The political opposition in Russia

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The Russian opposition operates in an increasingly hostile environment. The landscape of opposition in Russia is marked by two types of opposition, on the one hand political parties that are accepted by the regime and integrated to the electoral system, and on the other hand some isolated movements which are kept out of the electoral process.

1 The systemic opposition

Russia’s party system is characterised by dominant party politics, where United Russia, the hegemonic party with 328 seats out of the 450 of the State Duma, determines access to most political offices. Other political parties, including the Communist Party (CPRF) and the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), continue to compete in elections but have been made subordinated to the ruling party.

1.1 Description and role

The systemic opposition plays a part in providing the appearance of electoral competition. It gives the impression to the electorate that there is a range of options, with multiple political parties defending different interests and public policies. At the same time, the ruling party United Russia can anticipate without concern the outcome of the elections, as the systemic opposition has a limited and predictable support. For instance, the Russian Communist party which used to benefit from an extensive party organization, did not manage to renew itself nor to attract new voters. In the 2016 Parliamentary elections, the CPRF won 13,4% of the vote, securing 42 seats in the State Duma. The LDPR succeeded in winning 13,3% of the vote, securing 39 seats, while Fair Russia won 6% of the vote and has 23 seats in the State Duma.

![Figure 1: Distribution of the seats in the Duma after the 2016 elections](source: Inter-Parliamentary Union)

The variety of parties and the multiplication of candidates also leads to a division of the vote against the ruling party. The regular creation of new parties, on paper independent from the central power, further weakens the opposition vote. The recently created New People Party was registered for the September 2020 regional elections, allegedly with the Kremlin’s support. The newcomer gained enough votes in the regional elections to participate in the 2021 State Duma elections.

The parties belonging to the systemic opposition are expected to show loyalty to the central power and should not become too independent. Opposition parties play a role in maintaining regime support and the Kremlin applies multiple strategies to preserve its procedural legitimacy. Systemic parties can have an incentive to strike bargains with United Russia before the elections.
to avoid restrictions and to maintain some influence. For example a party of the opposition decides not to present a candidate for the gubernatorial elections in one State Duma constituency in exchange for the appointment of a party member to a position to the Federal Council (Senate) or the certainty that United Russia will not challenge an incumbent’s seat.¹

In 2018, three candidates from the systemic opposition defied the ruling party and unexpectedly succeeded in winning governorships in Khabarovsk Krai (Far-East), in Vladimir Oblast (close to Moscow) and in the Republic of Khakassia (Eastern Siberia). The technical candidates were expected to drop from the race after the first round to ensure the victory of the Kremlin-backed candidate, but they refused to do so. These opposition candidates eventually benefited from the vote against United Russia.

1.2 Control of the systemic opposition

The central power also holds a tight control over other political parties. As it oversees the registration filter, parties are encouraged to show loyalty to United Russia, by registering weak competitors in constituencies important to the ruling party, and by urging citizens to vote. Candidates of the systemic opposition usually obtain low support, and stay away from active campaigning to avoid repression from the regime.

The Russian United Democratic Party, commonly referred to as ‘Yabloko’, initially represented a democratic tendency and claimed the status of political opposition, but it was progressively marginalised. In the early 2000’s, the party could not find political room between United Russia and the Communist Party and was unable to reach voters. In the previous parliamentary elections, in 2016, Yabloko did not secure any seat in the State Duma and failed to reach the 3% threshold to qualify for state funding. The party now struggles to register candidates and has little impact of the Russian political life. Yabloko has become so marginal in the electoral process that it is growing closer to non-systemic movements.

The arrest of Sergey Furgal, Governor of the Khabarovsk Krai (Far East) in July 2020, was considered politically motivated. His election in 2018 against the incumbent governor Vyacheslav Shport nominated by United Russia, and the content of Furgal’s local policies were drifting away from the accepted line of conduct accepted by the central authorities. This arrest was seen as a reminder to Furgal’s party, the LDPR, that in-system opposition cannot become real opposition and that individual politicians belonging to the party should be kept in check. After Furgal’s arrest, he was replaced as governor by a more docile LDPR politician, Mikhail Degtyarev, who used to be a member of United Russia, and who does not have any ties to the region.

