

Mikhail Khodorkovsky answers questions from the public:

1. Mister Khodorkovsky! Perhaps it was fate, or Divine providence or human will, that has without a doubt made of you a Hero of Our Time. Do you realise that now, every action of yours, every word and deed, will be judged by History? Are you aware that now you are not only a millionaire who has lost [his] fortune and a person who has played at politics unsuccessfully, but one of the leaders of this Epoch? // Marina Filippova-Aguilar, Buenos Aires

I don't know how many people consider my words and deeds important for the adoption of their own personal decisions. However, even my four children – are a sufficient incentive to try and conduct myself honourably.

2. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Why did you not submit a supplication on pardon? // Antonova, Maria

The current power for some reason considers «repentance» a mandatory condition of pardon. I do not suffer from excessive pride, but to confess non-existent crimes is for me unacceptable. Bearing false witness – is a sin.

3. You don't really believe in your political prospects, do you? // Dmitry

I am not a politician and do not intend to become one. There are other ways one can serve one's fellow citizens.

4. Mikhail Borisovich! You've been sitting in jail for goodness knows how many years already, but for some reason you still consider it noble not to tell all the inside facts about today's lords of Russia? What have you got to lose? // Yegor Streltsev

I do not see honour in hanging out somebody else's «dirty laundry».

5. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What political force, in your view, is most consistently standing up for your interests? // Olga, Moscow

My interests, as a prisoner, are consistently defended by human rights advocates and many simply not-indifferent people. Politically, I feel closeness with the democratic opposition, standing up for the European choice.

6. Mikhail Borisovich, have you become a more religious person in the years of imprisonment? Are you a believer? // Stanislav (Novgorod)

I believe in the existence of a world beyond the bounds of our physical perception. I believe in the existence of a higher purpose for a person and humanity. It is easier for me to live that way.

7. Mikhail, you don't intend to write an autobiography or memoirs or a bout about life in prison? Is there an opportunity to engage in this, being found in a colony? // Alexandra (Moscow)

The more you know and understand, the higher the degree of responsibility for what is said. For now I am not ready to give an assessment to historical events, while talking about jail is boring for me.

8. If we consider that the roots of the current political system are found at the beginning of the nineties, in what, in your view, are the principal mistakes of the “young reformers”? 1. In what is the reason for the ease with which the ideas of democracy were discredited here in our country? 2. Do you consider that privatisation was indeed fair and useful for the country in that form in which it was conducted here? // François

There were enough mistakes, and a certain analysis I have made in my articles (see «A turn to the left», *Vedomosti* 01.08.05, <http://khodorkovsky.ru/documents/2005/08/01/12298/>; Dialogues with Ulitskaya, the magazine «*Znamya*» №10 2009, <http://magazines.russ.ru/znamia/2009/10/ul12.html>; Dialogues with Akunin the magazine *Esquire* № 10 2008, <http://khodorkovsky.ru/documents/2008/10/03/11902/>). Nevertheless, there was also no small number of

achievements. However, it is intrinsic to people to expect to «get it all, and right now». Therefore a «thermidor» - is the unavoidable companion of any revolution.

9. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! After everything has ended, and you will come out to liberty, are you planning to remain living in Russia, or would you like to get as far away as possible from here? Success to you and all the best to you! With respect, Yuri, age 27. // Yuri V.

I'm 46 years old, and my land is here.

10. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What, from your point of view, are the optimal ways out of the crisis for the country? Are you prepared to take upon yourself the responsibility for improving the economic situation in any individual industry (or at an enterprise) if such an opportunity were granted to you - for example, within the framework of the cessation of investigative actions in relation to you? // Elena

If my labour will be needed by my country, - I will work. I deem that my services are not required by the current power.

11. Mikhail Borisovich, I am a student. I want to tell you that you are my idol of sorts. Forgive us for having elected such people who are not able to support a democratic regime in our country... I have questions. What gives you faith in the future? Does our country have a future under the power that has formed today? Hang in there. We will not forget about you. // Yaroslav

There will always be a Russia, while the power will be replaced inevitable. You will certainly live that long.

12. Esteemed Mikhail, how can you explain such a situation when Abramovich is buying his latest yacht for 300 mln euros and at the same time in Russia by the hundreds of children are dying of cancer and the newspapers, TV are calling on poor people to help when they themselves have nothing to eat? Where is the state looking or are they at Abramovich's feeding trough? // Mikhail

This is a direct consequence of the absence in the country of an independent influential opposition. The presence of huge money in the «Future generations fund» and the impossibility of paying for the medical treatment of children do not fit together in my head.

13. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich. What in your view awaits Russia in the medium term and long term perspective? And when will the point of no return for alternative variants of the future be passed. // Konstantin

The struggle for the place of Russia among countries with a modern economy, for the next 50 years, could be lost for good by the year 2015, if the country does not take a path of cardinal modernisation before then.

14. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, how can your admirers help you – ordinary citizens of a democratic frame of mind, believing in Liberty? // Alexander

I am grateful to all who have figured out what is going on and are helping others to figure it out.

15. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, How do you consider, are there in Russia prospects that today's economic crisis or some other event may serve as the cause of the replacement of the administrative pinnacle of the country and of the whole regime and with an efficient democratic model. Or will the growing economies of China and other developing countries again save the raw-materials market, not letting a critical mass of problems to accumulate and not allowing Russia to fall to where the popularity of today's «efficient managers» will already be unable to pull itself out? // V.

Power changes not when the people have nothing to eat, but when they stop being afraid of wanting to live differently.

22. Explain please, in what is the advantage of a parliamentary form of self-administration over a presidential one. And is there not lying at the bottom of the institution of the boundless power of the president a threat of totalitarianism and extremism. // S.V. Pingvintsev

The democratic model of administration (separation of powers, real elections, civil society) ensures “feedback”, increases the flexibility of the system, creates vertical mobility. Many systemic errors are thereby averted, equally as the uncontrolled spread of the consequences of such errors. It is precisely these errors – the main reason for the death of all authoritarian regimes. Besides this, within the framework of a democratic model is ensured the opportunity for the effective existence and functioning of «small groups». «Small groups» - are the guarantee of the innovational development of the economy and society.

24. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, why is it that they deal so harshly with competitors for power here in Russia and in similar regimes, while at the same time they manage to get along with one another relatively peacefully in developed democracies. What is this a peculiarity of the mentality, an indicator of the level of freedoms or the banal thirst for vengeance of individual persons? // Nikolai, Tyumen

An authoritarian regime rules out the existence of a law guaranteeing equal rights for people. Having lost power, an autocrat loses all.

26. Deeply esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, what actions must the rank-and-file citizen of Russia undertake in order to stop the undeviating growth in the numbers of the bureaucracy in our country? Health to you and your close ones, with respect Elena. // Elena Kuznetsova, Perm

A universally known law of management: the problems of a system are not resolved from within the system. So, then, there is but one recipe – an influential opposition, ready to replace the power. Only political competition restricts the appetites of the bureaucracy.

