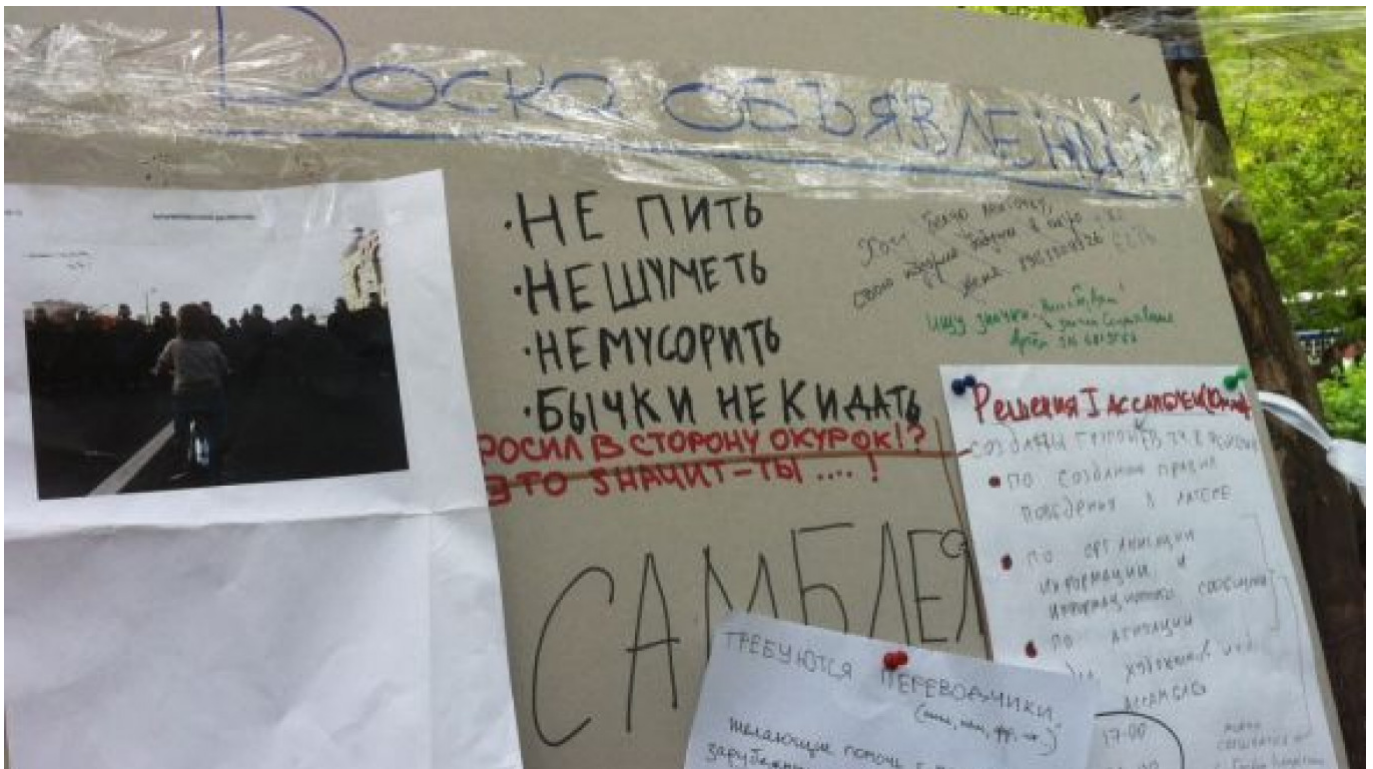


Protesters Battle for Toilets, Settle in at Mobile Camp

May 11, 2012



An announcement board set up at the camp. Rules listed as bullet points: Don't drink, don't be loud, don't leave trash, don't leave your cigarette butts. **Kevin O'Flynn**

Protesters have stuck out another night in a mobile camp at Chistiye Prudy, where they fought off an attempt to leave them without toilets and began settling into normal routines of exercise and cleaning, despite authorities stating they would clear the camp.

The number of protesters swelled to about 2,000 overnight at the camp, where participants spread out sleeping pads, Vedomosti reported.

At one point authorities sought to flush protesters from the area by removing portable toilets.

"I think authorities decided waste us in the outhouse. The owner said he had been pressured and took away the toilets," socialite and opposition figure Kseniya Sobchak wrote in Twitter. "I never thought I would get sucked into politics in the toilet business," she quoted the owner of the toilets as saying.

But organizers were able to quickly organize new toilets from another company.

"The authorities are funny: they removed the toilets to kick us out of Chistiye Prudy. However, we were able to solve the problem quickly: after an hour they brought new ones," Solidarity opposition group co-leader Ilya Yashin said in Twitter.

At least 150 protesters made it through the entire night with sandwiches, tea and coffee, waking up to morning exercises and a clean-up of the territory, Interfax reported. A bulletin board with notices and schedules for chores was also erected, and protesters passed the night with songs and power provided by a portable generator, Vedomosti reported.

A Novaya Gazeta correspondent reported that a few police officers joined demonstrators in eating sandwiches at one point in the night.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday called the camp illegal and said police forces would be used to clear protesters. He had said earlier in the week that police officers hitting, kicking, and striking demonstrators with batons at Sunday's March of a Million protest should have been rougher.

Opposition organizers have been gathering protesters to Chistiye Prudy with calls to "Occupy Abai," a reference to the statue of Kazakh poet and cultural figure Abai Kunanbayev near which protesters have settled.

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