file registration papers for the sixth time, altering the title and the emblem, but admitted Rot Front had slim chances of being registered in time for the State Duma elections in December.

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