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CHRONICLE OF POLITICAL PERSECUTION IN PRESENT DAY RUSSIA

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Is it a quarantine for Mikhail Khodorkovsky?

Moscow, 16 September 2005. According to the information received from the defence lawyer of M.B. Khodorkovsky, namely from the lawyer K.A. Moskalenko representing the Center for Promotion of International Protection, the relevant officials continue to deny the defence lawyers their right to meetings with the well-known convict of the “Matrosskaya Tishina” investigative isolator.

Today, despite the received permission signed directly by the head of the investigative isolator No. 1, one of the employees of the prison administration has declared that the defence lawyer Karinna Moskalenko is denied a meeting with her client Mikhail Khodorkovsky, since in the cell, where he is held, there has been introduced a “strict quarantine”.

Information Agency “For Human Rights”

The current attempts to bring Mikhail Trepashkin back to prison are a clear manifestation of the efforts to impede a fair investigation of the 1999 terrorist acts, which is actually the revenge of the special services for his courageous public stand

The group of human rights activists has voiced their protest against the attempts to bring Mikhail Trepashkin back to prison and appealed to all Russian human rights advocates to stage a solidarity campaign in behalf of the lawyer’s case. Below is the complete text of the statement signed by the well-known human rights advocates.

"The decision of the Sverdlov Oblast Court, made in accordance with the motion of the procuracy, on repeal of the decision of the Nizhny Taghil Rayon Court regarding the early release from prison of the lawyer Mikhail Ivanovich Trepashkin with a further probation term to be served by him in a colony-settlement is an obvious revenge of those currently in power for the lawyer’s resolute and clear-cut public position and their attempts to impede his human rights protection activities aimed at revealing the true reasons behind the 1999 terrorist acts in Moscow.

The lawyer Mikhail Trepashkin, recognized as a political prisoner by the Russian human rights advocates, was released from prison in absolute concordance with the existing Russian legislation. The representative of the procuracy, who attended the court hearing, had no objections to the early release of Mikhail Trepashkin with a further 4-year probation term to be served by him. The relevant decision was taken by the court soon after Mikhail Trepashkin was acquitted by the court on the charge of illegal keeping of fire-arms.

The actions undertaken by the procuracy with the purpose of deprivation him of liberty is an obvious reaction to the fact that, on having come back to Moscow, Mikhail Trepashkin has immediately stated his intention to continue the investigation of the circumstances relating to the blasts in Moscow in September of 1999, while he joined the human rights movement and headed the Committee for Protection of Lawyers.

The fierce pursuit that Mikhail Trepashkin was subjected to by those currently in power is one of the most important reasons to think that there are too many chilly suspicions in the terrorist acts of 1999, which were used as a pretext for starting the second Chechen war and for a simultaneous liquidation of the young growth of democracy in Russia.

It is necessary to remind that the lawyer Mikhail Trepashkin was arrested unlawfully on 23 October 2003. It happened two days before the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, that is when the authorities have already committed the act of “burning the bridges”. They framed up

Mikhail Trepashkin by putting a pistol in a trunk of his car. During the period of two years, he was held in the torturous conditions of the investigative isolator, which has resulted in the severe damage inflicted to the state of his health.

For the purpose of serving his sentence, Mikhail Trepashkin, a Muscovite and a father of small children, ridiculously charged with the disclosure of the KGB secrets, in violation of the existing legislation, was sent to a town of Nizhny Taghil, which is located 1000 km from Moscow. The charge of keeping a pistol was dismissed by the cassational instance due to lack of evidence. The only charge, which remained, is that of disclosure of the state secret.

The main "guilt" of Mikhail Trepashkin is related to his revelation of the suspicious attitude of the Federal Security Bureau (FSB) with respect to the information on appearance of the terrorists in Moscow, as well as disclosure of the facts of possible implication of the officers of the special services in establishment – with the help of provocateurs – of the “controlled” criminal and terrorist groups.

We call upon the human rights and democratic organizations of Russia to demonstrate their solidarity in defending Mikhail Ivanovich Trepashkin.

*Elena Bonner, Serghei Kovalyov, the Foundation named after Andrei Sakharov;
Yury Samodurov, the Museum and Public Center named after Andrei Sakharov;
Lev Ponomaryov, Lubov Bashinova, Evgheny Ikhlov, Victoria Alexeyeva,
Alexander Luboslavsky, the All Russian Movement "For Human Rights";
Nikolai Arkhipov, Kamil Zartdinov, Rafit Abzalov, Andrei Maltsov,
the "Joint Tatarstan Opposition";
Ruslan Badalov, the movement "Chechen Committee for National Salvation";
Tatyana Vlasova, the Moscow Merchant Society;
Valery Khatazhukov, the Public Human Rights Centre of Kabardino Balkaria;
Grigory Pasko, journalist;
Vyacheslav Feraposhkin, Anti-War Movement Club.*

16 September 2005.

The collection of signatures under this statement is going on.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky was given several days

The Moscow City Court postponed the consideration of the cassational appeal filed by the defence lawyers of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev against the verdict brought by the court in respect of their clients until 19 September. Thus, the former head of the OAO «NK «Yukos» had several days to be registered as a candidate in the additional elections to the State Duma.

The meeting of the Cassational Collegium of the Moscow City Court started at 11 o'clock. It depended on its decision whether the businessman would be able to participate in the additional elections to the State Duma or whether he would be escorted right to prison to serve his sentence. On the eve of the meeting, the western lawyers of Mikhail Khodorkovsky were quite certain that the court of higher instance would, without any further delay, support the verdict and let Mikhail Khodorkovsky be escorted to a relevant penitentiary institution. However, at midday there was announced a break until two o'clock in the afternoon, which was needed, as it turned out, for the clarification of the state of health of the defence lawyer Genrikh Padva, who, quite suddenly, got ill. Instead of the two hours initially planned for the break, the clarification of the new circumstances actually took four hours. It turned out that the defence lawyer of Mikhail Khodorkovsky was taken to a hospital for the reason of his having a very serious and grave illness, the treatment of which could take a month and a half and even more time. On having learned about these circumstances, the representative of the prosecution Dmitry Shokhin demanded that the cassational appeals should be considered in

the absence of the defence lawyers. "Probably, we deal in this case with a banal delay of the court hearing", was the procurator's supposition. In his opinion, the hospitalization of Mr. Padva was planned in advance.

The hospitalized defence lawyer himself refuted, as well as he could, the accusations of having evil intent. In his interview given to the Interfax information agency, he explained that he had felt a sharp worsening of the state of his health caused by a rather serious disease. On having examined him, his doctors took a decision on his immediate hospitalization.

On having clarified the situation with Mr. Padva, the judges suggested that Mikhail Khodorkovsky should employ another defence lawyer, since the consideration of the case cannot be postponed for a period exceeding one month. However, the businessman, in his turn, explained to the court that he would insist that his interests in this particular case should be defended precisely by Mr. Padva. In the long run, the court postponed the consideration of the cassational appeals until Monday.

The sudden disease of the defence lawyer played a very important role in the election campaign of Mikhail Khodorkovsky. The point is that the documents needed for registration of Mikhail Khodorkovsky as a relevant candidate have to be submitted to the district election commission not earlier than 19 September. Meanwhile, the defence lawyer Elena Levina, who defended the interests of the former head of the OAO «NK «Yukos» in the court of first instance, voiced the opinion that on 19 September the relevant cassational appeals would not be considered either.

