



# Putin and the Oligarchs: The Khodorkovsky-Yukos Affair

*Richard Sakwa*

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The arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the head of the Yukos oil company, in October 2003, was a key turning point in modern Russian history. Although officially charged with fraud and tax evasion, many speculated that the real catalyst for Khodorkovsky's arrest was his outspoken criticism of President Vladimir Putin's regime. After two controversial trials, attracting widespread international condemnation, Khodorkovsky was sentenced to 14 years in jail. In this book, Richard Sakwa examines the rise and fall of Yukos and considers the relationship between Putin's state and big business during Russia's traumatic shift from the Soviet planned economy to capitalism, as well as Russia's emergence as an energy superpower. The attack on Khodorkovsky had - and continues to have - far-reaching political and economic consequences but it also raises fundamental questions about the quality of freedom in Putin's Russia as well as the world at large.

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