

# RUSSIAN ELECTION WATCH



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## TOP NEWS

- Russia's top "oligarch" arrested, assets frozen
- Putin's chief of staff resigns, defeated by "Chekists"
- Putin taps moderate for new chief of staff
- Court strikes down key media restriction
- 23 parties registered for Duma ballot
- State-owned media blast Communists
- Yabloko, SPS, Communists defend oligarch
- Dollar millionaires on Communist party list
- Putin remains far ahead in presidential race

## DATES TO REMEMBER

November 7, 2003: Television campaigning begins

December 7, 2003: Duma elections

March 14, 2004: Presidential election

## SEE INSIDE

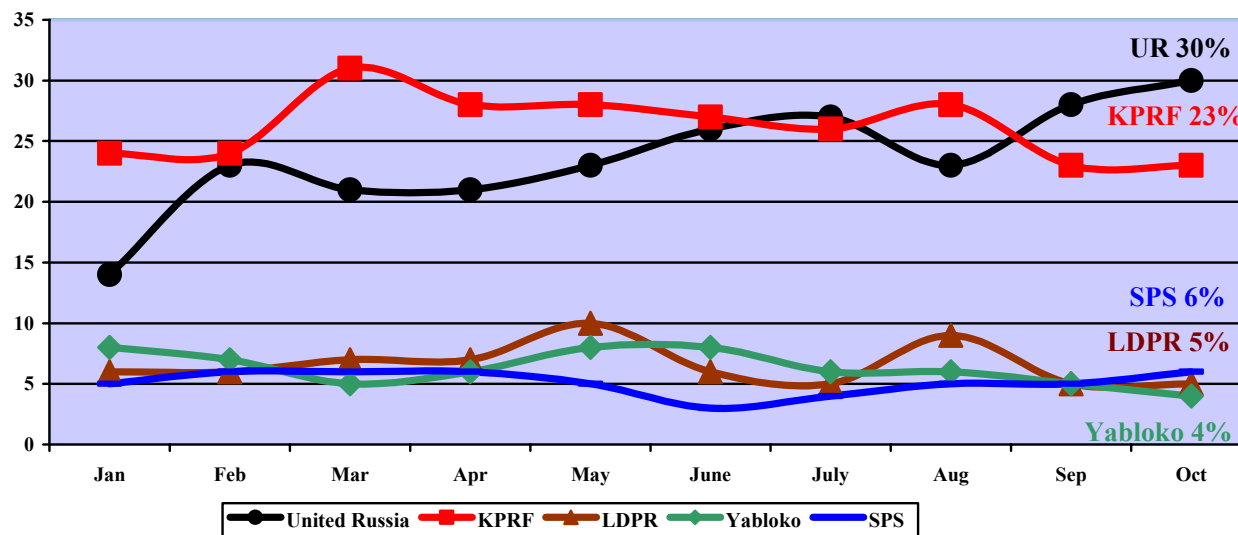
P.2: *Theories on the Khodorkovsky arrest*

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## TRACKING THE POLLS:

*How the percentage intending to vote for each party has fluctuated in 2003*



Polling agency VTsIOM-A polls 1600 people in 40 regions nationwide late each month and reports the percentage of adult citizens who, given a list of names, say they would cast their ballot for a party if the election were held now, counting only those who intend to vote. The latest poll was taken October 24-28, just as news of the Khodorkovsky arrest was breaking. A total of 58% said that they were likely to vote, down 5% from September. Margin of error is 3.4%.

## On the Campaign Trail

### THREE POLITICAL EARTHQUAKES

Just when observers were writing off the elections as fully managed and predictable, Russia struck again. On October 25, Federal Security Service (FSB) troops stormed the plane of Mikhail **Khodorkovsky**, Russia's richest man and an open financier of opposition parties, during a refueling stop in Novosibirsk and hauled him off to jail in Moscow. Presidential Chief of Staff Aleksandr **Voloshin**, the top manager of President Vladimir **Putin's** "managed democracy," protested by tendering his resignation the same day. To top things off,



on October 30, Russia's **Constitutional Court** proved not to be as manageable as expected, striking down a key restriction on media campaign coverage. With the official start of television campaigning fast approaching on November 7, each of these political earthquakes have helped to throw the election's outcome into question.

### The Khodorkovsky Arrest

Khodorkovsky, head of the gigantic Yukos-Sibneft oil concern, had corporate representatives on the party lists of the Communist Party, United Russia, SPS, and Yabloko and was reportedly the biggest financier of the latter. In spring 2003, he was making no secret of his political ambitions, letting slip to reporters that he would give up business in 2007 and perhaps begin a political career. Having gotten his start using Communist Youth League money in mysterious

ways during the Gorbachev era, he had recently sought to foster an image as an “oligarch with a heart of gold,” demonstratively funding various good causes and taking pains to make his corporate dealings transparent, a novelty for Russian business. But now Khodorkovsky stands accused of fraud and embezzlement during the privatization period when he accrued many of his assets. Prosecutors added insult to injury by freezing 44% of his firm’s shares, although they subsequently released a few. On November 3, Khodorkovsky resigned as Yukos CEO.



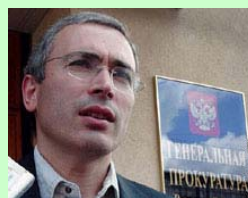
While theories about motive are legion (see box at right), few question that the arrest was arranged by the grouping of FSB-linked St. Petersburgers in the Presidential Administration known as the *Siloviki* or *Chekists*, notably Igor **Sechin** (left) and Viktor **Ivanov**. Putin left little doubt that he, too, had approved the move when he forcefully backed his General Prosecutor, who officially ordered the arrest, in front of television cameras the very next day.