If Mr. Padva fails to recover by Tuesday or Wednesday, then Mikhail Khodorkovsky will sign a relevant agreement with another lawyer, which means that the initiating team that has nominated Mikhail Khodorkovsky to run for the State Duma will eventually have several days needed for submission of the package of documents to the election commission.

Source: BUSINESS

New developments in the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev

Correspondent: The consideration of the cassational appeal in the Moscow City Court started with an unexpected event. Actually, Mikhail Khodorkovsky was put by the court before a dilemma: either to continue his participation in the court hearing without his defence lawyer or to postpone it until the recovery of the lawyer. Again, M.B. Khodorkovsky and P.L. Lebedev were in the court room, which was more spacious this time. Instead of the metallic bars of the cage for defendants in the Meshchansky District Court of the City of Moscow, there were just the transparent screens and the enforced guarding. Mikhail Khodorkovsky came to the court room with a thick file of documents and he was writing something in his note-book all the time. As for Platon Lebedev, he did have his habitual kefir and crosswords. The defendants spoke a few words to their escort. Platon Lebedev offered the guards to take their seats beside him, - since there was plenty of vacant seats, - meaning it as a joke. There were really plenty of vacant seats, since the defence lawyers of both M.B. Khodorkovsky and P.L. Lebedev failed to appear in court in full force. The judge opened the hearing, and the first question addressed to the defendants was about their defence lawyers who were absent at the hearing. Platon Lebedev's answer was to the effect that it was he who had forbidden them to enter the court room, while he himself was brought to the court room against his will. He demanded that he should be taken out of the court room, which was eventually done. As for Mikhail Khodorkovsky, he explained to the court that it was only Genrikh Padva of all his defence lawyers who managed to be fully familiarized with the official court record of the Meshchansky District Court of the City of Moscow and, therefore, for this particular reason the defendant entrusted this lawyer with the defense of his interests in court. However, just two days before the court hearing Genrikh Padva was hospitalized.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky: I certainly think that I will not be able to defend my interests in the cassational instance of the Moscow City Court without participation of my lawyer, who is thoroughly familiarized with this case...

*Serghei Morozov,
Dmitry Neonilin
NTV*

The opponents of Mikhail Khodorkovsky were paid by his supporters

In front of the building of the Moscow City Court, where there was considered the cassational appeal filed by the defence lawyers of the former head of the OAO «NK «Yukos» Mikhail Khodorkovsky and the former head of the MFO «Menatep» Platon Lebedev, there were held three rallies representing both the supporters and the opponents of the defendants. The rallies were accompanied by the sounds of bayan and pipes.

...To the right of the court building, there were standing the supporters of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, representing the “Sovest” group, while to the left of the court building there were standing his opponents, who refused to announce their political affiliation. Nonetheless, the correspondent of *KOMMERSANT* could not help seeing the black arm-bands on the sleeves of their shirts and jackets, which clearly indicated their Eurasian Youth Union membership. And behind the court building, there was held the rally of the members of the Moscow Youth Movement “Yedinstvo”, all wearing the football jerseys featuring the prison bars with an inscription reading “MBKh must be put to prison”.

Near the court building, right on the pavement there were placed the metallic barriers, alongside which there were standing the policemen, officers of the special forces, and the dog trainers with their dogs.

One could pass through these barriers by no way other than going through the metal detection arch. According to the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), there were the total of 200 officers involved in the maintenance of peace and order. There were the total of around 100 rally participants, with the supporters of Mikhail Khodorkovsky making up one third of these. There were no serious incidents, except that there happened a squabble between an elderly woman standing in a picket and Konstantin Markov, the coordinator of the Eurasian Youth Union. When the woman saw quite close to her the two activists of the above-mentioned organisation (the activists of this organisation disrupted the rally of the supporters of Mikhail Khodorkovsky held on 12 September in the Pushkin Square), she approached them in a menacing manner with a poster in front of her. Mr. Markov retreated immediately saying: “Dear Granny, you just do not beat us!”, to which words the elderly woman’s reaction was: “If I could, I would have killed all of you, Putin’s little rats!”

The other rally participants were standing at a distance of 300 metres from each other. On the fence around the court building, there were placed and glued the posters and stickers with different messages: "Do not buy, but purge an offence!" and "Just pay and sleep well!", on the one hand, and "MBKh’s being in prison is the country’s shame!", "Khodorkovsky is more needed by Russia than by the “Matrosskaya Tishina” prison" and "Russia’s choice is democracy and life without dictatorship, poverty, and lawlessness", on the other hand. Part of the posters were glued to the fence by the “Oborona” movement members as early as last night, for which act they were arrested and brought to the “Preobrazhenskoye” police station.

Actually, the supporters of Mikhail Khodorkovsky did not shout any slogans, while they limited themselves to repeating – clearly and softly – one word only: "Freedom!". In contrast to them, the opponents of the defendants produced a lot of noise blowing their pipes. The activists of the “Sovest” youth organisation threw coins to the pipe players to put a premium on them for their good performance. Against the background of the poster with the words: "It is enough to plunder the country!", there was seated an elderly woman of the pension age

playing a bayan. One of the young participants of the rally explained to me the essence of this performance in the following way: "Just because such as him (the young man expressively motioned to the court building, – correspondent of *KOMMERSANT*) did not take the trouble to pay the taxes, our elderly folks have no chance to live a normal life. Who ever counted how many of them stand in the pedestrian subways and play bayan to earn some money to buy their daily bread, just like this granny?..." Another activist, who presented himself as Andrey, said: "He (Mikhail Khodorkovsky, – correspondent of *KOMMERSANT*) plundered the wealth of many people, and now he poses as a victim. We are fed up with this hypocrisy!"

At 15:00 hours, in accordance with the time limit indicated in the applications for holding the relevant protest actions, all the rally participants terminated their picketing of the court building and moved towards the underground station.

In the evening of that same day, the "Sovest" group members learnt that consideration of the cassational appeal was postponed until 19 September, and so they decided to submit their application for holding a picketing action on the above-mentioned day. However, according to Elena Fetisova, the organiser of the rally, in the prefecture they were refused, while the reason for the relevant refusal was given in the following wording: "All the picketing places are already occupied".

*Author: Yekaterina Savina,
Source: KOMMERSANT*

He is bound to be a candidate soon

The Moscow City Court has never started to consider the cassational appeal filed by the defence lawyers of Mikhail Khodorkovsky. The delaying of the case raises his chances for a political career. The process involving Mikhail Khodorkovsky may be delayed for a month.

Yesterday, the Moscow City Court did not start to consider the cassational appeal filed by the defence lawyers of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, since the judges spent almost the whole day for the purpose of finding out the state of health of Mr. Genrikh Padva – the only lawyer of the former co-owner of the OAO «NK «Yukos». The experts warned that the consideration of the cassational appeal might be delayed for a period as long as a month.

"You will come through right here!", the police officer in the court building showed the way to the journalists pointing to one of the doors leading to the court room.

"And there?"

"There, in the court room, you will see a defendant, who is bound to be a deputy of the State Duma very soon, indeed!"

Mikhail Khodorkovsky greeted his relatives and the journalists he knew with a smile; he even waved greeting his mother. He wore the same shabby blue jeans, a brown jacket, and a blue T-shirt, which were his usual clothes normally worn at the Meshchansky District Court. His eyes, however, gave a tenser look at the people and things around him.

When the former billionaire seemed to be certain that nobody in the court room had his or her eyes on him, he bent his head down, his arms crossed on his chest, and viewed the floor beneath his feet.