27. “As became known to the British weekly «Sunday Times», Mikhail Khodorkovsky «from under detention» transferred his shares (and this is 53%) to lord Jacob Rothschild”. Mikhail Khodorkovsky, answer please, what are your interrelations with the Rothschilds at the given moment? Why did you transfer the shares to Rothschild? // Konstantin

My shares were transferred to my partners consequent to my arrest. Their surnames are known. This is not Rothschilds.

28. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, if they are charging you with such an empyrean sum of theft, then why are they not saying just where this “field of fool” with the buried milliards is? And also, when they rehabilitate you (I do not doubt this), how will those who are now playing out this farce in court be able to exonerate themselves? // Tatiana

Because the power does not want to admit: the «milliards» are in YUKOS – and YUKOS has been grabbed by «Rosneft». This fact crushes the entire charge.

29. Mikhail Borisovich, do not answer, please, about the question of pardon - your motives and behaviour with respect to this question are understandable and elicit great respect. Now a question: How do you consider, will a fair trial of those who arranged such an “interesting” life for you ever take place? // Alexander

The law envisages this. At the very least, in relation to those who personally engaged in the falsification of evidence.

30. Mikhail, that in prison it is very complex to remain yourself is not even subject to discussion. How do you consider, will you be able to plunge into work anew as the head of a large company? The tone of a manager, a financier is not lost? What do you do in order to keep yourself in shape? Or have you already re-examined values and now do not intend to return to the previous arena? // Sergei

Engaging in business is already not interesting for me.

31. Tell us, why out of the richest people who had amassed millions in the most frightening time for Russia are you the only one behind bars? // Vladimir Nikolayevich

This is truly hard to explain to one who does not consider the case political.

32. Good day Mikhail Borisovich! From your point of view, the economy and mentality of what country promote the development of private business and the building of healthy capitalist

relations - with free competition, the dominance of professionalism over personal connections, respect for private property and an absence of the “social responsibility of business” so fashionable in recent times, under which people not desiring to work receive social advantages at the expense of taxes from those who with their honest labour earn their wealth. // Maxim

Private property, private business - is no less than 3.5 thsd. years old. And maybe much older. But it is precisely private property that gives rise to personal «social responsibility». Read the Bible. If you're a non-believer - read it as the history of our civilisation.

33. Mikhail Borisovich! Have you repented of the fact that having been the richest person in Russia, you did not spend a single kopek on real charitable causes (I do not take into account that window-dressing that was around YUKOS). // Alexey

That about which you know – you call «window-dressing». That which is not «window-dressing» - you don't know. Go with peace.

34. Mikhail Borisovich, give please your forecast of prices for energy inputs in 2009-11. Success to you and patience! // Mikhail

The «fundamental price» (without a speculative component) – \$50-70/bbl. The factual one is impossible to forecast. I don't engage in fortune-telling.

35. The say that in extreme situations a person re-examines his life and finds in himself hidden abilities, to which in ordinary life he would not have paid attention. Has jail given you something in the personal sense? Is there at least one moment for which you are grateful to fate that you ended up in jail? // Dmitry

Yes. A blinded person begins to hear and feel better. Jail has taught me to think more deeply and to better express thoughts on paper. And also - to value family and friends more.

36. Hello! Let's get married! // Masha

And you'll take me with my wife, four children and future granddaughter?

37. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What were you counting on, having gone into politics? Knowing you as a person who thinks sufficiently rationally, I do not even allow the thought that you did this [diving in] “head first”... Were you ready for what happened? // Sergei

Yes. But I was more likely waiting for them to kill [me].

39. You had an opportunity to avoid prisons by leaving Russia and emigrate to a safe for your country and enjoy life with the capital you had at the time. After 2062 days in Russian prison - do you not regret for not taking that decision back in 2003? Thank you. // Michael T

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. I'm an ordinary person, after all.

43. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich what for you is freedom. Are you free now?.. // Denis
Freedom is multi-faceted. I can not be with the people I love, but I can speak and think.

44. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Do you not find some similarity of yours with the biblical Joseph, sold into slavery by his own brothers and unfairly thrown in jail? But it was precisely Joseph who then led Egypt out of a most heavy crisis and made [it into] a flourishing country. Would you not like to become the Russian Joseph? Do you agree with the premise that your imprisonment - this is an act of God, His will? Remain just as FREE, trust in the Lord Jesus, we're praying for you! // Andrey Danilov (city of Kostroma)

In the broadest sense – without a doubt an act of God.

45. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What is your assessment of the economic policy of the powers in the period of crisis? Which steps do you consider correct, which ones erroneous? Do you not have the feeling that the entire economy of Russia has gone over to manual control, and that the powers do not have a thought-through strategy? And therefore the way out of the crisis will be for Russia and its citizens more heavy than for other countries (both developed and developing ones)? // Sergey

Within the framework of the existing political model, the economic decisions are close to optimal. But with a stone axe, alas, you can't build an automobile.

46. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! How do you see the most optimistic and the most pessimistic scenarios for the development of Russia in the next 10 years? Hang on, you're needed by people! // Maxim, city of Kiev

Optimistic: democratisation by 2015, a path in the direction of the Norwegian-Canadian model. Pessimistic: autocracy – an attempt to “catch up with and surpass» China, but without Chinese people, therefore unsuccessfully.

47. Mikhail Borisovich, how can you explain that at the present time a large part of the national economy factually belongs to foreign offshores? And why are they at the present time rendering them (the owners) st.support, which is used for speculation with currency and the return of credits to their own selves. Stupidity or treason? // Dmitry

But these are the «right» offshores.

49. Mikhail! Say it honestly – did you steal? Didn't pay taxes? Only honestly, without references to optimisations and reference to a multitude of other thieves. // Alexander

The state gave – I did not refuse, but neither did I «rat» [engage in petty thievery—*Trans.*]. I paid less taxes than only «Gazprom» - 4% of the budget of the country. Could I have paid more? I could, but I didn't, investing in the development of YUKOS instead. Look for saints in the government, there's lots of them there.

50. Are you hoping to come out to liberty before [your] 50th birthday? // Kirill

Of course. Everybody hopes for something.

51. Mikhail Borisovich, what actions or utterance of yours became the last straw for those who have seated you in jail? // Artur

Mikhail Kasyanov, I think, knows better (see «Izbitratelnaya kompaniya YUKOS», *Kommersant* 22.07.09, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1208181>).

53. Mikhail Borisovich! Have 2062 days behind bars, the appearance of ever newer charges and lengthy judicial wars changed your views on life, business and our country? // Lyudmila

Unconditionally, they have changed - both jail and age. Certain notions about life, by the way, have remained unchanged.

54. What present would you like to receive on [your] birthday (within the framework of the budget and means of a middle manager)? Have cellmates made you presents? // Boris

The best present – memory.

55. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, how, in your opinion, what will Russia be like in 5 and 10 years? What will her role in the world be like? // Ilya

I'm afraid that [it will be] the role of a raw-materials province of China and Europe. Such a development of events can be avoided, but for now I do not see in the current elite the desire to work on this.