The arrest and asset freeze set off an economic and political furor. In a rare show of independence and unity, key big business and even Prime Minister Mikhail **Kasyanov** condemned the actions as economically harmful. Russian stocks plunged. Virtually all parties not linked to the Kremlin *Siloviki* found themselves in a highly awkward position and struggled to respond. Most uncomfortable was Putin-endorsed **United Russia** since its pro-presidential and pro-business stances suddenly wound up at odds. Making the best of a bad situation, party leader Boris **Gryzlov** decided to try and grab the reins of the anti-oligarch bandwagon, warning large corporations that no one had ever given them the right to privatize profits on natural resources. The party also promptly purged a top Yukos shareholder (incumbent Duma deputy Vladimir **Dubov**) from its party list.

For the **Communist Party (KPRF)**, the arrest drew attention to the presence on its list of former Yukos board chairman Sergei **Muravlenko** as well as three other “dollar millionaires.” While denying their party was under any obligation to Yukos, KPRF leaders condemned the arrest as economically damaging. Gennady **Zyuganov** (above) repeatedly explained that the Communist Party was not just for the poor anymore, representing a broad social coalition that could work with business (*on KPRF aspirations and limitations, see Peshkov p.10*). Its opponents, among them “news” editors at Russia’s state-controlled television networks, however, eagerly pointed out the irony. (*Might the KPRF still come out the winner? See Kolmakov on p.5.*)



The most pro-Western liberal-market parties were also embarrassed. **Yabloko**, long critical of “crony capitalism” and Russian monopolism, was forced to own up to its dependence on the biggest oligarch of them all. In defending him, though, the party stressed its traditional



#### WHY ARREST THIS MAN?

*There is no shortage of theories as to why the Kremlin clan known as the Siloviki and their allies in the General Prosecutor’s Office decided to arrest Khodorkovsky (left). Some are:*

- Punish him for financing opposition parties, candidates
- Knock out a major rival for the 2008 presidential election
- Prevent the sale of oil giant to foreigners
- Obtain oil giant for selves to sell to foreigners
- Grab power, move closer to authoritarianism
- Shake up a political situation that favors the Family
- Actually clean up Russian business, end corruption

strength as an advocate of democracy, with party leader Grigory **Yavlinsky** warning of “capitalism with a Stalinist face” and hoping that the alarmed urban intelligentsia, a core part of Yabloko’s electorate, would turn out for it in higher-than-usual numbers (*on this possibility, see Nikonov on p.9*). Adding to the party’s worries, however, Russian prosecutors searched a political consulting firm that had business with both Yukos and Yabloko and hauled off computers chock full of financial and strategic documents from Yabloko’s campaign. When Yabloko legislator and campaign coordinator Sergei **Mitrokhin** showed up to protest, he was detained in the firm’s building until the end of the day (at right, he peers out a company window from “captivity”). (*On how this impacts Yabloko, see Michaleva on p.7.*)



While the **Union of Right Forces (SPS)** has always been unambiguously pro-big-business, its leadership had made a conscious decision to stress its support for Putin’s economic policies in its 2003 campaign, a choice symbolized by the inclusion of controversial but Putin-blessed “electricity oligarch” Anatoly **Chubais** in the number-three slot on its party list. By rebuking Putin for sanctioning the arrest, Chubais risked the extensive coverage he had been receiving on state-controlled television. Things could still break SPS’s way, however, if a sizeable pro-business vote abandons the newly anti-oligarch United Russia.

The only parties not facing difficulties are those most often linked to the *Siloviki* clan in the Kremlin, notably Gennady **Raikov’s People’s Party** and, some would add, Vladimir **Zhirinovskiy’s Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)**. Neither of these parties included Yukos people on its party lists and both have loudly championed the Khodorkovsky arrest. Some experts now predict an LDPR showing in the 10-percent range as it historically performs better than polls indicate. The People’s Party, however, still shows no sign of creeping closer to the critical 5% threshold in the party-list competition though it remains highly competitive in at least 30 territorial district races.

#### Voloshin’s Resignation

In Russia’s “superpresidential” political system, the head of the president’s staff can wield enormous power. Voloshin was one of the most powerful, personally handling eco-

nomic issues and overseeing the implementation of “managed democracy,” the means by which the state manipulates election outcomes. As the head of the “**Family**” grouping of Kremlinites linked to the Yeltsin regime, Voloshin (left) also managed the building of United Russia together with one of his deputies, Vladislav **Surkov**. Just last month Voloshin’s group appeared to have won a decisive victory over the Siloviki, as Putin bestowed his endorsement upon United Russia and not any of the Siloviki-sponsored pro-Putin parties. Khodorkovsky’s arrest, however, dealt a major blow to Voloshin, who worked closely with “oligarchic” business and whose authority in this sphere was thus undermined.



Allaying fears that the autocratically inclined Siloviki would now take full control of his Administration, Putin has created a new balance among Kremlin “clans.” Ascendant is a previously little-noticed grouping that observers have dubbed the “**St. Petersburg Lawyers**” for their professional legal training and roots in Putin’s native city. As of October 30, the new chief of staff is Dmitry **Medvedev** (below), a longtime Putin friend who has assiduously kept his distance from the Siloviki. Unlike Voloshin, he is known for uncreatively implementing his bosses’ orders and is thus widely expected



to seek compromises among the different groupings. To underscore his independence from the Siloviki, Medvedev almost immediately questioned the legality of the freezing of Yukos assets. Moreover, his new first deputy and close ally, Dmitry **Kozak**, is widely seen as a stronger figure and a veteran of many battles with the Siloviki.