The three judges were 40 minutes late. Immediately, the presiding judge Vyacheslav Tarasov informed those present in the court room that the delay was due to "the defence lawyers' failure to appear in court". The chairs standing alongside the table intended for the lawyers were vacant. Meanwhile, the presiding judge continued: "Prior to this court hearing, the convict Lebedev informed us of his not wishing to participate in the consideration of the cassational appeal. We have invited him to come here today in order to find out whether his position has been changed since the time of his last statement".

"I express my categorical protest against my having been illegally escorted to this court!", Platon Lebedev, who looked very sick and calm a while ago, exploded.

"It is not the right time for making complaints", the judge Tarasov tried to interrupt him.

“I demand that I should be removed from the court room, since as early as June 2005 I informed the court that I have no wish to participate in the court hearing of the cassational instance! This is first”, Platon Lebedev was furious.

“Mr. Lebedev, I...”, said the judge.

“Do not interrupt me! I have entrusted my defence lawyers with the task of appealing against this deliberately unlawful decision of the Meshchansky District Court. All the reasons for this are known to the public. I have forbidden my lawyers to participate...”

“So, you refuse to use the services of these lawyers?”

“I expressed myself clearly and audibly using the Russian language! And the last thing I’d like to say: I am going to appeal against this court’s decision!”

“I request the escort to remove Mr. Lebedev from the court room”, said the judge.

Thus, Mikhail Khodorkovsky was left alone behind the glass partition. The businessman let the judges know that Genrikh Padva was the only defence lawyer, with whom he had made the contract on representing his interests in the cassational instance court. However, it turned out that on 12 September the lawyer had been hospitalised.

“The failure of a lawyer to appear in court cannot be regarded as an obstacle hindering the consideration of the case in the cassational instance!” snapped the state prosecutor Dmitry Shokhin jumping from his chair; he then continued to declare that the whole thing is just a “banal attempt to delay the court hearing”. The state prosecutor produced a sheet of paper being allegedly the official document issued by the Moscow City Health Department stating the following: “Mr. Padva has applied to the reception unit of a hospital on his own initiative in connection with an acute condition of his chronic illness, which is not of an extraordinary nature, but rather a planned activity”.

After the two breaks lasting the total of four hours, the judge Tarasov informed those in the court room: “The defence lawyer Padva has been positively hospitalized, his condition is rather serious, his illness will require the treatment taking a month and a half and even more time”. The judge asked Mikhail Khodorkovsky whether, under the circumstances, he was going to make a relevant agreement with other lawyers. After another short break Mikhail Khodorkovsky declared that by 21 September it would be definitely known if Mr. Padva would be able to defend his interests in court or, maybe, another lawyer would have to take the job.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky requested that the defence lawyers should be allowed to have meetings with him so that they could start the relevant preparation in case the illness of Mr. Padva turned out to be very serious.

“If they happen to have an agreement on representing you in the second instance court, then they should be allowed to defend your interests”, said the judge Alexei Marinenko.

“But, as far as I know, they should have the relevant agreements on representing my interests in Strasbourg”, said Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

“Well, we do not have Strasbourg here!”, said the judge Alexei Marinenko in retort.

“In accordance with the existing legislation the court cannot make us start the process before we have prepared for it”, explained the lawyer Elena Levina, who defended Mikhail Khodorkovsky in the Meshchansky District Court, after the court hearing was over.

According to Elena Levina, the new defence lawyer would require at least two months to get prepared.

“If such a need may be, the defendants try to delay the process, normally doing this with the help of their illness, as well as their lawyer’s illness, or by replacement of one lawyer by another”, said an employee of the Moscow Procuracy sharing his observations with me.

“However, the consideration of the case in court without a defence lawyer representing the interests of a defendant would be such an outrageous violation of the right to defence that the Moscow City Court could not make any other decision”, said the defence lawyer Andrei Knyazev.

“Any new defence lawyer taking the job instead of Genrikh Padva would be obligated to get familiar with all the relevant materials, which will require the time limit of not less than a month”, said the defence lawyer Mikhail Burmistrov. “And in case if the court chose to make this time limit shorter, such a decision would be a clear manifestation of the violation of a defendant’s right to defence”.

*Author: Anfisa Voronina,
Source: VEDOMOSTI*

In a word for word version

Yury Shmidt, the defence lawyer of Mikhail Khodorkovsky:

“Everything is possible in our system of justice, even such a thing as the consideration of the cassational appeal without a defence lawyer, while the court proceedings are speeded up in a ridiculous manner, which is a gross violation of law. At that, it should be noted that the decision on the consideration of the cassational appeal has been taken by the district court. From now on, I’ll be hardly surprised by anything. Those in power make efforts to reach the final verdict for Mikhail Khodorkovsky as soon as possible, so as to prevent his participation in the elections to the State Duma. In case, if the Moscow City Court chooses to consider the cassational appeal in the absence of Genrikh Padva, who is currently ill, this will certainly be a new record set by our system of justice in the domain of unlawful deeds. Since the time of the Stalin rule nothing of the kind has ever happened, and even at that time, in the majority of cases, if a defence lawyer happened to be ill, they either postponed the court proceedings or searched for another defence lawyer.

As far as is the position of the state prosecutor Dmitry Shokhin regarding the illness of Genrikh Padva is concerned, it should be noted that both the procuracy and the court have the right to receive from the Moscow Health Department the information about the state of health within the framework of a specific case or investigation. There cannot be any medical secrets for the law enforcement bodies.

Another important point should be paid attention to. It seems that Dmitry Shokhin has learned about Genrikh Padva’s hospitalization before the court hearing, and, consequently, he has taken care of the relevant document certifying this fact in order to be prepared for the forthcoming court hearing, although Genrikh Padva has not let anyone know about his having been hospitalized.

Also, Dmitry Shokhin seemed to know that Genrikh Padva was the only defence lawyer of Mikhail Khodorkovsky who could defend his interests in the cassational instance court. I presume that the defence lawyers of both Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev are being watched in a rather tough way. I can feel this shadowing myself.

Grani.Ru

The opponents of Mikhail Khodorkovsky will be certainly surprised

Robert Amsterdam is well-known for his explicit criticism of the Kremlin. The defence lawyer of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the arrested Russian oil oligarch, speaks about the state of health of his client, about the consideration of the cassational appeal, as well as about Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s plans to be elected to the State Duma.

“Mr. Amsterdam, how is your client Mikhail Khodorkovsky doing in the Moscow-based investigative isolator “Matrosskaya Tishina”?

“He is currently held in a mass cell together with another 15 inmates. He suffers a great deal, especially from the consequences of a 7-day hunger-strike, which he has stopped quite recently. Although there is no direct danger to his life, his condition, nonetheless, is very serious, which is also due to the fact that, following the hunger-strike, they do not let him have the food normally passed over to him by his relatives.

“But they do give him the prison food, don't they?”

“Yes, they do, but the majority of inmates try to get the food passed to them by their relatives, since the prison food is as awful as the conditions inside the prison cells”.

“One can often hear from the supporters of Mikhail Khodorkovsky that the detention conditions are just horrible, simply disastrous. However, whenever asked to give specific examples, these people divert from the topic”.

“As far as the specific examples are concerned, I think it would be enough to mention that, being a non-smoker, my client has to share the cell with another 15 inmates, the majority of whom smoke, while the ventilation is practically non-existent with the clouds of smoke filling the room up to the ceiling. It should be actually stated that the detention conditions in my client's cell fail to meet the standards even of the third world countries.

“Is not possible for him in the corrupt Russia to have better detention conditions using his money as a tool for the purpose? He certainly has enough money at his disposal to do so”.