56. Mikhail! Have normal human relations formed for you with someone of the prisoners? How do you spend free time - what do you write, read? Do you believe that in the nearest 2-3 years you'll come out to liberty? // Eduard, 25

Of course. Without this it is impossible to live here.

57. How did your attitude change towards the thieves' world and understandings, after you ended up in jail? // Ivan

I - am an adult person, and these games are not for me.

58. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! As is probably known to you, around a milliard dollars from the sale of Mažeikiai [sic] nafta have been lying for two years on the bank accounts of a Dutch court. Do you not consider that these funds, belonging to all the former shareholders of YUKOS, must be given back? And if “yes” then how do you imagine this action to yourself? // Sergey, YUKOS minority [shareholder].

Of course. But their fate is not in my hands, but in the hands of the court.

61. What is the attitude towards corruptioneers and bribe-takers on the zone? // Igor Ordinary. They're not «lads», but neither are they «the elite».

64. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! First of all, Happy Boithday! May they not give your and your close ones anything bad on this day. Now a question. Do you see your personal guilt before the Motherland for the fact that that regime which seated you behind bars is ruling in Russia? If yes - what did you do wrong? What would you have changed? If possible, general phrases are not needed. Success – you need it more now than many. With respect, Viktor // Viktor

I've already spoken [about this] in articles. If briefly: we should have built democratic institutions, and not spend so much time on pinpoint improvements in industry.

65. Esteemed, Mikhail Borisovich, what steps, in your view, must be undertaken by the President and the government of the RF for reducing unemployment? // Ilya

Within the framework of the current regime – build houses and roads.

67. This question we had attempted to ask you through Vadim Klyuvgant (the interview with *Kommersant*), but, apparently, it never did get to [you]. Please name the ten most important books for you. // Konstantin Knigocheyru

If in [my] entire life, then let's start with the reading primer. If concretely, today in daytime, then the code of criminal procedure. If the favourite, then the Strugatskys - «*Trudno byt Bogom*» and «*Malysh*». If poetry, - then Vysotsky and Guberman. If historically-philosophical, - then the Bible. It's hard to enumerate. I love to read and always have. Of foreign writers I like Wilborn [sic] Smith, Sheckley, Simak, Asimov, but I would not call their books «important» for myself. I could have lived without them. But without them life, without a doubt, would be poorer.

69. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Do you consider the loans-for-shares auctions legitimate? Who initiated them, for what? Thank you in advance. With respect, Viktor // Viktor

Their «legitimacy» is undeniable. There was an *ukase* of the President, and nobody contested them in the course of the statute of limitations. Moral and political justification – [that's] another and not-simple discussion (see «A turn to the left», *Vedomosti* 01.08.05, <http://khodorkovsky.ru/documents/2005/08/01/12298/>; «A turn to the left – 2», *Kommersant* 11.11.05, <http://khodorkovsky.ru/documents/2005/11/11/12299/>).

70. Esteemed Mikhail, as is known - the higher up you fly, the more painful it is to fall. Having freedom, money, political influence, and having lost much - how much as your spiritual world-view changed? Thank you. Success and patience to you. // maxgv

Priorities have stood out more vividly. Family and human relations have become more important, convictions – less blurry. Faith has become firmer.

71. Suggest a book on law for a non-specialist (without a leg. education)! // Eduard

A school social studies textbook. Deeper and you're already dealing with sectoral specialisation: criminal, civil, family, constitutional etc.

72. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Answer, as one Jew to another, if you could now choose a fate for your 2 year old son, then would you prefer that he remain in Russia or leave for Israel or another country? In other words, is there, in your opinion, a future for Russia at all and for Jews in Russia in particular? // Dmitry

My father is Jewish, but he and I never talked about this. I think he feels himself Russian. I – all the more so. My grandfather - his father - died for this land at war. And the children - let them decide for themselves, when they get older. There are many places in the world where living is easier and more

pleasant. But in Russia, I think, there will go on a not-simple process of transforming a former empire into a Russian nation-state.

73. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! It is interesting how you would explain to your future grandchildren, simply and straightforwardly, why things turned out the way they did, in what, at what moment you had erred, at what point it still was possible to fix everything and save the company, money, freedom, at last. And why you didn't adopt that most true decision? Thank you. // Irina, Moscow

I'll tell the grandchildren: to save everything there wasn't enough wisdom. When the time came to choose – I chose honour.

74. Mr. Khodorkovsky! Why were there so many deaths around Menatep and Yukos? // Vitaly

In YUKOS and Menatep there worked only 150 thsd. people, like in a mid-sized Russian city. Around you, in your city, were there fewer deaths? If yes, - you're a foreigner.

75. Vladislav Surkov has declared that a political system has formed in Russia and that it now needs to be cared for and nurtured. Your opinion? // Alexey Pavlovich

To care for and nurture the system – his work, as a government official, not to let it «stagnate and go bad» - ours. Russian society's.

78. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What do we come to your mind [sic], and what answer begs itself to a simple question: what to do next? // Andrey

Live, think, raise children, believe.

80. Mikhail Borisovich, judging by everything - you still retain hope in justice (in relation to you), faith in a civilised path for Russia. But there is also another opinion (the publications of Afanasiev in *Novaya gazeta*) - it's not about the ruler, but about the people, the history of the country, and if one is to rely on them, then Russia - in the foreseeable future - is still a long way from getting up off her knees, it is genetically predetermined for her to remain a slave country. I would like to believe your optimism (first and foremost - in relation to you yourself), but Afanasiev is more convincing. // Vladimir Moscow

Read E. Pain's «*Rasputnitsa*». Yu. Afanasiev I greatly respect and explain his pessimism by his specific experience – first of all, the lack of success of the democratic movement, one of the leaders of which he was two decades ago.

82. Mikhail, what are your relationships towards Open Russia Foundation at this moment? Also you have founded that institution in association with notorious globalists (proponents of one world government and a new world order) such as Dr Henry Kissinger, Lord Jacob Rothschild, so will you continue along those lines? // Boris

Today my opportunities are limited.

83. Mikhail Borisovich, do you intend to engage in civic activity in future? Thanks to the activity of the “Open Russia” foundation, I understood that Russia has a chance at democracy. At the present time there are nearly no civic organisations left in the country that would be able to explain this to modern youth. Thank you. // Maxim

I do not cease to engage in civic activity in the forms accessible to me even today. I am thinking in future to dedicate a significant part of [my] time to continuing the work.

84. Are you in agreement with the opinion that jail, in principle, is a good school of life for Russian oligarchs, and it must certainly be gone through by Abramovich, Chubais - and on down the list. Including big thieving state officials? // Alexey Pavlovich

20% of Russian men have been through jail. What have we attained? The country has begun to look like a jail. You like that?