While the Family lost the chieftancy, it was compensated by the addition of Igor **Shuvalov**, another strong figure, as a deputy head of administration. Since Shuvalov is rumored to be assigned the economic responsibilities that Voloshin used to have, and since Surkov remains in place as the coordinator of the Kremlin’s Duma campaign, United Russia’s financing and coalition of Kremlin-dependent governors are not significantly threatened.

## The Unmanageable Court

The Constitutional Court’s latest ruling declared unconstitutional a clause in Russia’s main election law, the Law on Voter Rights, that had radically stifled media coverage of the campaign. The clause defined the printing or broadcast of almost any information about a candidate as “campaigning.” This made media vulnerable to prosecution for illegal campaigning if they could not prove that information reported was paid for from a candidate’s official election fund, ruling out commentary and analysis. In finding that this clause violated constitutional norms of free speech, the court also provided a more specific definition of campaigning. The result is that mass media will now be able to provide election commentary and report on candidate activities without

the threat of prosecution, although only for the final five weeks before the election. Since the restrictions favored incumbents whose activities as politicians could be covered legally under the law, the court ruling works in favor of the opposition.



With the ruling, Court Chairman Valery **Zorkin** (left) has cemented his reputation as one of the fearless free thinkers of modern Russia and as a defender of the rule of law rather than the “rule by law.” As head of the Constitutional Court in 1993, he first gained notoriety for his court’s ruling that Yeltsin had acted unconstitutionally in ordering the dissolution of the Russian parliament. After being removed and enduring nearly a decade of political oblivion, Zorkin returned in 2003 to head the Court again. Almost immediately upon his return, the Court invalidated a key mechanism by which the central government had sought to constrict regional autonomy, restoring the authority of provincial basic law.

## Internet Resources in English

Observers can find a good deal of information on the 2003-04 Russian elections on the Internet, even if one speaks no Russian. While most parties have little or no information in English, Yabloko regularly translates party documents and press releases as well as campaign-related news stories it considers of interest to readers. Party sites with at least some English material include

**Yabloko:** [www.eng.yabloko.ru](http://www.eng.yabloko.ru)

**SPS:** [www.sps.ru](http://www.sps.ru)

**LDPR:** [www.ldpr.ru](http://www.ldpr.ru)

**United Russia:** [www.mos-partya.ru](http://www.mos-partya.ru)

Several organizations also publish extensive English-language campaign information, including candidate lists, party programs, poll data, and expert analysis. See

**Carnegie Moscow Center:** [www.carnegie.ru](http://www.carnegie.ru)

**VTsIOM-A / Univ. Strathclyde:** [www.russiavotes.org](http://www.russiavotes.org)

**RFE/RL:** [www.rferl.org/specials/russianelection](http://www.rferl.org/specials/russianelection)

## Jockeying for Position

With television advertising forbidden until November 7, political forces sought creative ways to sway voter opinion. Playing a variation on 1999, the two main television networks, both state-owned, have unleashed a steady wave of negative stories on the KPRF. One day, a reporter describes the economic crisis in Communist-governed Bryansk. Another day, the target is the Communist governor of Kamchatka, who was brought in for questioning by legal authorities. Without equitable media coverage, the KPRF has resorted to a massive door-to-door campaign, hoping to reach every voter in Russia personally. Sergei **Glaziev’s** left-leaning **Motherland** bloc, languishing far below the critical 5% mark in the polls, may have come up with the most creative way to spend official campaign money: bounty for infamous Chechen terrorist Shamil Basaev. Meanwhile,

Motherland's number-two leader, Dmitry **Rogozin**, has been whipping up Russian passions in a territorial dispute with Ukraine over a tiny island called **Tuzla**.

Concluding party registration, the Central Election Commission in the end approved 23 organizations for the party-list contest, three fewer than appeared on the ballot in 1999. A lottery determined the order in which parties would be listed. The liberal-market parties both came out near the top, with SPS at number 2 and Yabloko at number 4. The KPRF selected the very last spot, 23, and the LDPR got the nondescript 18. The worst luck befell United Russia, not so much because it selected ping-pong ball number 20 (above) but because the party that will appear at the top of the ballot has a strikingly similar name, **Unification**. One party official lamented that the resulting confusion could cost the party 2% of the vote, *Izvestiia* reported. Thus it would not be surprising if the Unification Party were suddenly



to be found in violation of some aspect of election law and disqualified from the race.

In the 225 territorial districts, over 2,000 candidates were nominated. These contests reflect some of Russia's most colorful electoral strategies. For example, in two Ryazan districts, candidates **Sergei Kprf** and **Svetlana Kprf** dedicated even their names to the Communist Party. But as the actual KPRF did not nominate them, their likely aim is to confuse the latter's voters and thereby win a few ballots. In fact, in several districts, rivals have sought to sap votes from a favorite by nominating a political nobody whose only electoral asset is the exact same first and last names as the likely winner. The LDPR appears to have come up with the most innovative strategy. Having only one promising candidate in the Novosibirsk region, incumbent Duma deputy Yevgeny **Loginov**, the party not only nominated him in one district but advanced another "Yevgeny Loginov" in a neighboring constituency.

— Henry Hale, *Indiana University, Carnegie Moscow Center*

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**CORRECTION:** In Vol.3, No.1, Surkov's first name should have been printed as Vladislav.

