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### **Russian Elections – Attempts to Falsify the Truth**

In the run-up to the elections we have in fact witnessed two races simultaneously. One has been the presidential elections and the other a campaign to discredit the same. The first race has been fought between the five presidential candidates: Mironov, Prokhorov, Putin, Zhirinovskiy and Zyuganov. The other race has been fought between, on one side, the Russian state and its people and, on the other side, a small but vocal and well-organized group of citizens of Russia, their media resources, and the Western press. Behind the latter we find an assortment of American pressure groups (posing as NGOs) funded by the US Government and international oligarchs such as George Soros who share the same goals as the US Government. Ultimately - as much behind the scenes as possible - the operation is led by the US Government itself together with the leading European Union powers. We shall refer to this latter group consisting of the motley assembly of Russian citizens opposed to the rule-of-law, their media, the Western press, and the Western governments as the “opposition,” which they in this sense truly are, as they all oppose Putin with the goal of weakening Russia. As their nationalist thugs shout on their protest gatherings: “One for all, all for one.”

A good example on how all these interests come together is provided by the election monitoring group called Golos. The Western press and leading US and EU politicians love to refer to this organization as “Russia's only independent elections monitor.” The statement about it being “independent” is truly interesting. Yes, it is totally independent of the Russian state, as independent as any warring party can possibly be. But, on the contrary, it is not independent of foreign influence, being in fact totally dependent of the US Government. It is quite openly acknowledged that Golos receives its funding from the US Government agency, USAID, and National Fund for Democracy (NED) and National Democratic Institute (NDI). These are two pressure groups that disguise themselves under the cover of NGOs but are in fact arms of the US Government and totally funded by it.

It is clear beyond any doubt that all the major “opposition” figures have some such connection to US Government, and that their activities are jointly coordinated by the latter. In this sense it is quite correct to say that the protests we saw all through the election process (and witness again now after the elections) have been initiated by the West. And obviously most of the herd that populates the protests does not recognize this fact. This is the whole point of the covert operation: to feed the public with disinformation coming from well financed and well planned propaganda sources while making sure the public adapt the ideas of the propaganda as their own. The ordinary participants are, of course, not paid anything for showing up on the protests. They genuinely believe in the cause. But the organizers are paid, as well that the xenophobic nationalist thugs that form their combat leagues.

The task of this “opposition” on ground in Russia is to produce scandals which serve as material for the local and Western press in their endeavor to distribute the anti-Putin and anti-Russian propaganda.

**Democracy in Russia**

It is often said that due to gender and racial prejudice a woman or a person coming from a minority has to be ten times stronger a specialist or manager than the white male peer in order to get the top appointments. We note a similar situation with the Russian electoral processes: due to the strong distrust towards Russian democracy Russia has to conduct elections ten times better than they do it in the USA. And Russia is sure doing a good job in meeting these exceptions. Nevertheless nothing is enough because the “opposition,” including its foreign sponsors, is not a bit interested in whether elections in Russia are fair and clean, for their only interest is to discredit the elections and Russia. And for the same reason they are not a bit interested in developing any democracy in Russia, not any more than their interest in finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Both projects serve the same purpose.

In the aftermath of the 2011 Duma elections, the Western press referring to the Russian blogosphere was abuzz with allegations of electoral fraud. Many of these were anecdotal or purely rhetorical in nature, some were more concrete, but variegated or ambiguous. Whatever misuses there were in reality they certainly occurred on much smaller scale than those that happen in every US election. – As I write, I observe that this same smear campaign against Russia has started all over again today with the Western press spreading centrally planned propaganda attacks, the central theses of which are (for some reason) repeated all over in the Western world almost word by word. - USA has its fair share of the problems with registered voters; there are the clips thrown into the YouTube about instances of fraud; there are the allegations of miscount of votes etc. The Internet is awash with such scandals concerning US elections. We all remember the scandalous vote count in Florida in 2000 that awarded the US presidency to the losing candidate, George Bush, with catastrophic consequences for the whole world in form of wars, terror and financial meltdown. But this is not an isolated incident, these kinds of things happen all the time. The most recent cases come from the Republican Party primaries where, for example, the opposition candidate Ron Paul fell victim to election fraud when the votes for him were not properly counted in Maine.