86. A good time of day, Mikhail! From the interview to Boris Akunin, it shapes up that you know what could await you, but still, despite everything, you “took a walk” at the meeting at

the President's over our government officials, thereby having flipped mister President and the whole Government a second puck, since the first had been thrown in by you in the process of opening up Eastern Siberia, but they didn't let 'em rust and returned them to you. The question begs itself, what could the "grey cardinal" have said then to the President who initiated the beginning of your end. Excuse the tautology. Thank you. // Dmitry

What he said - is well known. What Putin actually believed – I don't know.

88. How do you bear imprisonment? How do you feel? What is this - to end up in a Russian jail and to spend in it so many years? // Irina

Jail – is a nasty place, but you can live. We, those who are by birth from the USSR, lived even at liberty almost like in jail. We got used [to it].

89. As of today, I am working with people who not that long ago were YUKOS workers, who had worked right on the front lines in Nefteyugansk, Samara, Nizhnevartovsk etc. I can note that the specialists are very good, if not the best. All, as one, say that they recall with delight those times when they worked under your leadership, and refer to you only from the good side. What would you like to say or wish to these people now? // Alexey

I recall with pleasure the years of work in the company. And to wish? Probably, I wish [for them] to pass on to [their] children the understanding of how you can live differently. May they have the good fortune.

92. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! I express to you my respects. Say, how do you consider, is there a future for such a political order as Putin has created, and that now exists? What, in your opinion, moved Putin in the creation of the current situation in the country? // Alexey

I am convinced that the authoritarian political regime in the Russia of the 21st century is not of long duration. The alternative - a falling behind fatal for the country. I deem that Putin does not want harm for the country. He is realising that model which he understands, and believes, that it - is the best. Alas, his notions are erroneous.

93. Hello, Mikhail. How would you act, let's say, 1-2 months, going back in time, before the arrest. What would you have done differently? // Avalon

Perhaps it was already late to change anything. At any rate, I don't think about this.

94. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! At the present time Russia is continuing to remain a technologically backward country and in essence is a raw-materials appendage of the West. In 10 favourable-for-Russia-from-the-point-of-view-of-the-economy years in the country not a single new capacity for the production of chemical products has been placed on stream (with the exception of two enterprises in the Republic of Tatarstan), new gas and oil fields are practically not being developed. Moreover, the noted tendency concerns both state and private holdings. In what in your view manner can the owners of large Russian petro-gas-chemical holdings be stimulated towards the innovational development of their business, about which the President is saying so much in recent times? // Stanislav

People aspire to put money there, where there are guarantees of property rights and an interesting level of incomes. With earning capacity all is in order with us, but to put their money in for 10-12 years, *i.e.* for two presidential terms, in Russia not everybody will resolve.

95. When will they release you from jail? // Dima, age 8

If they decide by law - soon, by «understandings» - when they stop being afraid, *i.e.* never.

96. Happy birthday, Mikhail Borisovich. It seems to me, if in the year 2003 they had not arrested you, then we would now be living in another country, it would have been more comfortable for habitation. What would you have done differently in the conditions of today, were you in the place of putin, I did not make a mistake, having written the surname with a small letter. // Dmitry

I would have returned the freedom of political discussion, would have stimulated the creation of a shadow (opposition) government, would have restored the independence of the court, having expanded the powers of jury courts. Thereby I would have broken the impunity of the corrupt part of the bureaucracy and would have created the institutional milieu for the country to come out of the crisis into an «innovational», and not a «raw-materials» space.

97. I keep being troubled by one question. By the will of fate you have turned out to be on the crest of the wave (of business, of power). You - have huge money, fame, glory, unlimited opportunities for self-realisation. There are two paths: to dedicate yourself to the country, enter into History as a person with a huge “plus” sign, who was able to create a Russia one is not ashamed of, to attain the genuine respect of people. And a second path - purchases of yet more yachts, football clubs, Courchavelian [*sic*] parties with VIP-prostitutes in the direct and figurative sense of the word, live according to the principle “Grab it - and over the hill [abroad—*Trans.*], to guzzle away the loot”. But why, say, are our oligarchs and big politicians so primitive, why don’t they make use of the unique chance that has been given them? Can it be that the greatest value for you is represented by the banal “minced meat patty”? // Alexey

The «minced meat patty» in Russia is considerably safer, as you can see for yourself

98. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, Happy Birthday! Health, forbearance, patience in your not-simple conditions of habitation. I am proud of you and your family. You are needed by Russians for the building of the true democratic Russia of the future. How do you assess yourself in the role of national hero, consolidating all strata of society for the attainment of the given objective? 60 years, Daniya. // Daniya

In Russia national heroes are, as a rule, dead. But I would like to live a little yet. True, sometimes it gets tedious, then I think: maybe [I’ll] become a hero?.. ☺

102. A bunch of meetings, forums, symposiums, targeted programmes are dedicated to the shifting of the Russian economy onto innovational rails. But the cart hasn’t budged one bit. How do you consider, is it possible in principle in our northern, energy- and transport- and corruption-intensive country to distract the attention of business from natural [resource] rent in favour of innovation? In what must be the competitive advantage against the background of those same India and China? // Andrey

Possible, without any doubts. There are enough examples. The USA at the beginning of the previous century differed little from today’s Russia. Perhaps only situated a bit further south. And indeed Australia - not a country poor in resources, and of the northern ones - Canada. The whole question is in the institutional capabilities for realising the creative potential of people.

104. So what’s it like there in stir? // Chisto Vovan [“Vladimir” in thieves’ slang—*Trans.*]

As I understand, soon you’ll assess for yourself.

109. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Turning into a banner of the struggle with the regime, a person become a target not only for political opponents, but for supporters as well. Do you allow that there may come a moment when the greater threat to your personal safety will emanate from people declaring like views? What would such a situation become for you: a sign of success or failure? // Ruslan (Voronezh)

My supporters – are the Russian intelligentsia. If from it begins to arise a threat to somebody’s personal safety – then, that means, the end has come to Russia. Humanism has left the country for good.

110. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Have you repented of the committed crimes? // Alexey

Repentance has to be sincere and honest, otherwise – [it's] a sin before people and the Most High. I did not commit this, so why then push me into sin?

111. Esteemed Mikhail, If one were to have you and VVP change places in the period of the year 2003, how would you have acted? // Alexander

I would have conducted a political battle, would have achieved a majority in the State Duma, but I would not have annihilated either the parliament or the opposition.

112. How do you consider: Will you come out at liberty? // Dmitry

Yes.

113. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, how do you consider, is it possible for the judicial system in Russia to become completely independent of the executive power in the nearest 10-20 years? What needs to be done for this? And more. If you were to become President of Russia, would reform of the Federal Service for the Execution of Punishments be one of your first-order tasks? Or is this system functioning more or less normally at the given moment? // Dmitry

The independence of the Russian judiciary is possible. The main path – expansion of the powers of jury courts with the simultaneous strengthening of them and every possible help. And the FSIN needs to be reformed urgently. The main task – reducing the prison population to that minimum that can not but be found there, stopping the artificial propagation of recidivism and people with a warped psyche and fate. Vengefulness costs the taxpayer too dearly.