“I am not responsible for his bank accounts, and I am not his adviser on the financial issues. I think that nobody will dispute the fact that the Russian authorities have confiscated his shares and have actually destroyed his company – «NK «Yukos». Since my client's wealth is directly linked to the «NK «Yukos», it is clear under the circumstances that his financial status has changed dramatically. However, I cannot mention any specific data relating to his current financial status”.

“Mikhail Khodorkovsky has surely managed to withdraw from the «NK «Yukos» several millions. He has employed a number of the defence lawyers, who exert a continuous pressure on the Kremlin maintaining contacts with the mass media and thus forming the public opinion. He has his own web site, which is constantly updated. He has his own press centre, which works with the journalists. Who pays for implementation of all these activities? The sponsors?”

“Just think. I am employed by him, and in this particular capacity I cannot talk about the financial status of my chief. Naturally, the costs are very high. It is also clear that the Russian authorities try hard to milk him dry. Those in power are still dissatisfied with the fact that my client is capable to employ his defence lawyers, and the very fact that we can talk now the way we are talking also adds to their dissatisfaction. Each single cent, which is still in my client's wallet, is a matter of annoyance and disappointment for those currently in power in Russia.

“Will Mikhail Khodorkovsky be able to continue to pay for your services?”

“Yes, he will. There is no doubt about it”.

“Let us change the topic now. Mikhail Khodorkovsky is currently held in prison. Yet, he wants to be elected to the State Duma, which is the Russian parliament. Is it really possible?”

“Following the verdict issued for Mikhail Khodorkovsky by the court we have filed the cassational appeal. Therefore, at the moment he is not deemed a convict and, consequently, he may be nominated for the State Duma. His status will change only when the court of the next instance finds him guilty”.

“So, in October, Mikhail Khodorkovsky will be registered as a candidate to be elected to the State Duma”.

“The Kremlin is afraid precisely of such turn of events trying hard to prevent it. The Russian authorities make efforts to speed up the process, while the way they do it is contrary to all principles of the jural state, as well as violates the provisions of the existing Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation. This is the case with the already known finale. The process will start on 14 September and the court will finish it up in three or four days. It is a 100 % guarantee that we are going to lose this cassational process. Resulting from this failure Mikhail Khodorkovsky will be deemed a convict and thus he will lose his right to be nominated for the State Duma”.

“You put a serious blame on the country's judicial power. Why, in your opinion, the speeded up process is contrary to the principles of the jural state?”

“The point is that we, the defence lawyers, have actually no chance to get prepared for the process thoroughly, the reason being that there is an excessively short time period before the start of consideration of the cassational appeal in the court of the next instance. Normally, the defence lawyers have sufficient time limit to be able to familiarise themselves with all the documents. Needless to say that Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s case has lots of such documents. It would be enough to mention that the reading of the verdict alone took two weeks. Normally, any court should give at least several months for the purpose of studying of such a heap of documents. However, in this particular case – just several weeks. Nobody will ever be able to do such a great volume of work in such a short time period. Incidentally, this is equally applicable to both the court and the procuracy”.

“You seem to have already put up with the current situation and it seems that you have no further hopes. Is it true that after the final verdict has been delivered you do not see any opportunities for saving your client from prison?”

“There is still another instance, a higher one. However, we have no guarantee that our cassational appeal will be considered by this instance. The court will decide independently whether it will take it for consideration or not. As a matter of fact, Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s nomination for the State Duma has nothing to do with the next instance. The verdict rendered by the court at the nearest process will be deemed valid. Therefore, those in power are in real hurry. Most probably, the elections-related registration will start at the beginning of October. I bet that by the time of registration Mikhail Khodorkovsky will have already the status of a convict.

“It follows from the above that the announcement of Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s election plans was actually a tactical mistake”.

“We knew that the Russian authorities would be in a hurry to convict our client, but we could not foresee that they would speed up the process in such a way. We could not even think that the consideration of the cassational appeal would be set for 14 September”.

“If now you do not see any chances for success, then it would be just logical to revoke the relevant application?”

“Not at all. No matter what the verdict will be, Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s nomination for the State Duma was and continues to be a very important step. Even if he will not be able to participate in the elections, just the same Mikhail Khodorkovsky today is a symbol of real political opposition in the country, contrasting with various small artificial opposition Russian parties organised by the Kremlin in order to create the desired impression of availability of the would-be opposition in Russia in the eyes of the rest of the world. However, in reality these parties are far from being the opposition, since they all are engaged in the same business together with the Kremlin”.

“So, the affair with nomination of Mikhail Khodorkovsky for the forthcoming elections to the State Duma seems to be a failure. The 8-year sentence is going to come into force. The Kremlin has actually come out on top. Does it mean that Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his team will acknowledge their defeat?”

“Not at all again. We have the plans, which are totally different from acknowledging our defeat. However, I would not like to dwell on these plans at this point. I am not going to let our opponents know about these plans before the right time comes. Our opponents will be certainly surprised, just like you will be. The only thing I can share with you right now is that we will certainly try to appeal against the verdict. We are going to apply to the European Court on Human Rights in Strasbourg. It is impossible to break Mikhail Khodorkovsky, he is not the person, who will ever give in. You are going to hear about him more than once”.

*Spiegel
Sebastian Sieglöch*

The investigation in respect of the legal adviser of the OAO «NK «Yukos» has been completed

The Procuracy General of the Russian Federation has completed the investigation of the criminal case in respect of Svetlana Bakhmina, the Deputy Head of the Legal Department of the OAO «NK «Yukos». According to Olga Kozyreva, the defence lawyer of the defendant, there has been signed the official record following the completion of familiarisation with the materials relating to this criminal case, and at the end of the next week the case will be sent to court. The defence is currently engaged in preparation of the motion on the results of the above-mentioned familiarisation, including the motion on termination of the criminal case. Svetlana Bakhmina is suspected of theft by way of fraud, as a part of an organized group, of the property belonging to the company «VNK «Tomskneft» in the amount of 8 billion rubles.

*Author: Yuliya Gaverdovskaya,
Source: IZVESTIYA*

The Swiss banks are of the opinion that the arrest of the bank accounts of the OAO «NK «Yukos» is a mistake

The Association of the Swiss Banks is of the opinion that the procuracy of Switzerland made a needless haste responding in 2004 to the request of Russia to lock the bank accounts of the OAO «NK «Yukos», and today the procuracy should check whether or not that request was politically motivated.

Yesterday, the Head of the Association Urs Rot stated that “the consent of Switzerland to satisfy the requests of Russia and other countries resulted in bewilderment and perplexity manifested by the clients of the Swiss banks.

They have started to wonder whether Switzerland is currently subjected to the political pressure exerted by these countries or whether Switzerland is influenced by the foreign governments”.

Source: VEDOMOSTI

The presentation of the President’s successor will be made in public

However, the President’s successor will have to be first raised in a breeding nursery.

Gleb Pavlovsky, the President of the Efficient Policy Foundation, has actually started the political season in Russia. According to the concept of the Kremlin adviser, on the current political horizon there are no places for the political parties, opposition organizations, elected heads of the regions, since all the places have been reserved for Vladimir Putin, who is bound, very soon and right before our eyes, to undergo a transformation from a popular president into a nation-wide leader.