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# **INSIDER INFORMATION:**

## **CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS**

### **BY LEADING RUSSIAN PRACTITIONERS**

#### **DUMA & PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: MUTUAL IMPACT**

**Sergei Kolmakov**

*Vice-President of the Foundation for the Development of Parliamentarism in Russia*



##### **SOME KEY POINTS:**

*\* The Putin card has already been played, but not well*

*\* Putin has become a "symbolic superleader," wildly popular but unable to lend popularity to others*

*\* United Russia is vulnerable*

*\* The KPRF may come out the winner, although SPS and Yabloko are also likely to benefit from the Yukos affair*

#### **I. The particulars of electoral cycles**

In Russia there is a close connection between parliamentary and presidential elections. A sort of tradition is developing in which parliamentary elections serve as a means of letting off steam and gauging society's moods, while the presidential elections are "a choice of fate."

For example, Democratic Russia's success in the 1990 elections for Russia's parliament paved the way for Yeltsin's presidential triumph a year later. Similarly, the Communists' victory in December of 1995 made their leader, Gennady Zyuganov, into a real contender for the presidency. And Fatherland's loss to Unity in the 1999 Duma elections did away with the presidential aspirations of Yevgeny Primakov and Yury Luzhkov.

But the current electoral cycle is substantially different from the previous ones: it is the first genuine "Putinite" electoral cycle and it is proceeding in the framework of new election legislation. In his first term Putin implemented **political reforms** that are leaving their imprint on the electoral campaign. All this means that the campaign methods themselves have changed significantly, producing

- A contraction of public politics, with political elites now preferring

the stuff of machine politics to media campaigns;

- A larger role for the courts in electoral campaigns;
- Heightened manipulability of national mass media outlets (in particular electronic media), which rules out an information war of the type we saw in 1999;
- A purging of the political arena, which has eliminated any challenge to the president.

#### **II. The presidential factor and the Duma elections**

The "**presidential factor**" has already been employed **but not to maximum effect**. With all the doubts about United Russia's status as the sole "party of the President," the impact on ratings and PR of the unambiguous clarification of this status should have been more substantial. But the growth of United Russia's rating did not exceed 5%, and no revolutionary changes came to light. So it appears that the modest surge of support United Russia managed to pull off has already slackened.

***The President has lost his political agency, having been transformed once and for all into a "symbolic superleader."***

One can hardly hold United Russia responsible for this situation; rather, there have been certain developments in the current political context that United Russia is obliged to examine as its campaign proceeds.

For one, the "presidential resource"

has become more isolated from the political process. It has become clear that even unequivocal support by the President for any politician whatsoever influences the public's attitude towards that person only slightly. In fact, **the President himself has lost his political agency**. He has been transformed once and for all into a **symbolic superleader**.

For United Russia, this means that the semantic fulcrum of its campaign — "the party of the President" — by itself can in no way guarantee high results, and there is probably not enough time left to revamp its image. Thus, in the pre-election fracas, United Russia is much more vulnerable than expected — and the "presidential factor," already used once, will hardly be able to compensate.

#### **III. The influence of the parliamentary elections**

The opposite effect — the parliamentary campaign's impact on the presidential race — is more complicated. A possible shortfall of votes for United Russia — "the party of the President" — would somewhat weaken the position of the President himself, though this weakening would not be serious.

A collapse of the elections themselves — a scandalously low turnout or an extremely high level of "against all" votes — could have a more significant effect. In such a case, the discrediting and delegitimizing of the entire political system as a whole could be at stake, and even the President wouldn't be able to ignore that threat. **Steps to restore to the citizenry at least a minimal level of trust and interest in politics will become inevitable.**

We should also note that under Putin the status of the **State Duma** has fallen to the level of a technical organ. Under the popular President, the Duma ceased to be a “forum for protest,” an arena for political bargaining.

Accordingly, interest in parliamentary elections is declining, which can have a negative effect on **voter turnout**. And since low voter turnout is advantageous most of all to the Communists (who have the most disciplined electorate), the pro-presidential parties will have to look for ways to increase voter turnout, which may put them in a contradictory situation.

On the one hand, in order to continue the course to stabilization they have to try as much as possible to lower the pitch of the pre-election campaign, but this leads to a lowering of turnout. On the other hand, in order to increase turnout it is essential to present the voters with some sort of intrigue, which, by definition, undermines an image of stability. So far United Russia has not found a way out of this trap.

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***A scandalously low turnout or an extremely high “against all” vote could have a significant effect.***

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In its final stage, the electoral campaign for the State Duma of the Russian Federation is superimposed onto the beginning of the presidential campaign. Virtually all the parties that can realistically vie for meeting the 5% Duma barrier will nominate a candidate for president.

Should the Duma elections live up, the presidential election could proceed quite dramatically. The party leaders, warmed up by the Duma campaign, could have quite a strong showing in the presidential elections, too. **In this way, United Russia bears direct responsibility for the presidential election.** If it doesn’t manage to maintain the current inertia and still solve the turnout problem, then the presidential elections could play out in an entirely different key.

In the current scheme of things, it is hard to imagine a scenario in which the Duma elections would help Putin win re-election to a second term. Any

Communist lead over United Russia in the party-list voting will be perceived as a failure for the President, particularly if the KPRF levels any criticism at Putin in the course of its Duma campaign, which is not out of the question.

In addition, a tie between United Russia and the KPRF in the party-list race shouldn’t be interpreted as a success for the President; for the “party of power,” with overwhelming superiority in financial and administrative resources and the open support of a popular president, to manage only a draw in a duel with a backward-looking opposition isn’t too good...

The most interesting thing is that even a United Russia victory benefits Putin little. No one anticipates a routing of the Communists, and if United Russia comes out on top by a few percentage points, this won’t be any feather in Putin’s cap. Next to the President’s sky-high ratings, a party’s showing to the tune of 30% will look very modest. The fact that out of all the parliamentary parties, Putin will be supported in the presidential elections by United Russia and only United Russia leaves the President one-on-one with the voters.