114. Mikhail Borisovich! How do you consider, are there any decent people left in modern Russia among the politicians and big businessmen? Can you name at least three? // Sergey

There are very few of them. Both in the opposition and even in power. But I do not want to and will not set people up with my good work about them.

116. Mikhail Borisovich! How do you consider, does the state have the right to put the people's money into supporting inefficient business, the way it acted having transferred 25 milliard rubles of interest-free and non-repayable credit to AvtoVAZ? Does the country need such "social" projects? // Alexey

If one sees a special project in the support of AvtoVAZ, then this is a lawful, albeit inefficient putting in of the people's money. If there is an idea how to make «AvtoVaz» uncompetitive for this money, then I envy the author and wish him success. I wouldn't be able to.

117. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, allow [me] to express huge respect for you, your close ones, your friends, colleagues and your lawyers. Never, reading different philosophers, could I have imagined how one person embodies the time and stands up against the situation, the time, the stereotypes of society. You have answered the call of the time and have courageously received the blow of an unfavourable development of events. Recount, what kind of opportunities do the "little" people, such as myself, have to stand up on your side of the barricades? Does [sic] the supports at the courthouse, the letters in support, the publications help you? What needs to be done in order to overcome the situation that has formed in Russia? // Maxim Zorin

Yes. Very much. Platon and I are extremely beholden to all for the help.

118. Mikhail Borisovich, how do you think, won't they close Gazeta.ru after this interview? // balabin

After this one – not likely.

119. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, thinking people have a feeling of hopelessness now from the authoritarian system that has arisen in the country. How do you consider, our country, on the strength of its sizes and historical traditions, can it become civilised one day? // Alena

I have never doubted the civilisedness of our country, but the «passionarity» [sic] has under-dwindled, although I hope not forever. And as concerns sizes – Canada and Australia do not differ overly much (proportionally to the population).

120. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, only one question interests me: how are you holding on? Unconditionally I can not even imagine to myself what jail is like, (perhaps a tiny bit after the story “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich”). What is there that forces you not to break, to survive and to remain in so doing a person even in such horrible conditions? I think, this would be useful for any people, who at times lose presence of spirit. Thank you! // Alexander

In any situation you can set yourself a worthy goal. Movement towards this goal, even to the extent [allowed by] minimal opportunities, gives life content.

121. Having read your interview in Esquire there arose such a question - there arise the feeling that you consciously chose the image of a martyr, understanding that there is a hounding going on, and if you do not leave - they will seat you, however the motivation of your decision is still not understandable to me to the end - if you were thinking in so doing not only about yourself, but also about the country as a whole, does it not seem to you that, having left, you could have done more for the country? Let us say organise a real opposition to the current regime? after all, today the situation is such that all (with the exception of government officials) are dissatisfied with what is going on in the country, but people do not have any unifying factor // Andrey

Those who need me specifically – accept me just the way I am. Those who need a revolutionary leader or something else – have a broad choice of other personalities.

122. It seems to me, you at the end of the day will have the victory over the system, for the system is rotten and soon will fall apart. But will not your victory be pyrrhic? // Alexander

When you're talking about honour and liberty – the cost of the victory does not have any meaning. The rest is indeed the subject of compromise.

124. Hello Namesake! First, I wish you in the nearest future to end up at liberty! Second, I would like to get from you advice, as from a specialist - what human qualities, do you consider, are the most valuable for the running of a successful business? // Mikhail

For «running» a business - industriousness and a desire to learn. For creating – creativity of thought.

127. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, on 27 May, the Birthday of Saint Petersburg, I met with my friend in a little restaurant near Nevsky prospect (a street terrace on Malaya Konyushennaya right next to Nevsky). The salvo ended. Along Nevsky, along the width of the entire prospect, the people were returning from Palace Square. I was in shock: The huge crowd of people (more youth), passing by along Nevsky were chanting “Sieg heil”. A huge mass of people. They were walking along the width of all of Nevsky. From sidewalk to sidewalk. They were yelling loudly. Outshouting any and all. Everything military-style. It could be heard everywhere. In the course of some 15 minutes we observed this procession... Mikhail Borisovich, this is Russian fascism or simply idiot hooligans? // Alexey

As a rule - idiots, but the problem of the necessity of completing the construction of a nation-state of Russians on the wreckage of the former empire – exists. Russia - is the same kind of «multi-national» state as France or Germany (unlike the USSR), and for real fascists on our land there is no place. Only under. Two bayonets deep [Standard battlefield grave depth during the times of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)—*Trans.*]

129. Mikhail, do you believe in a bright future of Russia? From myself I wish you patience and forbearance, as well as the quickest possible release. // Anna

I believe. Notwithstanding.

130. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Why do you continue to participate in this Circus, in the so-called second Trial? Why don't you protest, don't announce a hunger strike, have you really not understood anything yet, are you really hoping for something? // Alexander

Each day of the trial – this is several more people who have understood that for democracy in Russia you need to fight. This is my small contribution.

131. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, had they given you an opportunity to leave beyond the border, with hints or straightforwardly? Did you have a choice, to stay in the RF, or to leave beyond the pale, or did they not leave you any chances? // Anton

«Physical» chances - there were, furthermore I did travel, I was tying up loose ends, saying goodbye to friends.

132. I congratulate with [your] Birthday!!! How are your children enduring all this? What is going on with them now, are you managing to have an influence on the development of the younger ones? Health and patience to you and your close ones. And success!!! // Alexander

Not badly. The oldest son has gotten married, the daughter has entered college, the young ones - in school. The wife manages. I write, sometimes we see one another through the glass. It is sad.

133. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What gives you the strength and courage to hold on so steadfastly and firmly? I do not think that privileged conditions are created for you with respect to the regime, while jail and colony quickly break even people who are not nearly so proud. Maybe, particularly proud ones - first of all. Do not regard [this] as flattery: your forbearance and steadfastness elicit deep respect. // Alexey

Now the GULAG in the full sense no longer exists. Public support helps to avoid «lawlessness», while the knife blow and other «trifles» did not scare me for some reason. Although I'm not at all a hero.

134. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, share your thoughts how in Russia one can get rich from nothing, and what sectors are the most promising. And likewise what you think about the second wave of the crisis, what problems still await us. // Alexander

There are two options: either to start a really small business and do something better than others; or to work for someone, get yourself a reputation, connections, and then «capitalise» them in your own business.

135. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! What are the Russian powers afraid of and why? Health and forbearance to you and your close ones! // Gazovik

The Russian powers, like all others, are afraid of not being able to hold on to power. Why? Apparently, they are not confident in the quality of their work.

137. I have not been in Novosibirsk since mid 1990s when I accepted a full Professor position in US. At the time when I left, according to rumours, almost every business related murder in Novosibirsk was connected with you and your partners names. Do you feel that you were a part of the group of people who were responsible for creation of the atmosphere of fear and terror in mid 90s in Russia? I graduated just a couple of years later than you from the same University and almost 20% of 160 people who graduated with me were murdered in 1990s. Thank you. Professor Granit. // Alexander Granit

In the middle of the 90s I did not have any substantial business-interests in Novosibirsk. Later (in 19998) – there appeared Novosibirsknefteprodukt on a share basis with Sibneft. I think you're confusing me with someone else. There were enough of their own, local «showdowns» there.

