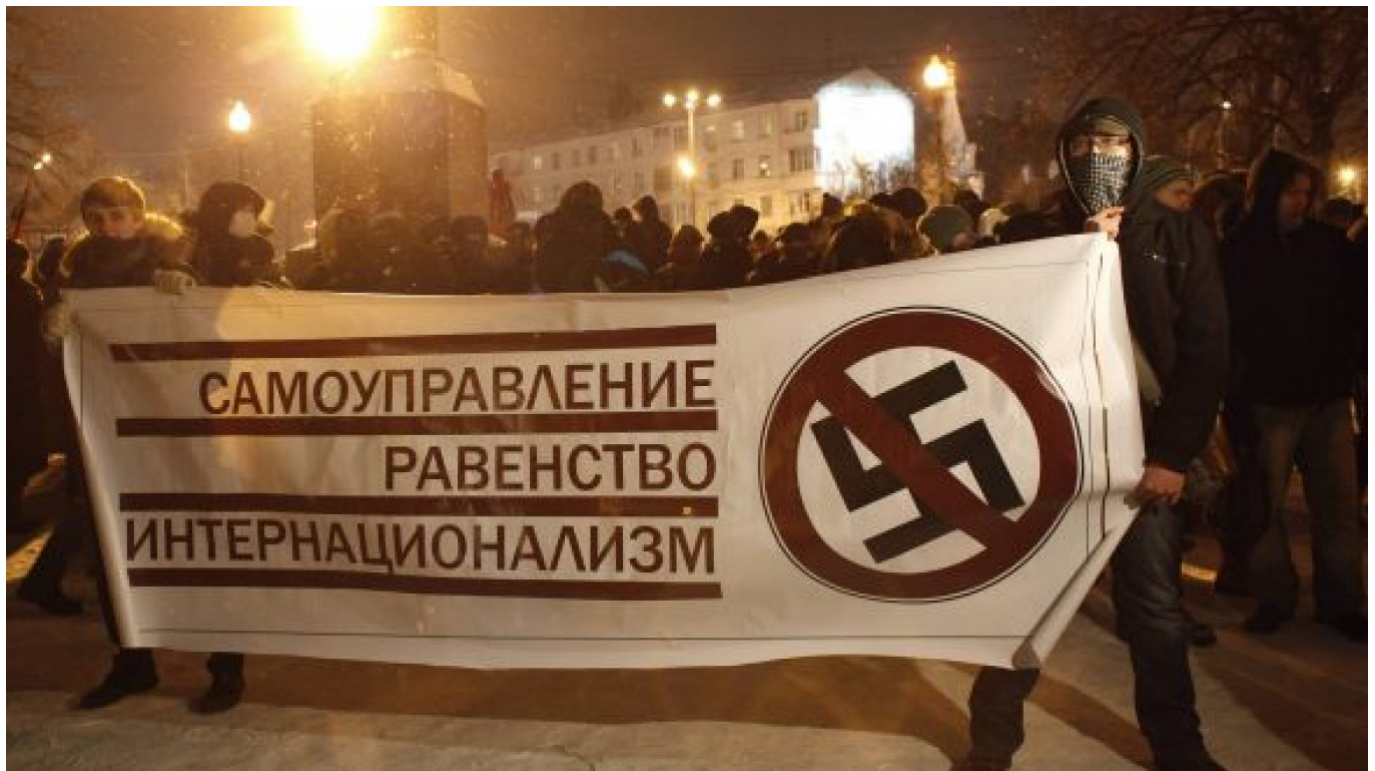


21 Detained at Rally for Slain Lawyer

January 20, 2011



Masked demonstrators holding a sign reading "Self Government, Equality, Internationalism" late Wednesday. **Alexander Zemlianichenko**

Moscow police briefly detained 21 people at a memorial rally for a human rights lawyer who was shot in a brazen, broad-daylight killing two years ago.

Hundreds of people walked down Tverskoi Bulvar and rallied on Pushkin Square late Wednesday in memory of rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and Novaya Gazeta reporter Anastasia Baburova. People released Chinese lanterns into the air, holding candles and clutching portraits of Markelov and Baburova.

Police spokesman Anatoly Lastovetsky said people wearing masks at the rally were detained as well as those who lit flares. They were only held briefly.

Markelov, 34, a lawyer whose work had angered nationalists, and Baburova, 25, a journalist walking with him from a news conference, were shot on Jan. 19, 2009, near the Christ the Savior Cathedral by a masked gunman.

The trial of a man and a suspected female accomplice opens in Moscow next week.

Prosecutors accuse Nikita Tikhonov, 30, and his girlfriend Yevgenia Khasis, 26, of killing Markelov because of his work as a lawyer for hate crime victims. Tikhonov gunned down Baburova as the murder witness, prosecutors say. Both Tikhonov and Khasis, known nationalists, deny the accusations.

Investigators say they found the murder weapon in Tikhonov's apartment a few days before his arrest in November 2009.

Neither of the suspects have an alibi because they could not recall their actions on that day, Tikhonov's lawyer, Alexander Vasilyev, said Tuesday.

(AP, MT)

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