The Kremlin political technologist has not even tried to conceal the fact that the clearing of the political space, including such acts as the abolishment of the elections of the governors and the adoption of the new law on political parties, has been accomplished for the purpose of creation of the most favourable conditions for the operation “Successor”. Gleb Pavlovsky has rejected the supposition that Putin’s successor will emerge from the President’s own retinue, while he has also promised that “the process of presentation of the successor will be made in public”. As it has turned out, it is precisely for this purpose that there have been established such phantoms of the civil society as the Public Chamber and the President’s Council for exercising control over the investments, the latter actually duplicating the functions of the nation’s government; for the same purpose there is also in existence the party of power under the name of “United Russia”. It is precisely these, still rather amorphous structures, that the

Kremlin political technologists are going to use for the purpose of “breeding” the President’s successor.

“Until quite recently, Vladimir Putin used to be within the nomenclature structure, which is the reason why he was isolated”, said Gleb Pavlovsky. “From now on, his actions are aimed at establishment of the working political teams, which will be linked to all social layers of our society and which will work towards creation of the open sites, where the new political leaders will eventually appear”. According to the Kremlin adviser, the governors appointed by the President represent such political teams already. “The community of the governors has actually changed, the governors make up a political team, they are appointed by the President, which means that they come with the President and they go with the President”, said Gleb Pavlovsky. It also means that the governors are thus warned that from now on their destiny is directly dependent on one circumstance only, namely on whether the President will continue to stay in power. As for other political forces, apart from the President, it seems that Gleb Pavlovsky ignores them completely.

Yesterday, Gleb Pavlovsky made a statement to the effect that the Russian opposition, in his opinion, is actually an international coalition comprising several nongovernmental centres abroad, as well as the national bolsheviks headed by Eduard Limonov and the “Yabloko” party, which are “financed by Berezovsky and «NK «Yukos». Also, in the opinion of Gleb Pavlovsky, all the texts signed by Mikhail Khodorkovsky are actually written outside his cell, and then these texts are sent abroad to his «Yukos» partners for them to visa these documents. “They (the opposition – *NG*) do not plan to come to power by way of democratic elections, they make various schemes for making Vladimir Putin retire”, states Gleb Pavlovsky in the full conviction, which, incidentally, is in line with the logic of his political chart, where there is no room for the civil movements and political parties. According to Gleb Pavlovsky, they “play a secondary role and ensure the mere semblance of mass support; the problems of the opposition have a police nature rather than a political one, while the opposition has absolutely no support on the part of the population”.

Giving her comments on the above-mentioned statement made by the Kremlin adviser regarding the President’s successor, the Director of the Institute for the Applied Politics Olga Kryshantovskaya said: “I think that this is an attempt to cover up their tracks, or as they call it – “not to burn up the candidate”. They just try to avoid the false start of the operation “Successor”, and, therefore, they have to voice such statements. You see... On the one hand, the potential successor must be clearly visible, while, on the other hand, the successor must be protected against any criticism”.

*Author: Liliya Mukhamedyarova,
Source: NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA*

Mikhail Kasyanov has announced his intention to run for the President’s Office

V: The first one is already on the track. There is one candidate for the future 2008 presidential elections. This is Mikhail Kasyanov, the former prime minister of the Russian government. Today, in the evening, he has announced his intention to run for the President’s Office personally and definitely.

Mikhail Mikhailovich, we would like to know whether you are going to be nominated for the President’s Office in the forthcoming elections?

Mikhail Kasyanov (Head of the Government of the Russian Federation in 2000-2004): My today’s answer is “yes”. While three months ago, I still had serious doubts regarding this decision, today I think that the current situation will not change the way I would like it to change. And, therefore, I cannot – I’ll put it this way – just go and stay in the background, since there is no one, who would be currently able to develop those political processes, which, in my opinion, may lead to the positive result required by millions of the Russian citizens.

V: Mikhail Kasyanov has also informed of his being engaged in the talks with the representatives of the democratic opposition in order to achieve the desired goal of joining these currently fractionary forces into a coalition. He hopes that such a coalition may be established at the beginning of the next year. It seems that Mikhail Kasyanov has a plan to head the coalition.

As for the rumors regarding Mikhail Kasyanov's possible nomination for the State Duma elections in the University District No. 201, the former prime minister dismissed them stating that, in his opinion, it would be inexpedient for him to work in the parliament alone. At the same time, Mikhail Kasyanov supported Mikhail Khodorkovsky's decision on the same issue.

*Source: REN TV No. 24
Information programme*

Is Mikhail Kasyanov offered a role of just a pairing partner to accommodate in the election ring someone representing the current power?

The first thing that comes in upon my mind resulting from getting familiar with Mikhail Kasyanov's declaration is that the current Russian authorities have made the same mistake once again, just like in the case involving Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

For some unknown reasons, those currently in power breed their own opponents doing it in a very careful way, too. Let us remember that right after his having emerged from the political shadow the former prime minister presented a rather foggy picture of his immediate political plans. When asked directly about his presidential ambitions, Mikhail Kasyanov answered: "Everything is possible".

After this, the famous "dacha case" was started by the authorities resulting in a resolute answer by Mikhail Kasyanov to the same question: yes, he will run for the President's Office. Incidentally, he sees Mikhail Khodorkovsky in the capacity of his ally. Moreover, there has even emerged a possibility for a tandem: Kasyanov – President, and Khodorkovsky – Prime Minister.

After the authorities had threatened Mikhail Kasyanov with a criminal case for his love for dachas, the guy had two ways to choose from: to retreat or to rush forward. He chose the latter. However, I refuse to believe in his willingness to mount the scaffold, if such a need may occur; this guy fails to impress me as the one who can die for the idea he adheres to. And the authorities in this country are not really so stupid as it may seem. This is the reason why it is not so easy to get rid of the following thought: maybe, the true reason behind Mikhail Kasyanov's activities is the fact that he has been given the guarantees of his personal safety? In other words, the man is required by the current power as a convenient pairing partner in the political ring. Let us pay attention to the fact that the former prime minister has made it quite clear that he does not view Vladimir Putin as his political opponent.

*Author: Serghei Yuryev,
Source: KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA*

Seven brave guys

The list of Vladimir Putin's successors is due on the agenda. The political science specialists think that the President prepares a surprise for his compatriots and for the world community. The political science specialists have counted the potential successors of Vladimir Putin.

Stanislav Belkovsky, the Director of the Institute for the National Strategy, stated at the press conference, which was recently held in Moscow, that, in his opinion, the main events of the forthcoming political season would be focused on the struggle between the potential successors of President Vladimir Putin. The political science specialist produced a list of

seven potential participants of the struggle, but he also remarked that for him personally the most desirable option would be the total absence of the above-mentioned successors and holding of the “really democratic elections instead”.

“Today, the people of the President’s administration are certain that Vladimir Putin will not do anything for his re-election for the third subsequent term”, said Mr. Belkovsky. “They actually discuss the early retirement of the President in September of 2007, which will make it possible to combine the presidential elections with the parliamentary elections in December of the same year”.

At the same time, in the opinion of this political science expert, the various “third term” scenarios, including the projects for making amendments to the existing Constitution and for unification of Russia and Belarus into one union state, are methodically circulated by the mass media as a camouflage meant to present Vladimir Putin’s inevitable retirement as a great gift given both to Russia and the world community, as well as a manifestation of the triumphant democracy.

...Of those claiming to be President Vladimir Putin’s potential successors, Stanislav Belkovsky named the Head of the Federation Council Serghei Mironov. It is to this particular person that the Russian President is “inclined psychologically”. The fact that the speaker of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament does not own any large property and is, in fact, uncorruptible is also in his favour.

