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Activists Try to Rally But Are Blocked by Cops

By Alexander Bratersky

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Several hundred protesters on Sunday evening tried to enter Triumfalnaya Ploshchad in central Moscow, which had been fenced off. Police forcibly prevented them from succeeding, blocked all of the entrances and urged them to disperse.

Riot police also used police batons on the same crowd.

After one person, possibly a provocateur, threw sparklers into the crowd, several participants shouted "The elections are a farce," as police officers detained some of the activists.

Yelizaveta, a 21-year-old student, said she was protesting because the liberal Parnas party was not allowed to register. "All of the parties are Kremlin-backed and we have no choice," she said.

Valery, 43, an activist of the Solidarnost movement, said he regularly attends protests to fight

for free elections. "Our Constitution is not bad, but authorities should use it for the people," he said, adding that he believes protests are "the only thing left." "Continually dripping water wears away a stone," he said.

"The reaction shows that the authorities are afraid of a revolution, similar to the ones in Ukraine and in Egypt," Valery said.

Vladimir, 23, a car mechanic, complained that the authorities put a lot of taxes on the old American cars he is restoring. He said he voted for the Yabloko party. "I don't want my voice to be given to United Russia." He said his grandmother, a loyal Putin supporter, voted for the Communist party.

He was wearing a pin featuring the United Russia bear crossed out, reading "against the party of crook and thieves."

Local pro-Kremlin activists were giving out leaflets on Pushkinskaya, inviting people to donate blood. The leaflet also announced a concert at Lubyanskaya Ploshchad at 8 p.m. The leaflet said it would demonstrate that "Russian warriors bend horseshoes and cross themselves not only in fairy tales."

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