



UCSJ: Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union

"The Voice of Emigration, Jewish Survival, and Human Rights in the Former Soviet Union Since 1970"

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UCSJ REGRETS RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS TO RUSSIAN DUMA

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Sadly, Russia's parliamentary election turned into a popular plebiscite for its president... As such, given Russia's improved economy and international clout, victory of Vladimir Putin's United Russia was never in doubt -- a fact that makes one question the extreme and undemocratic means by which the Kremlin felt it must throttle all progressive opposition. What's more, the election raises continuing questions about the lack of independence of Russia's legislature.

Of greatest concern to UCSJ is President Putin's failure to translate his often eloquent statements that decry the impunity of antisemitic and xenophobic hate crimes into an improved and reformed Duma. The impunity of racist acts and speech is a measure of the decline into corruption and dysfunction in the justice system for assuring rule of law. Five years ago, one-third of the Duma were elected based on platforms of explicit antisemitism and xenophobia. One of the few potential "benefits" to be derived from such close control of the election system was, we had hoped, the purging of this political blight.

While it will take another week or more to get a complete list of winners, early reports suggest that no such reform has taken place. Indeed, many nationalists and chauvinists occupied the top parts of the list of candidates and many of them will be among Duma deputies. According to Sova Informational-Analytical Center, at least 100 highly placed candidates are well known chauvinists, based on their xenophobic rhetoric and views. Xenophobic ideology is typical for representatives of several parties whose members participated in the election campaign -- "Spravedlivaya Rossia" ("Just Russia"), Communist Party (KPRF), Liberal-Democratic Party (LDPR), "Russian Patriots" and "People's Union". Later we will present information about xenophobic and antisemitic views of the "United Russia" Party faction members, including its Youth wing ("Nashi" and some others).

- Among the most active xenophobic/antisemitic candidates from the "Just Russia" Party are: Ivan Kharchenko, Sergey Grigoriev and Vladimir Nikitin (from "Rodina" Party faction in the previous Duma. They signed the infamously antisemitic "Letter of 500"), Oleg Pashenko (editor in chief of the newspaper "Krasnoyarsk Worker", well known antisemite), Alexey Mitrofanov (former leader of Zhirinovskiy Party faction in Duma),

Vladimir Timakov (member of the Congress of Russian Communities, publisher of the antisemitic newspaper “Zasechny Rubezh”).

- The Communist Party polled second after United Russia. Chairman of KPRF Gennady Zuganov is the author of the xenophobic/antisemitic brochure “Holy Rus and Kashevo Tsardom.” Vladimir Kashin, Nikolai Ezersky, Peter Svechnikov and Sergey Sobko also signed the “Letter of 500”.
- Besides the well known ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the LDPR list has such xenophobes as Ivan Musatov (one of organizers of the “Russian Rally – 2006”), Sergey Ivanov (activist of the National-Socialistic Society).
- Non-registered ultra right Party “Russian Patriots” activists took part in elections; many of them were among authors. These include Yuri Saveliev, Valery Kukov, Victor Cherepkov, Alexander Krutov, Sergey Pykhtin and many others.
- The “People’s Union” party candidates are very active chauvinists and share an empire ideology, some of them are RNU activists – Sergey Baburin, Victor Alksnis, Stanislav Terekhov, Alexey Mikhailov, Igor Artemov, Nikolai Kuryanovich (works with neo-Nazi youth groups, including skinheads), Ivan Pershin, Irina Savelyeva and some others.

We will have a complete analysis once full election results are available.

The UCSJ appeals to political progressives and human rights NGOs to join the Coalition Against Hate and its Blog in order to resist neo-Nazis and chauvinistic extremists in Russia, and to return Russia to a democratic path. We appeal to the Western governments, parliaments and civil society organizations to support all public efforts in Russia that struggle for democratic reforms and an improved inter-ethnic and inter-religious climate.

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