



## RUSSIAN SOCIAL- DEMOCRATIC UNION

tel./fax: ( 7-095 ) 943- 9476

E-mail: [socdemru@geocities.com](mailto:socdemru@geocities.com)

Internet: [//www.geocities.com/capitolhill/9019](http://www.geocities.com/capitolhill/9019)

### Political Situation in Russia

The current political situation in Russia has two major features: electoral campaign for State Duma – the Parliament of the Russian Federation and the war in Chechnya.

The electoral campaign is marked by unprecedented pressure of the acting power (the President's administration and the government) and financial groups of its support at all other participants of the electoral process. This pressure is performed by the following means:

- a) concentration of financial resources and streams in hands of structures and persons that are under control of Kremlin, and destroying the financial channels that could be used for financing of Kremlin's political competitors;
- b) via the controlled media (first of all – the main all-national TV channels), which conduct open propaganda of pro-Kremlin political forces and blackmail their opponents;
- c) by creating of artificial electoral mirror-blocks which are to take votes from competitors, and making secret agreements with those competitors, which are considered by Kremlin as less dangerous (in particular, with the Communist party of the Russian Federation).

In these conditions Russian social-democrats believe that their main task is to support the most fast and civilized change of power, where the first step should be the creation of the constructive democratic majority in the new elected Parliament, which will not be linked with the now acting power.

The main social-democratic organizations (The Union of Labor, Social-Democratic Union, Young Social-Democrats, Social-Democratic association, Socialist People's Party) are taking part in electoral coalition "Fatherland – All Russia", headed by Eugene Primakov. According to sociological polls this coalition at the moment is the leader of voters preferences.

Some other organizations (Social-Democrats Movement, Socialist Party of Russia) have decided to present their own lists for elections.

Although according to Russian Constitution neither relative nor even absolute majority in the Parliament does not grant the winning party the right to form the government, still potentially the possible constructive democratic majority will be able to have a significant influence at the political situation in Russia on the eve of presidential elections-2000.

The electoral campaign develops at the same time as the tragic events in Chechen Republic take place. These events were started by an invasion of forces of Chechnya into neighboring Dagestan and the series of terrorist acts in Moscow and other Russian cities, which caused the death of hundreds civilians.

The strong anxiety of Russian public caused by these barbaric actions has let the acting power to gain a broad support to start military actions against terrorists in Chechnya.

However by the present moment the feelings of the Russian society have changed a lot. The military actions have caused the victims of civil population, Russian troops also suffer losses, the sharp problem with refugees has arisen and the authorities turned out to be not prepared for it.

More and more often the Russian media spreads the supposition that all of these events, starting from the war in Dagestan and explosions in Russian cities, was planned by Kremlin and the special services to strengthen the positions of prime-minister Putin, who was declared by Eltsin his successor, and also to have a formal reason to postpone or cancel the elections if necessary.

Russian social-democrats, supporting the struggle with terrorism, believe that the situation in Chechnya should be solved by political means.

RSDU International Secretariat

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