The difference between the US and Russian cases is that nobody apart from the victims of the fraud care what happens in USA. The power and the media in USA are so totally in the hands of the so-called Democratic Party and the Republican Party, the two parties that share the eternal monopoly to power, that no other points of view get coverage, let alone have any chances to win in the maze of the US system of litigation. - This whereas the whole Western press in relation to Russia prey like vultures to snap up any bit of anecdotal evidence that could possibly serve as material to blow up a scandal.

Let's look at the facts.

### **Ballot access for political parties**

The two parties that have monopolized the power in the USA have ingeniously designed a system that makes it essential impossible for any other nationwide third parties to emergence. At the same time the prerogative for nominating candidates for president is with the monopoly parties. Among the various hurdles are the requirements to petition for party registration in each of the 50 states separately. This is an arduous task that among other things require the collection of punitively many signatures and defending one's constitutional rights in endless processes of litigation against the army of attorneys that the monopoly parties raise in order to block a new

party from emerging. Once past the hurdles the parties have to immediately already in the following election secure a substantial following in terms of votes cast or else be dropped from future ballot access. For example, in the state of Alabama a party needs to poll at 20% in a state wide election to retain its ballot access. As a consequence of these undemocratic principles the two largest of the non-monopoly parties the Constitution Party and the Green Party are on the ballot in only 21 and 31 states, respectively, thus being counted out from any real political power.

In Russia the laws regulating party formation and nationwide ballot access are very lenient compared with the US laws. Presently only 40,000 signatures are needed for immediate nationwide access (to be compared with the 51 registrations in USA, 50 states and the capital area of Washington). According to a draft law put forward by President Medvedev, even this comparatively low threshold would be abolished so that only 500 signatures will be need in the future.

The USA also practices the very dubious single-mandate-district plurality system which awards the seats in legislatures only to the two monopoly parties. Russia's proportional election system compares democratically very favorably with this.

### **Nomination of presidential candidates**

The Western press and their governments have much criticized Russia for the fact that their favorite candidate, Mr. Yavlinsky, did not make it on the ballot. This was due to the fact that Yavlinsky did not manage to collect the needed 2 million votes. In the West this was presented as Yavlinsky having been "removed on a minor technicality."

And yet the Western press does not have any problems with USA applying much harsher ballot access rules for candidates in a presidential race. In fact, the rules are so severe that a candidate rarely can even reach the situation where he would be recognized as a nationwide candidate, for in the USA the candidates are killed off on the level of each state. The conditions for ballot access in presidential elections are mainly the same for independent candidates and candidates from non-monopoly parties, which in turn are similar to those of gaining ballot access for parties. The candidates from non-monopoly parties have to petition for ballot access in each state separately (as described above) and either register a party in each state (or confirm that registration anew for each election) or go through the same processes as independent candidates of petitioning for being accepted as a candidate. This involves the collection of some 2,900,000 signatures in total nationwide broken into separate absurdly cumbersome processes in each of the 50 states. And to boot the rules and timing are different in every state making it very unlikely that anybody could possibly overcome all the hurdles. And naturally it has been very rare that any independent candidates have ever run in the USA, let alone succeeded – in fact, nobody after the first president George Washington has managed the task. The process is so difficult and therefore costly that the quintessential condition for giving it even a try in the first place is that the candidate is a billionaire. An American Yavlinsky could not even dream of it no matter how many signatures he copied.

There are exotic undemocratic rules in other countries, too. For example, in France a person cannot gain ballot access without receiving approval from the existing political elite. To stand, candidates need to muster 500 signatures from mayors or other elected officials across France. This is an undemocratic system which is designed to protect the powers that be from any competition.

The existing system in Russia already compares democratically very favorably to the laws of these two countries of which we have been taught to think as the cradles of democracy. And now according to the draft law the Russian ballot access for presidential candidates will be further liberalized so that only 300 thousand signatures will be needed nationwide

### **Voter registration**

In the USA not only parties and candidates have to go through these cumbersome processes of gaining ballot access, even every single voter has to go through a process of registration in order to participate in elections. This when most civilized countries, including Russia, run a system whereby the state has the obligation to ensure registration and no special action is required by the voter.