#### **IV. Agendas and scenarios**

A radical restructuring of the general political context, the rise of new large-scale intrigues and conflicts (for example, armed conflict with Ukraine over the island of Tuzla or a sudden resignation of the government) could bring major changes.

**Putin’s agenda for a second term is still not set**, which introduces anxiety and uncertainty into the Duma campaign. In the course of the parliamentary elections, each political force can try to sway the president towards an “agenda” that is in its interests, for instance, the dispossession (*dekulakization*) of the oligarchs.

The General Prosecutor’s decisive actions with the escalation of the Yukos affair and the arrest of the oil company’s head, from all appearances, end the inertia of the parliamentary elections and significantly complicate things. Now the President will have to define his agenda and team for his next term not in February 2004 but at the end of October and the beginning of November 2003.

Tensions are rising in Russia over potentially tough questions involving

such things as social justice, the redistribution of wealth, and a review of privatization.

All these issues were thrust into the public’s attention not by party campaigns but by the best armed structures of the state, most of all the General Prosecutor and the FSB.

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***These forces aim for a left-patriotic Duma with the KPRF, United Russia, the LDPR, and Motherland or the People’s Party, with no Yabloko and only a little SPS.***

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These forces clearly aim to produce a left-patriotic Duma comprised of the KPRF, United Russia, LDPR, and either Motherland or the People’s Party, with no Yabloko and only a little SPS representation.

In the 2003 elections, the adapted, educated, and most active part of Russian society may decide to support the democratic parties at the expense of United Russia.

The winner of the biggest electoral prize may be the KPRF, which will add to its anti-regimist slogans such ideas as the defense of democracy and citizens’ rights and the deliverance of the country from the practice of “clan shoot-outs” in the corridors of power.

An attempt to cast the next Putin agenda as **deliverance from the “nightmare of Yeltsinism” in all its forms** will be met ambiguously by the Russian public. With each passing day until December 7, the rupture of the inertia and the intensification of the political situation will steadily erode United Russia’s standing. Unlike Putin, on whose resources it relies entirely, United Russia has not defined its position on the main issues of November’s electoral campaign.

From all sides, United Russia will be the target of concentrated attacks. United Russians will either have to criticize the “anti-oligarch campaign” or lead it. Keeping in mind the conglomeratic nature of the party, making this decision could mark the beginning of its end as it loses ground among the prosperous strata of the population in big cities, most of all Moscow and St. Petersburg. ■

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## OCTOBER: THE PLAYERS AND THE YUKOS AFFAIR

**Galina Michaleva**

*Head of the Yabloko Party's Analytical Center*

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### **SOME KEY POINTS:**

*\* The Yukos affair and Kremlin reshuffling dominate the campaign*  
*\* SPS continues to run an anti-Yabloko campaign, but Chubais could follow Khodorkovsky's path*  
*\* Yabloko has been hit hardest, with campaign documents confiscated and most of its funding gone*  
*\* Medvedev's rise as Putin's chief of staff gives hope to democrats*

Events in October proceeded in the expected vein of inertia until the third week of the month, which saw the arrest of Yukos head Khodorkovsky and the resignation of Voloshin from his post as head of the presidential administration. Thus the significant pressure applied to Yukos and the reshuffling in the Kremlin — not preparation for the election — were the focal points of this month.

As far as the campaign itself goes, particularly important was the Constitutional Court's ruling that part of the election law, which broadly interpreted the definition of campaigning, was unconstitutional. Now the mass media can provide commentary on the candidates and describe their activities without running the risk of being closed down by the court. Of course, they can take advantage of their new opportunity for all of a week; November 7 marks the start of official campaigning.

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### ***Internal warring among Kremlin clans has moved their election projects to the back burner.***

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Another significant event is the election of Valentina Matvienko as governor of St. Petersburg, which shows the might of the "administrative resource" in securing election outcomes.

Throughout October, parties and blocs collected signatures and registered their lists, determining who

would be the main players of this campaign. Yabloko was the first registered party.

Of the 44 political parties and 20 social organizations with the legal right to run, only 23 have officially joined the campaign. Of these, 12 are insignificant players, with neither financial nor administrative resources or even a minimally well-known leader. Almost none of these parties is running a campaign with the exception of "Rus," which has hung billboards.

Of the remaining minor players, "New Course — Automotive Russia" and "Great Russia — Eurasian Union" are headed by relatively well-known leaders, Viktor Pokhmelkin and Pavel Borodin, respectively. The Agrarian Party has long been on the political scene. But these three players also are not conducting an active campaign.

Motherland, the People's Party, the Speakers' Bloc (a coalition of the Party of Russian Revival and the Party of Life), all parties created specifically for this election, have well-known leaders and varying degrees of financial and administrative resources. However, if one is to believe the public opinion polls, the parties in this group do not have a good chance of getting more than 5%.

Judging from the reduced activity and absence of visible campaigning as well as the lack of information filtering into the press, these parties face financial drought and brewing internal conflicts. It seems the Kremlin has realized that putting financial resources into party upstarts has little effect. On the other hand, the internal warring among Kremlin clans has moved their election projects to the back burner.

One exception is the People's Party, which has a resource that is independent of the presidential administration's political crises — a large number of incumbents in the district Duma elections. Judging from the quantity of its billboards and its presence on the airwaves, the People's Party's financing has not been significantly cut.

Motherland's presence is manifest only in the public appearances of its leaders — Glaziev, with the idea to redistribute so-called "natural resource rents," and Rogozin, on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the island of Tuzla.