The Chairman of the State Duma Boris Gрызлов can also be considered Vladimir Putin’s successor. In the opinion of the political science specialist, Vladimir Putin also trusts Dmitry Kozak, his plenipotentiary representative in the Southern Federal Okrug. According to the Director of the Institute for the National Strategy, the “Saint Petersburg liberals” have similar feelings for the above-mentioned plenipotentiary representative. Moreover, the list of the potential successors of the President includes two governors – the Head of the Krasnoyarsk Kray Alexander Khloponin, who is ideologically close to the Kremlin political technologists, and the Head of the Krasnodar Kray, who is supported by the law enforcement section of the President’s administration. The above-mentioned list also includes the Procurator General Vladimir Ustinov and his deputy Vladimir Kolesnikov.

The Defence Minister Serghei Ivanov was not named by Stanislav Belkovsky as one of the potential successors of Vladimir Putin.

Stanislav Belkovsky expects the start of the informational struggle between the above-mentioned successors as early as this political season. According to the political science expert, the Kremlin analysts will eventually make up their minds about the final candidature of the President’s successor not earlier than the spring and summer period of 2007.

For this political season, Stanislav Belkovsky has also predicted the strengthening of the position of the former head of the OAO «NK «Yukos» Mikhail Khodorkovsky as a politician representing the opposition. This particular prediction is valid for any possible drift of affairs during the December 2005 elections to the State Duma, in which Mikhail Khodorkovsky is going to take part.

*Author: Darya Guseva,
Source: VREMYA NOVOSTEY*

The price of an inquiry

In the State Duma, the prices for the lobbying services of the deputies have risen sharply.

If you ask any member of both the lower and upper chambers of the Russian parliament, if he or she is involved in corruption, the response will surely be the righteous and unaffected indignation. Meanwhile, such a specific form of a deputy’s activity as writing letters of inquiry sent to the relevant bodies of power in the interests of certain individuals and legal entities makes up a source of huge and unaccounted incomes. The specialists in the field of

political housecleaning think that the annual turnover resulting from the letters of inquiry produced by the members of the Russian parliament and addressed to the high-ranking government officials amounts to billions of rubles. According to the data collected by *NI*, the price of just one more or less significant inquiry in the today's State Duma is within the range from \$ 7,000 to \$ 10,000. According to the unofficial data, 30 to 40% of the State Duma deputies take bribes for the lobbying services in one way or another from various commercial structures. In most cases the money is paid for letters of inquiry.

...To this day, the letter of inquiry produced by Vladimir Yudin, the deputy of the "United Russia" faction in the State Duma, remains the noisiest and the most dramatic as far as its consequences are concerned. This letter of inquiry was sent to the Procuracy General of the Russian Federation requesting to check the legality of the privatization deals made by the OAO «NK «Yukos». It is precisely Vladimir Yudin's letter of inquiry that initiated in 2003 the so-called Yukos case.

In some of the inquiries, it is rather difficult to see the corruption component. However, the public reaction created by such letters of inquiry adds considerably to the rating of the person who has initiated such an inquiry, thus attracting the potential clients to the initiator.

In the State Duma, there are genuine record-holders as far as the number of the produced inquiries is concerned. One of the most voluminous writers of letters of inquiry is certainly Alexei Mitrofanov, the member of the Liberal Democratic Party faction. The range of issues he has covered by his letters of inquiry over the years of his service in the Russian parliament is really very large and diverse. He was the one who inquired on what grounds and at the expense of whose costs the famous pop singer Paul Maccarthny staged his concert in the Red Square. He also tried to learn through his letter of inquiry, in what particular penitentiary institutions Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev are going to serve their sentences. This member of the parliament had his own ideas regarding their detention conditions. Alexei Mitrofanov suggested that the well-known convicts should be held on an uninhabited island in the Pskov oblast guarded by the special forces and patrolled by helicopters.

With the help of his inquiries Mr. Mitrofanov tried to restore the memorial plate of Leonid Brezhnev, as well as initiated the installation of the Stalin monument in Moscow. However, his main achievement in the domain of writing letters of inquiry, of which Alexei Mitrofanov is so proud, is the receipt of the information about the US presidential candidate Albert Gore. On having suspected Albert's father of ill behaviour, Mr. Mitrofanov sent his letter of inquiry to the Federal Security Bureau of the Russian Federation (FSB). According to the author of this inquiry, in a while, he was invited to visit the so-called "secret" room, where he learnt that the father of Albert Gore used to be the advocate of the Vietnam war, and the guy advocated the war "not just for the good of his health". Alexey Mitrofanov thinks that the publication of this fact helped George Bush become the US President...

Author: Nadezhda Krasilova,

Source: NOVIYE IZVESTIYA

Does Mikhail Kasyanov have any chance to become the Russian President?

Vaghif GUSEINOV, Director of the Institute for the Strategic Assessments and Analysis:

"Today, he has no chances at all".

Nina ANDREYEVA, General Secretary of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Saint Petersburg:

"Everything depends on who and why moves him forward. I am most certain that this is not his personal initiative. In case he pursues the policy, which is more pro-American than that pursued by Vladimir Putin, he will have all the chances to become the President, because the present-day Russia does not have the policy of its own, this country is currently a coachfellow of the USA.

Olga KRYSHтанovskaya, Head of the Section for Elite Studies of the Sociology Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences:

“No, he has no chances at all. In the eyes of the Russian people, he is a heavy swell. As far as our business people are concerned, for them Vladimir Putin and his team are of more value.

Vladimir EYEREMIN, Deputy Governor of the Bank "Moscow Capital":

“Judging by the objective preconditions, he has no chances. However, in Russia, the people’s attitude to the figures in disgrace is always that of some queer inexplicable love. Therefore, it remains to be seen, what kind of situation we shall have in 2008.

Irina XKHAKAMADA, politician:

“And why on earth not? They do not yet breed the country’s leaders in the lower layers of our society, which is the reason why there is no real democracy in Russia. The people in Russia trust those having the crown of power on their heads. It is not always that the people will hear me when I speak to them, while the former prime minister speaking to the people of Russia is quite another cup of tea.

Vladimir ZHIRINOVSKY, Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia:

“No, he has practically no chances. In the first place, he should not let himself be involved in the politics, just like Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Let him be quiet and keep a low profile so as not to irritate the people. Nowadays, the people are angry as it is resulting from low wages and salaries, insufficient pension amounts paid to the elderly folks. And now they are going to thrust these guys Khodorkovsky and Kasyanov with their millions under the noses of the dissatisfied people on a daily basis.

Sergei KOCHEROV, political science specialist, Nyzhny Novgorod:

“He is too gorged and satisfied. With his outer attractiveness he certainly lacks some touch of charisma. Even the convict Mikhail Khodorkovsky has more chances to become the President of Russia.

Yury YEVDOKIMOV, Governor of the Murmansk Oblast:

“Mr. Kasyanov would have his chances to become the President, if Vladimir Putin were not among those claiming the President’s Office in 2008. And we will do everything in our power for Vladimir Putin to be one of the candidates.

Stanislav RADKEVICH, Head of the Analysis Department of the association of companies "NIKKOLO M":

“No, he has no chances. Resulting from the 2008 elections, a person from Vladimir Putin’s political team will win the President’s Office. If I were in the boots of all those interested in this office, I would have made serious plans in view of the presidential elections of 2012.

Inna N, the reader of the web site WWW.KP.RU:

“He is so cute! Most women will certainly cast their votes for him.