140. The official aim of privatisation was to raise the efficiency of the management of property. Does it not seem to you that those people who got this property, on the strength of their criminal nature were not capable of realising this goal? Do you consider the term “earned” fair as applies to your capitals and the capitals of your “colleagues” in privatisation. // Andrey Alexandrovch

I will answer for myself on the example of YUKOS. I received the company with less than 40 mln. t of production, with approximately 1,200 mln. tonnes of reserves and 2 mlrd. dollars of debt. I left it (in 2003, not taking «Sibneft» into account) – with 80 mln. t of production, with approximately 1,500 mln. tonnes of reserves and 15 bln. dollars of profit, obtained over these years. This difference – is what was earned. Its assessment - growth in [market] capitalisation. Cost of production dropped from 8 to 1.6 dollars/barrel. The average earning (in Siberia) went up from 200 to 1000 dollars/month (this is the years from 1996 to 2003). I think these results allow [me] to be proud of them and certainly release [me] from the necessity of saying any more words in justification of myself.

143. What in your view is the value of your assets (former): before the arrest, at the moment of realisation to pro-state structures, and now? Can one more or less objectively say: the state won more or lost, having taken the business away from you? In the short-term (up to 5 years) and long-term (more than 10 years) perspective. // Sergey

The value of the assets at the moment of arrest is known – 35 mlrd. dollars. The state's gain – that part of the dividends that it is getting instead of private shareholders. Although «Rosneft» is not paying much (around 300-500 mln. dollars a year). The state's loss – the growth in the cost of financial resources for Russia by 1.5/2 percentage points (*i.e.* 6-10 mlrd. dollars a year) in connection with the reassessment of country risks, and this is only direct financial losses.

148. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! How do you consider, are you an accessory as one of the elite of post-Soviet Russia to the substantial level of falsification, corruption, pseudo-priorities and ignorance that are present in all spheres and at any level of our society? If “yes”, then do you see a re-directing towards civilisation and a way to inculcate it in fellow citizens of all levels; are you prepared to take upon yourself (canvases and eggs don't count) and is something like this possible in Russia in the nearest 12 years? With Respect! // Stanislav

Changes are possible, more than that, inevitable. On the strength of that complex situation in which Russia has ended up today. The efforts of the elite could accelerate or slow down the changes. I'm prepared to make my contribution. For now - from jail.

149. Hello! What are the main reasons for the low efficiency of the Russian economy? Are there the prerequisites in our country to get away from the merger of the government officials with capital? What in your view is the most realistically attainable way of getting rid of corruption? Do you consider right the introduction to ministerial

posts of trusted government officials, being incompetent in questions of the production and economic management of the industries entrusted to them? A big thanks in advance. // Igor

The main reason for corruption and the low efficiency of the economy on the whole is one - an archaic system of running the country (the so-called «vertical»). This is a horse cart on a modern motorway. And we - are passengers in the horse cart. Dung from under the tail of the horse – an inescapable option.

150. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich. As the result of privatisation and the loans-for-shares auctions a significant part of the assets of the country were concentrated in the hands of a limited number of persons. Moreover none of these persons paid a fair price for his property. As a result these persons never did become legitimate owners. This discredited the concept of “entrepreneur” and created the basis for the non-legal relations of the power and these persons. Besides that, such a gap in incomes, makes the building of democracy in the country impossible (in sociology or political science a 14-fold gap in incomes is considered extreme). How in your opinion to resolve this problem? Thank you and I wish courage. // Mikhail Nikolayevich

My proposals on this topic I introduced twice. The first time – not publicly, still being at liberty and alongside YUKOS, - in the year 2003 (see Mikhail Kasyanov’s book «*Bez Putina*», where our meeting in this regard in the White House is described). The second – in the year 2005, absolutely publicly (see my article «A turn to the left-2» in «*Kommersant*»). I think that now too it is not late to legitimise privatisation – the question is, will the elites have enough courage and sense of responsibility.

151. Hello, Mikhail. An oligarch - this is a very greedy person? A very smart person? Very cunning? Maybe, without principles? Or perhaps there is no such general quality, necessary to become an oligarch. // Slava

Take a look, if there will be time and desire, in an encyclopaedic dictionary: oligarchy – this is «the power of not many». Correspondingly, an oligarch – this is a person who combines broad economic opportunities with political power, the opportunity to directly adopt the most important decisions in the country. In this sense I personally have never been an oligarch, because power never belonged to me. Perhaps this is the reason why it is a bit complex for me to answer your question.

154. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, one great person once said: “IF YOU SACRIFICE FREEDOM IN THE NAME OF SECURITY - YOU WILL LOSE BOTH THE ONE AND THE OTHER”. As I see it, this is a universal formula. It concerns society too, it concerns the state too. It is interesting for me to find out your opinion on the topic of modern society. Could you express your opinion on what is written by me below? This is important, because any adequate person is thinking today about how to save his family and himself in modern-day Russia and what awaits us all going forward... Mikhail Borisovich, in the past half year, by the nature of my activity (I am the owner of a large electronic mass information medium), I’ve had the good fortune to seriously discuss many questions of our life with the brightest people of Russian thought. These people are attributable to the number of today’s and former leaders of our state, this is in the same way scientists, politicians and political scientists, famous cultural figures, musicians... Many names. In my conceptualisation of reality there were no contradictions with their opinions. This was unison. Sometimes in different words, but the thought is in common. I shall try to formulate it. You shall ask, what kind of questions were discussed? I shall designate the themes: the efficiency of st. administration, science, the political system, the economy, security, TV, the army, medicine, religion, education, culture, and the main thing - the modern state of society. I shall not now cite the cause-and-effect connection and the facts