The election's main players, the parliamentary parties, have conducted active campaigns in the media and the field with different levels of intensity. Of course, United Russia has made use of its preferential media treatment, with leaders Boris Gryzlov and Sergei Shoigu always on the air.

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### ***The subject of Yabloko continues to be one of SPS's main themes, with an intense anti-Yabloko campaign in the regions.***

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The party has used endorsements by sports and cultural stars as well as its leaders' trips to the regions as a pretext for coverage. As far as outright campaigning goes, two patterns are clearly observable — a negative campaign against all parties (especially the KPRF) and the cultivation of an image as "a party that cares about all citizens" in the style of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The KPRF, in addition to its traditional methods, has gotten creative with hip youth activities and the Internet. The basic themes of its campaign have been criticism of United Russia and advocacy of social justice. On the other hand, an active media campaign against the Communists was launched this month, with a whole range of spots on the main national channels exposing the KPRF's ties with big business.

In October the LDPR used its main resource, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, to maximum effect as the party's leader continued his systematic tour of the Russian regions. He appeared across the media with statements radical in both form and content that often con-

tradicted each other. A basic theme ran through all of this: the need to turn Russia into a unitary state and to remove democratic institutions. The main slogan of the LDPR campaign is "We're for the poor, we're for the Russians" — the quintessence of Zhirinovsky's nationalistic declarations.

In SPS, Chubais entered the spotlight, actively appearing in all media with the idea that Russia should become some kind of "liberal empire." Meanwhile, Boris Nemtsov and Irina Khakamada continued their trips to the regions. As far as open campaigning and the leaders' public appearances go, the party has held forth on the subjects of military reform, housing utilities, and business.

However, the subject of Yabloko continued to be one of SPS's main themes, sometimes with various accusations and at other times with proposals to merge immediately. In the regions, the anti-Yabloko media campaign was intense.

In both its media and field campaigns, Yabloko moved along two lines: image (Yabloko as the only democratic party of the people) and substantive issues. The focus was on proposals from legislation packages on poverty, corruption, housing reform, environmental protection, and education. On October 21 the party celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The events surrounding Yukos, though they started to unfold back in the summer, took an unexpected turn. This was true for all parties, but particularly for those sponsored by shareholders of the company.

It seems no one believed the President would take so drastic a step (one so fraught with economic and political risk) as the arrest of Khodorkovsky.

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***Yabloko moved along two lines: image (Yabloko is the only democratic party of the people) and substance (poverty, corruption, housing reform, environmental protection, and education).***

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Almost all major political players, who had Yukos representatives on their party lists and received funding

from the company, found themselves on the hot seat.

Zyuganov expressed extreme concern, emphasizing the political nature of the persecution of Khodorkovsky.

SPS and Yabloko released a joint statement about the change in the political situation, which, they contend, casts doubt on the stability of the constitutional order.

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***Almost all major political players had Yukos representatives on their party lists and found themselves on the hot seat.***

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Yabloko reacted by proposing an "anti-oligarch package," which envisions laws on lobbying, transparency in the financing of parties, the creation of real public television, and anti-monopoly policy. Yabloko considers the Yukos affair to be the consequence of those economic and political reforms that have been conducted in recent years and sees the crisis as systemic in nature. At the same time, all of its statements underscored the excessiveness of the suppressive measure and the opportunity to conduct an investigation if the accused is released but restricted from leaving the country pending trial.

SPS is worried about "serious changes in the political course" and serious repercussions for business. Chubais quickly proposed a unification with Yabloko in order to mount a joint resistance. Nevertheless, SPS continued its "anti-Yabloko" campaign, with the number of publications against Yavlinsky and Yabloko remaining stable.

United Russia also found itself in an uneasy situation. Gryzlov stated that the General Prosecutor's actions in the Yukos affair are in accordance with the law. But Vladimir Dubov, a co-owner of the Menatep Group and the best known (and richest) of the Yukos representatives on the party's list, was forcibly removed from it.

There was unabashed gloating in statements by the People's Party. Raikov said that it is necessary to stand up to defend the interests of the people, society, and the president from the presumptuous oligarchs.

The leader of the LDPR, who con-

tends that Khodorkovsky financed parties with an anti-Russian orientation, was also pleased by the development; he suggested that all the oligarchs go to London.

The People's Party, a project of the Kremlin Siloviki, seems to have gained an advantage from all this. For United Russia its pro-Kremlin rival's gain was a mere unpleasantness, which it quickly got over.

For now, Yabloko is in the trickiest situation, hit by ricochet in the Yukos affair. Computers with a large volume of campaign documents were seized in a search of the Agency of Strategic Communication, which had done campaign and PR work not only for Yabloko but for Yukos as well. Besides that, the party lost virtually all its financing.

The events of the last day of the month suggested that SPS could also end up in a tight spot, with Chubais possibly joining the list of "disgraced oligarchs." Authorities searched the offices of Novosibirskenergo, 14% of whose stock belongs to Russia's electricity monopoly, Unified Energy Systems, run by Chubais. Such a beginning strongly recalls the first steps taken against Yukos.

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***Yabloko is in the trickiest situation; computers with a large volume of campaign documents were seized and the party lost virtually all its financing.***

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On the whole, it is becoming obvious that, with the high cost of television and newspaper advertising, only the parties who have administrative resources can conduct an effective media campaign.