The result of these undemocratic practices in the USA has been a total chaos. A recent US report (PEW 2012) showed that more than 50 million US citizens - one in four – were denied their constitutional right to vote in view of not being properly registered. Some 24 million - one in eight - of these are voter registrations which are no longer valid or are significantly inaccurate due to the mismanagement of citizens' rights. About 12 million voter records have incorrect addresses, indicating that either the voters have moved, or errors in the file make it unlikely the U.S. Postal Service can reach them. And some 2.75 million people (most of them adhering to the monopoly parties) have registrations in more than one state. And more than 1.8 million Americans currently listed as voters are deceased.

In addition to the in itself peculiar requirement to register in order to uphold the constitutional right, the voter is in most states asked in connection with registration to disclose his party affiliation (there goes the secrecy of ballot) and even race!

The Russian “opposition” cheered by the Western press reported (complete with the highest evidence of all in this brave new world where the mind is numbed by the propaganda of the dominant press: YouTube clips) that the alleged fraud in the December Duma elections was substantiated by the fact that some voters were not enrolled in the list of eligible voters at their polling stations. Yes, such instances occurred, but here two things are radically different in favor of Russia. Firstly, in the Duma elections only some 700,000 voters were not correctly registered, which is less than one percent of all the voters, and which in itself compares favorably with the truly amazing figures coming in from the USA. Secondly, the voter does not lose his right to vote just for the reason of not being registered. The voter can anyway vote at his place of residence by showing a valid identification (the domestic passport that each Russian citizen carries, which also contains the proof of residence).

### **Media coverage**

The US and UK media which don't allocate as much as a passing mention to any candidate beyond their respective monopoly parties have been particularly harsh on criticizing Russia for what they deem as "media bias and lack of impartiality" in covering the candidates. And yet in Russia the candidates in fact get equal access to state media. We have seen all the candidates constantly appear on state television equal time (9 hours per channel), without any relevance to their popularity or past electoral success.

At the same time the Russian printed press is very free and highly competitive in opinions. It seems that the mainstream press has been overwhelmingly against candidate Putin. Notwithstanding this fact, they insist in the West that there is no media freedom in Russia. And in a double twist of logic, the Western press frequently refers to Russian media reports writing about these things.

### **Democracy Made in USA and exported at gunpoint**

Considering all these incredible problems with democracy in America, we can only wonder how anybody has wanted to make it a product for export – the more at gunpoint. How can the Iraqis and Afghans ever create the two needed monopoly parties? How will they devise these complex and discriminatory systems for registering parties and getting ballot access? And from where will they get all the lawyers that will fight to deprive citizens of their constitutional rights? And how do you explain to them that voters will not be eligible to vote just like that and that a lot of hindrances have to be devised for this purpose as well?

### **The electoral process (voting system)**

We have seen that not much of the criticism against the Russian elections stand up to scrutiny. Finally we may look at how the electoral process, or voting system, is organized in Russia.

The Western press is ripe with allegations of ballot stuffing and vote count fraud. But these accusations cannot be justified either.

In these presidential elections there are some 1,200,000 people working on the polling stations and election commissions of all levels. About half of them are appointed by the political parties. In addition to this there are some 300 thousand observers monitoring the elections, including 700 foreign observers. Each polling station has an election commission that consists of members of all the parties. And in addition to these the observers assigned by each candidate will supervise the vote count at each polling station until the final vote count protocol at the station is signed. There is clearly no room for any fraud here.

In addition to this each polling station has been occupied with two web cameras that allows to physical count each voter as he enters the voting booth and casts his ballot. These counts can be compared with the actual votes in the final protocol making it impossible to do any ballot stuffing.

It should be noted that contrary to the provocations that the Western media has so eagerly picked up it is impossible to misuse absentee ballots, because the absentee ballot can only be used by the person to whom it was issued by presenting it together with his passport at the polling station where he uses it.

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