confirming it. This would take up dozens of pages. I shall say merely certain conclusions. I apologise right away, for the style of the presentation. It is extremely epocaleptic [*sic*] and seems a synopsis of a mystical serial. This is done by me specially, so that what is written could be understood by people not having preparation. You Mikhail Borisovich, this does not concern)) But... But try to hear me out... And so... 1. I love St. Pete very much (I myself, Mikhail Borisovich, live in St. Pete), I love Russia, I love the Russian person of any blood. I share (at times) the significances of the concepts of Motherland and State, Faith and Church. Sometimes they can be opposites in meaning. The concept of Motherland for me is not geographic, but semantic. Based on the traditions, history and everyday life of the family. This is a very important concept. But, alas... A mutation has taken place. Much out of us [*sic*] do not notice this even now. There is only a feeling of the not-normalness of our life. Intuition and life experience give hints. But do not formulate the problem. The milieu that formed in society for around a hundred years has created a certain conditional virus capable of changing the personality of a person. It seems that everything looks like the former country and the former people. But they are different already. We go to work, to the institute, to the restaurant or to the stadium. But many of the people surrounding us in reality are already not people. INSIDE is a virus, decomposing the personality and the soul of the person. The damage is precipitous and merciless. The infected ones are strong and with each passing day replenish their ranks, with each passing day become ever more cruel and indifferent. There is no antidote. 2. Together with the infected ones in one *socium* live adequate people. Now they are in danger. They are in domestic conflict with one another. They are splintered, divided, besotted. They are romantic. They are confused. They are naive. They believe in themselves, in the family, in friends and in God. All this is important and until recent days this, indeed, helped to survive, gave strength to resist. But soon heavy trials await the adequate people. The impending trials are commensurable with the fate of Russia and its best people of nearly 100-year antiquity... And the most frightening thing: the adequate ones will not be able to conquer, but will be able to create an ark for the future Russia. Adequate people, in their majority, do not understand what is happening yet. And this can be seen from the discussions in the previous note. They speak words about the necessity of capital punishment. The fear of death will release from crimes - consider they. Terror over the infected ones will lead to victory - considers [*sic*] they. This is misbelief. They are still hoping for good sense, for a strong hand, for a personality in history. They are still hoping for the strength of truth and justice. This is misbelief. The infected ones have the most mighty weapon in their hands. First and foremost, this is the majority of the telechannels. The life of the infected ones - this is treachery in the profession, this is laziness, this is not efficiency, this is glamour. The infected ones convincingly lie and are not capable of productive labour. But the main strength of the infected ones [*is*] in the indifference of the adequate ones... 3) Today the strength of the infected ones is so great that to overcome them is nearly impossible. The task of the adequate people - this is to save their gene pool. The gene pool of traditional principles of normal life. It is precisely this gene pool that will be the first green shoot on the scorched detritus of today's society. The infected ones will destroy themselves in a monstrous skirmish. This skirmish is already not to be avoided. The task of the adequate ones now is one - to save themselves, their culture, their language, their memories... 4) I do not like giving direct advice about what needs to be done and how to act. How to save myself I do not know. I can only make assumptions... My assumptions to a not-prepared person will seem strange. Maybe you, Mikhail Borisovich, can give them? But nevertheless: a. Before all else (those who can do this) one needs to leave for any civilised country. To that country that can withstand the infected ones. There to create one's own community and have a very careful attitude towards one's national culture, saving it for descendants. b. Who can not leave must create settlements and a habitational milieu with the same kind [of people] as himself. This will

give an opportunity, will give a chance to jointly withstand the infected ones. In such places of habitation must appear spiritual leaders - moral authorities, capable of giving an adequate assessment to everything taking place around... Not a political movement, not an ideology, not patriotism, but ordinary common sense and adequacy has to unite people... You need to keep the people close to you safe. Then you yourself will be saved. There are no other recipes. Ahead are very heavy times... As the hero of Schwartz's book "*Ubit drakona!*" used to say : "The winter will be long and cold. Must get ready..." Your opinion, Mikhail Borisovich? // Alexey

The answer depends on what a person feels as «his own I». If himself, family – your advice is good. If his country too – one will nevertheless have to «rise up out the trench». Although, most likely, – they will kill [one]. Why does it make a difference what will be after? Faith that we all are here «not for no reason at all».

155. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, Imagine a situation in which you, at last, are released and have the opportunity one-on-one (without any wiretaps and other IT gadgetry) to have a chat with the current Chairman of the Government. As what would you part after such meeting? Faith to you and more good people on the way! // Madina (Vladikavkaz)

We have no need to explain ourselves, we understand everything or nearly everything about one another. Can we be political allies? Only «very theoretically».

156. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Would you have written your "A turn to the left" had you not ended up in jail? // Yegor Sinebok

No. I don't like the epistolary genre. If you're about the change in my views – see the dialogues with Ulitskaya (Dialogi s Ulitskoy, the magazine «*Znamya*» №10 2009, <http://magazines.russ.ru/znamia/2009/10/ul12.html>).

160. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, I ask forgiveness for a possibly somewhat shrill question. Have you attempted to create (a) monetary fund(s) for lobbying political decisions needed by you or their leaders in the uppermost echelons of power? There is an opinion that it was precisely your somewhat immodest position in the given question that served as the main reason for your imprisonment. // Denis

Political decisions I did, without a doubt, lobby. This is generally accepted world practice – business and other groups of influence «push through their» interests. There are legal ways (including the funding of political parties and movements) and illegal ones (bribes). In 6 years of lynching they have not accused me of bribes.

161. Not even once esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, you truly considered that you would really manage to capture power under the help of your money? Is not vexing to you that everybody stole, but you alone are sittings (of the "oligarchs")? // Sidor

You too are living in a jail, and this threatens your children. It is particularly sad that you do not understand this.

162. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Did you receive proposals from the Power to cease your criminal case? And if yes, then why did you refuse? // Alexander

No.

163. In your view, is a democratic transition to a new power possible or not? If yes, then who is capable on the modern-day political scene of being an alternative leader? If no, then when, in your view, could a non-democratic transition begin? // Stepan

I deem a democratic transition of power is inevitable, but only then, when people will start to want this seriously. *I.e.* in some 5-10 years. Then with the leaders it will be more understandable too.

164. Hello, esteemed M.K. Of your confinement is guilty “the System” or is a concrete “Object” guilty ? // Stas

A «system», allowing «objects» non-legal behaviour.

165. I looked through the questions to you. But it is obvious that they are written through carbon paper (they begin with a template - Esteemed so-and-so!), in a laudatory tone (it can be seen, they want to find favour in your eyes - they know you like this). But this is exactly what shows the level of the intellect of your supporters. They love to lick, and you, it turns out, love it when they lick. // Nikolai

People usually lick higher-sitting backsides, while to those who are in a pit, - they either defecate on the head or not. The choice is in this.

168. What has changed in your views (assessments) of yourself, the country after these years behind bars? // Mikhail

I very much want to believe that I’ve become a bit wiser and more tolerable.

170. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! There is now an economic crisis in the world. When you were still at liberty, did you have a presentiment of its approach? How, in your opinion, what needs to be done to get out of the crisis - in the world and in our country? And when, in your view, will it end? // Anastasia

A crisis – is a periodic phenomenon. The previous one we had in 1998-1999, the next will be, probably, in 2015. As a result, every time we get poorer and smarter in a different proportion.

171. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich, do you consider the results of the trial process are already pre-decided (I do not think that you have faith left in justice after the first trial) or will the president-jurist not permit in the period of his rule to allow an obvious lawlessness, and therefore the court has gotten caught in a stalemate situation and any decision is possible, including one positive for you? // Viktor

Hope there is. It dies last. I will struggle.

176. Esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! First I want to convey a greeting to your family and ask how is the health of Marina Filippovna and Boris Mikhailovich and how is your family. Second I would like to ask what is the fate of the school-boardingschool in Koralovo [*sic*] created by you? I do not doubt that even now you are trying to support them and the future of these children is not a matter of indifference to you. // Levon

Thank you. Health corresponds to age and situation. While the fate of the lyceum gladdens for now. Not without problems, but on the whole – successful.