The situation that is shaping up now is favorable first and foremost to United Russia. However, the reshuffling in the Kremlin is not to the advantage of the Siloviki; the appointment of Dmitry Medvedev as head of the administration and his deputies, Igor Shuvalov and Dmitry Kozak, give the democratic parties hope that the Kremlin's plans for the configuration of the new Duma leave a place for the democrats also. ■



## YUKOS AND THE ELECTIONS

Vyacheslav Nikonov

*President, POLITY Foundation*



### **SOME KEY POINTS:**

*\* Voloshin's departure may herald the end of "managed democracy"*

*\* The most likely outcome is "managed non-democracy"*

*\* The youth and middle class are likely to rebel against Khodorkovsky's arrest in the Duma race, to the benefit of the democrats*

The Duma electoral campaign, barely noticeable to begin with, has now gotten completely lost in the furor over the Yukos affair. The arrest of the company's head, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, along with the freezing of its shares, has already prompted a chorus of commentaries about the possible consequences for Russia.

On the economic front, few experts doubt that they are very bad: the stock market is already convulsing, a growing amount of capital is flowing out of the country, and Russia is becoming less attractive to investors.

There are far fewer voices on the political front, where evaluations of the consequences boil down to predictions of whether Aleksandr Voloshin would resign as head of the presidential administration and debates over popular support for the arrest of the oligarchs.

I will hazard to suggest that the political ripples of all these events will widen significantly to influence the upcoming elections. Keep in mind that we are talking about the biggest scandal of Putin's first term and possibly the biggest political crisis of his nearly crisis-free presidency.

Voloshin's resignation represents the obvious aging of the Kremlin clan referred to as "the old Yeltsinites" or "the Family," which is to the advantage of the Petersburg Siloviki.

According to the division of labor within the Administration, elections have been traditionally delegated to the Family, who have proven to be highly effective political managers.

The resignation of Voloshin on the eve of elections for Duma deputies and president obviously will not strengthen the Administration on the electoral front, and so Putin, having

allowed the head of his staff to leave, has preserved the rest of his team if only for the time being. Nevertheless, Voloshin's departure will inevitably change the nature of the Kremlin's relations with other political players.

The Family was associated with a certain political course (or political style), dubbed "managed democracy" by sharper tongues, which is based on administrative and informational domination in the elections and on tough (but outwardly democratic) methods of marshaling support for the president in the Duma and the regions.

It is not out of the question that Voloshin's departure will mark the beginning of the end of "managed democracy," which in theory could be replaced either by real democracy or by "managed non-democracy." I would say the chances of the latter are higher, though I am almost certain that Putin will try to preserve a balance of power in the Kremlin and will not want to rely on only one group — the Siloviki — as this would alienate all the other groups and dangerously limit his power base among the elite.

Although the electorate's reaction to recent events hasn't been precisely gauged yet, such information will not be very telling — public opinion usually doesn't notice even serious shifts of this sort. Generally speaking, in light of the public's aversion to big business, one has to agree that the Yukos affair won't do the Administration much harm. But it will still create some problems, it would appear.

In the "Putin coalition" — that bloc of voters who are ready to vote for the President — there is one significant social stratum that does not harbor prejudice against private enterprise and does not support suppressive measures against it. This is the youth. If Putin wants to win in a single round next March, he cannot allow himself to lose the support of this group.

It is entirely likely that the noise surrounding the Khodorkovsky affair can also rouse a "sleeping dog" — the middle class of small business owners who, though not too politically active

thus far, now recognize that they have something to lose.

These sentiments are already clearly visible at least in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where people regularly read the newspapers. It should also be noted that a majority of the print media is noticeably dramatizing all these events as something like a return to the Stalin era and sympathize more with Khodorkovsky than with the General Prosecutor.

The very liberal radio station *Ekho Moskvy* posed the following question to its audience: If the presidential elections were held this Sunday, whom would you vote for — Putin or Khodorkovsky? A record number of listeners phoned in their answers, and Khodorkovsky won by a ratio of 75 to 25. Thus I foresee higher than usual voter turnout among the prosperous middle class that traditionally does not vote. This will be good news for Yabloko, SPS, and the "against all" option on the ballot more than for the party of power.

### ***A liberal radio station asked voters: Whom would you vote for, Putin or Khodorkovsky?***

Another difficulty for the government is the timing of the Yukos events, which coincide with the official start of campaigning in the mass media. On November 7 candidates from the registered parties will begin to appear on television screens daily, often live, and there may be more criticism of the government's actions than many in the Kremlin expected. Since Yukos had supporters (and not always disinterested ones) in many segments of the political spectrum, this criticism will come from both the right and the left.

In conclusion, the Yukos affair's consequences for the elections aren't vast, but they are there, mainly in the form of difficulties for the Kremlin as well as for Putin personally. ■

## BATTLING FOR THE HOPES OF THE PEOPLE

**Viktor Peshkov**

*Russian State Duma Deputy, Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee*



### **SOME KEY POINTS:**

- \* *Candidates raise hopes for a better life to attract voters*
- \* *Economy, law-and-order, international status are the biggest issues for Russian voters*
- \* *Many voters pin hopes to KPRF*
- \* *United Russia also scores well*
- \* *One-third of population sees no hope in any party*

In any election, one of the main campaign techniques is the creation of hope for the future, the raising of popular expectations. Parties then use this as a politico-psychological springboard to their own electoral work. As a rule, experienced politicians and parties begin employing this strategy early, well in advance of the start of the electoral “marathon.” Quite often, such appeals to popular expectations are made throughout the campaign and continue into its final moments.

