

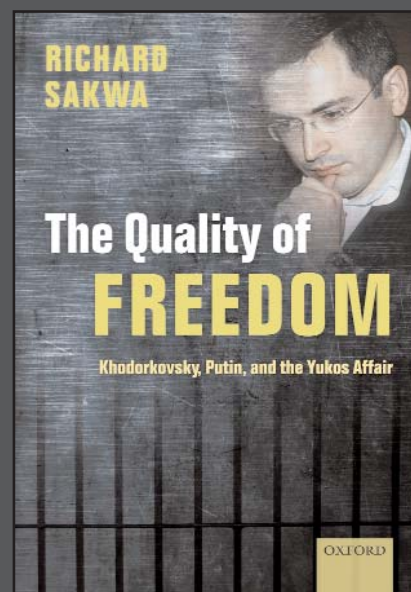
The Quality of Freedom

Khodorkovsky, Putin and the Yukos Affair

Richard Sakwa, Professor of Russian and European Politics at the University of Kent.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the head of the Yukos oil company, was arrested on 25 October 2003. This event proved a turning point for post-communist Russia and for Vladimir Putin's presidency. By that time Khodorkovsky had become one of the world's richest and most powerful men, while Yukos had been transformed into a vertically-integrated oil company that was set to go global. On all counts, this looked like a success story for Russia, but it was precisely at this moment that the authorities struck, and Khodorkovsky was later sentenced to eight years in jail. This book explains why all of this occurred. It provides some theoretical discussion as well as detailed analysis of the rise and fall of Yukos, and with it the development of the Russian oil industry. It also examines the relationship between the state and big business during Russia's traumatic shift from the Soviet planned economy to the market system, as well as Russia's emergence as an 'energy superpower'. The attack on Khodorkovsky had far-reaching political and economic consequences but it also raised fundamental questions about the quality of freedom in contemporary Russia as well as in the world at large.

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