Source: KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA

There have been started the legal proceedings in accordance with the secret orders of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation

On 22 September 2005, at 14:00 hours, in the Independent Press Centre (20, Tver Boulevard) there will be held the press conference with the main topic reading as follows: “There have been started the legal proceedings in accordance with the secret orders of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation”.

In the forthcoming press conference, there will take part: Stanislav Markelov, the lawyer who has appealed against the secret orders of the MVD of the RF, and Lev Ponomaryov, the Executive Director of the All-Russian Nongovernmental Movement “For Human Rights”.

On 3 October 2005 in the city of Ufa (the Republic of Bashkortostan), in the Kirov District Court, based on the materials of the so-called Blagoveschensk case, there will be decided the issue of the lawfulness of the filtration stations and of the extraordinary actions undertaken by the police on the basis of the infamous Order No. 870 DSP MVD of Russia.

Information Agency “For Human Rights”

Comments on Mr. Kalinin's statement

Comments by Lev Ponomaryov, the Executive Director of the All-Russian Nongovernmental Movement "For Human Rights" in connection with the statement made by the Head of the Federal Service for Execution of Punishments, General of the Interior Yu.I. Kalinin on the air of the radio station "Mayak".

According to the mass media reports, today, when speaking on the air of the radio station "Mayak", the Head of the Federal Service for Execution of Punishments (FSIN), General of the Interior Yu.I. Kalinin has made the following statement: "In the present-day Russia, there are very many such committees and all types of foundations. Not a single person belonging to the community of the so-called human rights advocates works in any of the professional fields. I wonder how these people earn their living? Who pays them money? We know that one of the sources they get the money from is the thieves' "common cash box"..." "There are dozens of examples confirming the destructive position of the so-called human rights organizations". "They are not engaged in protection of human rights, they just try to aggravate the existing situation and practice the blackmail methods" (<http://www.newsru.com/russia/14sep2005/obshak.html>).

Unfortunately, I have got familiar only with several extracts of the above-mentioned statement of General Yu.I. Kalinin, but even this much is enough to understand that the Head of FSIN tries to avoid giving answers to the thorniest questions being actually engaged in small talk instead. He has not said anything about the severe battery that the convicts are subjected to on a regular basis by the employees of the administration of the penitentiary institutions, as well as by the activists of the so-called "sections for order and discipline", about the victimization of the convicts, the acts of provocation organized by the employees of the administration, which are the main reason behind the actions of protest carried out in the penitentiary institutions, about the tortures, with the help of which the convicts are made to refuse from their complaints sent to the procuracy and to the European Court on Human Rights.

He speaks about money. He habitually reproaches the human rights advocates for their would-be ties with the criminal community. This man should know, however, that the criminal community has never supported the All-Russian Nongovernmental Movement "For Human Rights", which is one of the main human rights organizations currently working towards finding solution to the Lgov situation, as well as to other crises in the penitentiary institutions. However, I should like to clarify the stand taken by the Movement "For Human Rights": we currently receive and will continue to receive in the future the information on the human rights situation from any sources, and we naturally check this information.

We are convinced that the former convicts, who have served their sentences, need to be viewed as the full-fledged citizens of our country. The more so that, knowing just too well what kind of justice we have in this country, we think, not without reason, that the charges brought against many of these people have been falsified (fully or partially). Moreover, it should be stated that by stripping the former convicts of the right to be engaged in the human rights protection activities the Head of FSIN actually impedes the process of integration of these citizens in the society!

As a matter of fact, the topic of corruption is hardly applicable to the organizations of the civil society, while the same topic is relevant to the current situation in the institutions headed by Mr. Kalinin. It is well known that there are fixed tariffs for the services such as transfer to the cells of drugs and alcohol, and transfer from the cells of the so-called "ksivas" and "malyavas" etc. It is precisely this corruption, which has eroded the existing system of the penitentiary institutions, that the criminal bosses often use for their own purposes.

The Russian human rights advocates will never stop their work aimed at revealing all the crimes and acts of beastliness in the country's penitentiary institutions, while the attempts to divide them and to make mischief between them are doomed to failure.

Information Agency "For Human Rights"

The residents of Voronezh are in favour of the direct election of the city mayor

In the city of Voronezh, the members of the civil, nongovernmental, human rights, and political organizations staged a mass action of protest against the decision on cancellation of the direct elections of the city mayor taken by the deputies of the city Duma. Approximately 200 residents of Voronezh were picketing the building of the city Duma centre, where the first autumn meeting of the members of the city parliament took place.

"Keep your hands off the city Charter!", "We are for direct elections of the city mayor!" – these were the slogans held by the rally participants. Those participating in the picketing action handed over to the members of the city parliament, as well as to the city residents the Appeal of the representatives of the public organizations of Voronezh. This document, signed by the leaders of the Union of Right-Wing Forces (SPS), the United Civil Front, the Civil Congress, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Republican Party, and other organization well known in the region, contains the demand addressed to the deputies, who are asked to abandon their plans for making amendments to the city Charter.

It is expected that at the current session of the city parliament the deputies will take a decision on the motion submitted by the city public initiative group with regard to holding a referendum, which is intended to help the residents of Voronezh identify their position with respect to elections of the city mayor: whether the mayor should be elected directly by the city residents or by the members of the city Duma.

According to the data of the public polls, the majority of the residents of Voronezh are in favour of the direct elections of the city mayor!

Representatives of the public organizations of the city of Voronezh

In the city of Orel, the residents are picketing to protect their right to freedom of speech and to voice their protest against the "personality cult of Mr. Stroyev"

The members of the Orel Regional Public Organization "Civil Control" have submitted their application to the Mayor of the city of Orel Vasily Uvarov informing of the intended picketing of the building of the State Administration of the Orel Oblast, as well as of the building of the Press House.

In the application, the goal of the public activity is clearly stated: to express the public opinion on the freedom of speech in the Orel Oblast and on the right to receipt of the true and authentic information.

As reported by the press service of the above-mentioned organization, in violation of the Federal Law 54-FZ "On the Meetings, Rallies, Demonstrations, Marches, and Picketing" of 19 June 2004, the head of the city denied the citizens their right to picketing near the building of the oblast administration.

In spite of this, the organizers of the picketing, whose intention is to appeal against the refusal by the city administration later, say that the picketing near the Press House in the Brest Street will take place on 16 September 2005.

According to the organizer of the rally Serghei Burmistrov, who is one of the leaders of the Orel Regional Public Organization "Civil Control", "the reason behind this action of protest is the unprecedented personality cult of the Governor Stroyev and his retinue created

by the local pro-governor mass media, which at the same time are full of abusive and insulting publications targeting the public organizations that dare to defend the interests of the oblast residents, containing lies regarding the current situation in the business sphere. The protest is also prompted by the prohibition to sell the copies of the independent newspaper “Orel News” accompanied by the intimidation campaign against its reporters, keeping in concealment the information on the emergencies such as, for instance, the mass mortality of poultry at the poultry factories in the Orel Oblast, and other such items of information, which are concealed from the local population.

Press service of the Orel Regional Public Organization “Civil Control”

The attempt on the lives of the national bolsheviks

On 11 September 2005, at 14:40 hours, four national bolsheviks, including Vladimir Abel, left the apartment of the press secretary of the National Bolshevik Party Alexander Averin (Malaya Alexeyevskaya Street), got into the party-owned car (“Volga”) and drove to Eduard Limonov’s place. Five minutes later, it became clear that something is wrong with the car, because the vehicle oversteered several times and eventually it went out of control and hit the curb. This accident took place near the underground station “Rizhskaya” and, luckily, in a small street with almost no traffic.