While the hopes generated by even the most diverse candidates invariably have the same intention — to excite the public — at times, the hopes themselves can differ quite strongly from one another. And the higher the hopes, the deeper the divisions. Often in the course of a campaign these various hopes come into serious conflict. There is a single reason for such clashes: whichever political force the public pins its hopes to — hopes for a better life, for material prosperity, for solutions to life’s most pressing problems — will increase its electoral chances, sometimes heavily influencing the outcome of the race. At the end of October, the Duma campaign passed into this phase of the race.

We’ll examine three problems that have long preoccupied Russians: which of the parties will be able (and want) to raise the Russian economy from ruin and improve the material well-being of Russians; which one will fight crime and corruption; and which will restore Russia to its former position of respect in the world and authority as a superpower.\* So far the picture looks as follows.

The public’s economic aspirations are firmly pinned to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, on which 27% of the population is laying its stakes (Table 1).

At the same time, 22% of citizens chose United Russia. A clear minority staked itself on the remaining parties — 10% of the population on SPS, only 5% on Yabloko, 3% on LDPR, and even less on the others. Another very important finding is that 29% of citizens have no confidence at all in any of the existing parties when it comes to the economy; they have no expectations of anyone.

Another key question — Who can rectify the material well-being of the nation? — yielded roughly the same results (Graph 1). Many people, a third of the population, expressed deep disillusionment and a crisis of expectations.

**TABLE 1:**

*In your opinion, which party, if in power, could best improve the country’s economy?*

OPINION	%
1. United Russia	22
2. SPS	10
3. Yabloko	5
4. LDPR	3
5. People’s Party	2
6. KPRF	27
7. Others	2
8. None	19
9. No opinion	10

Nevertheless, the remainder say that they do have hope on this score. Twenty-four percent of the population point to the KPRF and 21% to United Russia. SPS does not have a bad showing with 9% of those polled, nor does Yabloko with 5%.

On the issue of crime, the split between the Communists and the “United Russians” is greater — 22% to 14% of expectations in favor of the KPRF (Table 2).

**TABLE 2:**

*In your opinion, which party, if in power, could best end crime and corruption?*

OPINION	%
1. United Russia	14
2. SPS	9
3. Yabloko	2
4. LDPR	7
5. People’s Party	2
6. KPRF	22
7. Others	1
8. None	27
9. No opinion	15

Again SPS is in third place with 9% of popular hopes, followed by the LDPR with 7%. In general, United Russia, as a party of bureaucrats and “new Russian” wheeler-dealers, clearly crumbles in the arena of electoral hopes when it comes to criminal activity and the country’s descent into corruption. And a record 42% do not see anyone who could rectify this situation.

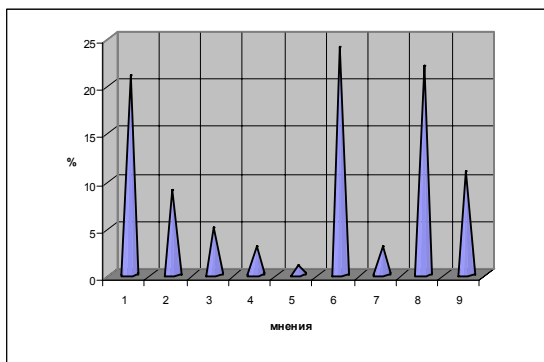
Finally, the foreign policy issue is closely tied to Russia’s position in the world and the loss of her former superpower status (Graph 2). Russian public opinion has long viewed the country’s geopolitical “crash” as no less important than its economic dislocation and rampant poverty.

Here again, the picture is more or less the same. The main concentration of hopes (27% of all responses) are bound to the Communist Party. At the same time, the ruling United Russia is lagging perceptibly and in no condition to overcome the distrust and irritation that the public has built up over the many years of “reforming” Russia’s unchecked retreat from all her geopolitical positions.

It is symptomatic that the People’s Party is in third place as it has been propagandizing itself very actively for nearly a year already as a demonstratively patriotic force, borrowing a lot from the Communists’ arsenal of

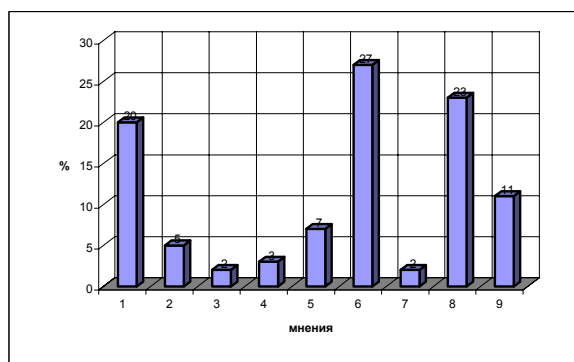
### **Graph 1**

*In your opinion, which party, if in power, could best raise Russians' material standard of living to an acceptable level?*



### **Graph 2**

*In your opinion, which party, if in power, could best restore Russia's status as a great and respected superpower?*



(1 = United Russia, 2 = SPS, 3 = Yabloko, 4 = LDPR, 5 = People's Party, 6 = KPRF, 7 = Other, 8 = No one; 9 = Other opinion)

ideas. Support for the electoral campaign's other participants ranges from 2-5%. And once again a third looks around without hope, not seeing anything reassuring in the political party landscape.

In sum, thus far the Communist Party has the advantage in the "battle for hopes." However, its lead over its chief rival, United Russia, is not a

major one. In addition, SPS is holding steady in third place. And most importantly, the share of voters who tie their plans for the future to the KPRF does not go beyond the bounds of the Party's electoral base. In other words, it does not give the Communists any significant electoral advantage in the current campaign.

*\* This article cites data from the Center for Research into the Political Culture of Russia (TsIPKR). The panel sample is based on quotes and weights. 1500 respondents in 72 regions of the Russian Federation were polled. The statistical margin of error is 3.4%).■*