181. Mikhail Borisovich, what do you think of the reform being conducted at the present time in the army? How should it be conducted, so there would not be broken fates? Thank you // Andrey

I wrote about this in «A turn to the left-2» (see «A turn to the left – 2», *Kommersant* 11.11.05, <http://khodorkovsky.ru/documents/2005/11/11/12299/>). For a real army reform is necessary a lot of money and, the main think, is needed a very clear-cut, considered national security doctrine. With whom and against whom are we friends? On this depends the types of armaments, what do we make ourselves and what do we buy, from whom? Of course, we could

[do] like the USSR: together with Cuba against the USA, Europe and China. But, I'm afraid, we'll hurt ourselves.

182. Good day, Mikhail Borisovich. There's an opinion out there that you in your time were an officer (even though not the last one) of an ancient European family of bankers-financiers http://arteksgroup.com/Article_about_crisis3.html Why did they refuse to defend your interests? Who now represents their interests, instead of you? // David

This is one of the «nursery rhymes». There are many such. To speak seriously about this there is no sense.

185. Mikhail Borisovich, you stole everything that earlier had belonged to the workers, peasants and labouring intelligentsia. So where is that which the other thieves have - your houses in Nice and London, your own yachts, airplanes, newspapers and football clubs? Or are thieves in Russian subdivided into haves and have-nots? Happy Birthday! // Vashchenko, Galina Ivanovna

Thank you for the congratulations. I myself am from a family of «labouring intelligentsia»: the parents worked at a plant. Nothing belonged to us besides a flat, a Polish «wall» [unit] and a cat. To our friends – also. Neither flats, nor furniture, nor cats, which is all the people had, I obviously did not steal. By the way, in the subtext of your question is contained the answer as well.

191. Happy Birthday, Mikhail Borisovich. What are you reading now in captivity, besides the illiterate drivel of the investigators, of course? Who of the writers is closer to you spiritually? // Viktor (age 57)

I, as an ordinary representative of the technical intelligentsia, love, for example, fantasy – the Strugatskys, Shekley, Asimov. And in general - I read a lot.

193. Hello Mikhail. Do you consider that the patrimony of the Russian people - oil - ought to belong to the people (what is had in mind is that incomes from exports, must be expressed in good st. benefits and pensions for our old folks), and not to the owners of holdings and foreign investors? // Artem Krivtsov

I consider and keep considering that the Russian population's stake in the incomes from oil ought to be as in Canada. Conditions here and in Canada - economic and climatic - are approximately the same. But investors have to get such an income on capital put in as would be interesting for them, but not exceedingly generous. This is easy to do, if a normal legal system is working in the country, while the decisions and the actions of the power will be transparent.

196. Happy Birthday, esteemed Mikhail Borisovich! Comparing the level of professionalism of management personnel working both in the head office of the Company and in the oil production regions with the “government officials” of the st.company of today's days, I understand that the country has rolled back decades! Servility, fear before the adoption of any decision, even an incorrect one, an absence of transparency in the building of a business etc. - these are the distinguishing features of so-called state capitalism! How do you consider, how many decades does Russia need so that the level of professionalism, business ethics, honesty, in the end, of the executives of big business and the country would reach the level of at least the African rapidly-developing countries, Angola and Namibia, for example? Thank you and patience to you and your close ones! // Igor

As you know, I worked as an executive of a large oil company in Russia. I consider that with a normal, literate management, the objective of which is not thievery, you can achieve labour productivity in the Russian raw-materials complex at a level of 70-75% of the American one. Decades aren't needed for this – several years of consistent efforts are enough. The

remaining (difficult-to-achieve) 25-30% I write off to our natural melancholy and the complex Russian climate.

We can easily surpass Angola and Namibia. Maybe I'm excessively optimistic. By the way, were I a hardened pessimist – I would probably not have survived in jail.

201. Has someone of the other “oligarchs” at least somehow supported you in all the time that you’re in jail? (Morally, legally or some other way). Or is everybody quietly glad that [it was] not him? How do you assess their behaviour in this history? // Alexander
My friends did not sell me out. For the rest – God is [their] judge.

203. What is your attitude towards communism, towards a planned economy? Can this be a solution for the current problems of capitalism? // Alexander

Definitely not. Man is hundreds of thousands of years old and his motivations are formed by evolutionary selection: the welfare of the family, material abundance, the struggle for leadership. The rest – derivatives or deviations. A planned economy is possible only at the stage of «catch-up» development. If it is precisely known what and how to do for the attainment of a concrete objective. Innovations – this is always individual decisions, mistakes, risk. You believe that some kind of government official will be able to plan your creative search? Jackboots he'll plan for you! And walking in formation!

356. Mikhail, at a certain moment in time you created a threat to the kremlin in the sense that you intended to get into politics. This is as I understand one of the reasons for your persecution. Another side - your business, which the kremlin took away from you. They got everything they wanted, neutralised you, but are afraid to release- they've organised a new case against you. To all appearances you know something or other or have real levers of which they are very afraid. Can you recount what it is that makes you frightening to the kremlin, even now when they've taken away the business from you and have excluded [you] from politics? // Valery

Any person, considering himself a citizen, and not a slave, does not simply have the right, but is obligated to «get into politics». Participation in elections in the capacity of a voter – this is already politics. Any public utterance with respect to a question having relation to the power and to its actions – is already a fact of intrusion into politics. Participation in a rally – politics.

If and as long as we continue to consider that our power is formed someplace on Mars, without any participation from us, we should not be offended that the power wanted not to care less about us. Russia will become a democratic country when and only when, at the very least, 70% of our fellow citizens will regularly and sensibly «get into politics».

518. Mikhail Borisovich, I have a t-shirt “Khodorkovsky, go home”, even two, but can you wear one like that? // Maria

This is not prohibited. But I will not wear such a shirt. Because in jail, unfortunately, I'm not the only unjustly convicted person. And I desire freedom not only for myself, but for everyone who has been unjustly convicted.

567. Mikhail, after release would you agree to run for the post of President of the RF, if the citizens of the RF would ask you about this? // Dmitry

I, first of all, proceed from the premise that power for a decent person – this is a gigantic, inhuman labour and a huge, sometimes fatal responsibility. It would be well to ask me: and am I brave enough, to be – even theoretically – president of Russia? By the way, I am convinced that to posts in our country one can propose no small number of worthy candidacies.

I was a good manager of the economy and the social sphere in conditions of crisis. If I sometime will be useful in such a capacity for my country, then...

Let us not play guessing games. Today I – am a prisoner. No more, although no less either, than that.

684. How, in your view, should young people who have liberal values and a desire to live and work in Russia, but in so doing one often has to either go for compromises with the conscience, or sacrifice effectiveness, behave themselves? // Mark

Even my – it may be, far from model – experience shows that an honest consistent position always conquers. But for any transaction with the conscience one has to pay. Often not right away, but always dearly.

Effective, in my view, can be only one who always remains himself and is ready to defend not only his interests, but also his values.