

The Abstract – The Rise and Fall of the Russian Oligarchy

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The thesis “The Rise and Fall of the Russian Oligarchy” deals with the relationship between big business and the Russian state apparatus between 1987 and 2008. Since the beginning of the entrepreneurship in Russia during Gorbachev's reforms influential business structures started to develop. These structures then were able to dominate in the nineties a significant part of the Russian economy. That was partially caused by an unusually high degree of concentration of ownership structures growing under Michail Gorbachev's and Boris Yeltsin's governments. Important factors were as well natural resources as an easy source of income and the weakness of the state in creating and promoting a legal environment. Because of that some enterprising individuals were able to gain large fortunes that could be used to influence some policy decisions. Their influence peaked during the campaign for Yeltsin's re-election, when they even received some governmental posts. In that time the situation was closest to the oligarchy. Nevertheless within a short time their influence was reduced by mutual conflicts, the financial crises of 1998 and with Vladimir Putin becoming acting president at the end of 1999. Therefore the political influence of oligarchs was significantly reduced. Over time, a new elite based on the powerful bureaucracy emerged. It is using its power for further concentration of the enterprises under their control and for determining the form of a business environment. This paper analyses the evolution of oligarchs of nineties and tries to explore their influence on Russian society and economy.