The above-mentioned episode could be interpreted as just a trivial happenstance. Many different things happen on the city roads every day. However, at approximately the same time when this accident happened on the road, somebody called Eduard Limonov (the call came to his mobile phone) and asked him: “Do you sell “Volga 3110”?” Eduard Limonov’s answer was “No, I don’t” and the next instant the connection was terminated. At the moment, Eduard Limonov did not yet know anything about the incident and so his thought was that somebody misdialled the telephone number. Neither Eduard Limonov himself, nor any of his party comrades were currently engaged in selling a car and they had no plans to do it in the nearest future. However, it is in fact the model “Volga 3110” that Eduard Limonov currently uses. To sum up, we have a strange car incident and a strange call by a man who knowingly names the car model used by Eduard Limonov, and these two strange things happen practically at the same time.

“This is a typical bullyboy tactics”, confirmed our suspicions the retired security officer, sympathizing with the NBP. “By naming over the telephone the car model used by Eduard Limonov they let him know that the car incident is not a mere eventuality. It is certainly a warning, the black mark as they say. There are several ways to disable a car eventually aiming at a serious car accident. In order to understand what particular method was used for the purpose, it is necessary to carry out the relevant investigation involving the thorough technical expert examination of the car. It is clear that there could be victims, but this is so to say the secondary effect of the intimidation operation”.

The members of the National Bolshevik Party are convinced that the above-mentioned car accident, the attack on the national bolsheviks on 29 August 2005 in the Avtozavodskaya Street, the fire set to the shop “Falanster”, as well as all other attacks on the NBP headquarters and on the party activists – all these facts constitute links in one and the same chain.

This is actually the state-sponsored terrorism. Those currently in power want simply to destroy the radical opposition represented by the National Bolshevik Party.

Press service of the NBP

The best journalists were given the awards named after Artem Borovik

This year, Artem Borovik, the talented journalist and the founder of the holding company “Sovershenno Sekretno”, who came to a tragic end in March 2000, would have been 45 years

old. On his birthday, 13 September 2005, in the State Central Concert Hall "Rossiya" there was held the Fifth Ceremony for Distribution of Prizes awarded for the best journalist investigations and for the essential contribution in development of the independent journalism in Russia. The motto of the prizes reads: "Honour. Courage. Skill".

The contest is held by the Charity Foundation named after Artem Borovik on the annual basis beginning from 2000. The number of the works participating in the contest grows from year to year dramatically. While in 2000 there were submitted just several dozens of works, in 2005 the number of works reached the level of over 800 submitted by the journalist, who represent the total of 72 cities and towns of Russia.

The jury of this contest composed of Vsevolod Bogdanov, the Chairman of the Union of Journalists of Russia, Irina Petrovskaya, the TV critic, Svetlana Sorokina, the TV host, Yasen Zasursky, the Dean of the Journalism Department, and Genrikh Borovik, the Chairman of the Jury, accomplished a great work resulting in selection of 30 nominees who entered the final stage of the contest.

In order to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Russia's Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the Foundation made a special prize "For a valuable personal contribution to achievement of the victory of the Soviet people over the Hitlerite fascism". Boris Yefimovich Yefimov, the legendary person, who went through the war - from day one to its last day -, was awarded this special prize. In the war days, the prize winner was the most known caricaturist of the USSR, whose works encouraged the Soviet soldiers and helped them endure the hardships of war. Born in 1900, Boris Yefimov said at the ceremony with the sense of humor and optimism, which are characteristic of his nature: "I cannot exclude a possibility that in two weeks I will be 105 years old!"

It is not just in the days of war that the journalists have to deal with various hardships. According to the UN data, because of the permanent stress impact the life expectancy of journalists is shorter compared with that of other professionals. Over the period of the last year alone, around 67 journalists from different countries were killed in Iraq, while in Russia there were killed over 20 journalists.

There was one minute's silence in remembrance of those journalists who perished doing their work accompanied by the sounds of requiem. Then, on the stage of the State Central Concert Hall "Rossiya", decorated with the steel pen-points symbolizing the journalist profession, there appeared – one by one – the winners of this contest.

The Diploma of the First Degree was awarded to:

Yekaterina Lazareva (Radio "Za Oblakami", city of Kurgan),
Roman Gazenko (Documentary Studio "Galakon", city of Moscow),
Pavel Sheremet and Serghei Braverman ("Pervy Kanal", city of Moscow),
Valery Volkov and Alexander Ostashevsky (newspaper "Malaya Zemlya", city of Novorossiysk.),
Galina Sapozhnikova (newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda", city of Moscow),
Alexander Sabov ("Rossiyskaya Gazeta", city of Moscow),
Andrei Tsodbayev (the author of the book "Sudba voyennoplennogo" (Destiny of war prisoner), city of Mahachkala),

In 2005, the Prizes named after Artem Borovik were awarded to:

Liliya Vyughina (TV channel "Rossiya", city of Moscow) for the movie "Lesniye Bratya" (Forest Brothers),
Leonid Velekhov (newspaper "Sovershenno Sekretno", city of Moscow) for the series of war reports,
Igor Prokopenko (Ren TV, city of Moscow) for the documentary dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the Chechen war,

Alexei Pobortsev (NTV, city of Moscow) for the documentary "Po tu storonu voyny" (On the other side of the war),
Veronika Shakhova (newspaper "Zerkalo", city of Blagoveschensk) for the article about the events of December 2004 in the city of Blagoveschensk,
Marina Dobrovolskaya (TVK - 6, city of Krasnoyarsk) for the programmes "Budni" and "Belaya Vorona".

*Stepan Sergheyev
Extreme Journalism Centre*

They again beat convicts in the prison of the town of Livny, Orel Oblast

We have received the information about the resumption of the battery of the convicts held in the penitentiary institution YaI – 22/2 (the head of the institution – colonel of the interior A.N. Semenov)

The convicts David Zhvaniya and Vakhtang Lysenko were subjected to battery in the quarantine room of the institution by the assistant head of the penitentiary institution and his team of employees. The reason behind this battery was the refusal by the convicts to do the physical exercises. When beating the convicts, the officer Glushkov knew only too well that both convicts were seriously ill: Vakhtang Lysenko had cirrhosis and TB and David Zhvaniya - the second grade of disability.

As far as the other convicts are concerned, their rights are violated too. The convict S.N. Paramonov, who has AIDS, suffers from the permanent intumescence of arms. However, he gets no medical assistance from the medical staff of the penitentiary institution, who at the same time do not take the trouble to explain to him why he is denied any professional help.

More than a year ago, the administration withdrew from the bank account of the convict Vladimir Uteshev 250 rubles allegedly for the purpose of making the new passport in his name. Vladimir Uteshev has never asked about the proportionality of the withdrawn amount for the above-mentioned purpose, he just asked the social worker Mamayev to give him his new passport. However, he has not received it to this day.

The barrack SUS (strict detention conditions) is overpopulated, the convicts are not allowed to have such necessities as the toilet paper, tooth paste etc., there are plenty of beetles and other bugs, sick people do not get enough food.

The convict Alexander Vasyukov, resulting from sending to us his complaint against the unlawful actions of the administration of the penitentiary institution, was punished through placement of him into the barrack SUS.

The All-Russian Nongovernmental Movement "For Human Rights" has sent a cable to the head of this penitentiary institution, and an appeal to the head of the relevant department demanding them to stop the above-stated violations.

*Boris Panteleyev,
Saint Petersburg Branch of the Movement "For Human Rights"*

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