2 The non-systemic opposition

2.1 Description

The non-systemic opposition is composed of multiple small groups and public figures, it is politically diverse, not large numerically and is concentrated in Moscow and in a few cities. The opposition does not only seek to oppose government policies but the regime as a whole. It is kept isolated by the central power through the inability to access most electoral processes.

¹ The Federal Council is the upper house of the Federal Assembly in Russia, composed of 170 Senators. Each federal subject sends two senators to the Federal Council.
The visibility of non-systemic opposition rose with the 2011-2012 mass protests against Putin’s candidacy to the presidency, following his four-year tenure as Prime Minister after his first two rounds as President. The popular movement was a steppingstone for the emergence of new forms of opposition and some opposition activists became more important actors of electoral politics. As a reaction, the Kremlin stopped ignoring these opposition groups and reinforced its strategy of intimidation.

The non-systemic opposition which had been until then focusing on abstract ideas, asking for democracy and human rights, adopted a more concrete agenda around anti-corruption and reflecting the growing public demand for change. The opposition’s campaigns focused on accusing the central power of tolerating corruption. Boris Nemtsov through the Solidarity movement used to publish pamphlets about corrupted politicians in 2010 and Alexey Navalny created the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) in 2011. The idea behind these movements was to foster a consensus of the opposition against the regime.

2.2 Administrative restrictions and repression

The Kremlin maintains its “politics of fear” which involves intimidation by means of threats of repression and the public discrediting of the opposition. The non-systemic opposition face an increasing pressure on leaders and activists, stricter legal constraints on non-governmental organisations, social media and the internet, and powerful Kremlin-sponsored propaganda campaigns.

The non-systemic opposition experiences important administrative limitations, as rules are designed specifically to make it difficult, if not impossible, for opposition parties to register their candidates. These rules are accompanied by a reduction of independent election monitoring, by often denying access to foreign observation organisation and continuously obstructing the work of national observers. The opposition also lacks resources because of the rules on election funding, which target specifically foreign sources funds.

The legal constraints against opposition movements were evidenced with the 2012 foreign agent law, which allows judicial authorities to assign a status of “foreign agents” to non-profit organisations. Furthermore, ad-hoc 2015 legislation prohibits the activity of "undesirable foreign agents" on the Russian territory. The Council of Europe’s Venice Commission on Democracy through Law issued a critical opinion on the ‘foreign agent’ overall legislation in 2016. The European Parliament went further in its December 2019 resolution, ‘calling the Russian authorities to immediately repeal the law on ‘foreign agents’ and to bring the existing legislation into line with its obligations under international law. The foreign agent legislation is currently undergoing an update including a review of all activities and events of organisations listed in the government’s “foreign agent registry” and the possibility to ban certain programmes. Organisations which do not comply can be dissolved. The role of this legislation is to discredit the civil society and opposition groups by claiming that they are influenced by foreign powers. Depicting the opposition as corrupted also allows Russian authorities to weaken the opposition’s claims that United Russia is the ‘party of crooks and thieves.’

2 Boris Nemtsov was a Deputy PM in the last Yeltsin’s years of his presidency, who made a strong opposition to Putin and was killed in the middle of Moscow in February 2015.
3 “The politics of fear” is a term created by the political scientist Vladimir Gelman.
4 “A party of crooks and thieves” is a popular expression among the opposition in Russia used to refer to United Russia party. The expression was coined by Navalny in February 2011.
The non-systemic opposition is also regularly the target of harassment from authorities, including arrests of political figures. Prosecuting its vocal figures is an efficient strategy to control the opposition, since a criminal conviction limits the access to electoral races. Trials and convictions also play a role in discrediting publicly main figures of the opposition. For instance, Navalny faced multiple attempts to be discredited with corruption charges, alleging that he and his brother had abused their position to gain access to resources. Campaigns to discredit the true opposition are traditionally accompanied by further restrictions on demonstrations and systematic repression.

The non-systemic opposition groups develop innovative strategies to maintain their attempts to counteract the control on the electoral process. The opposition uses independent methods of communication, not controlled by the State, in particular via internet, through blogs and social media. These means of communication can be used swiftly to organise protest activity and to communicate among leaders of the movements. However the Russian authorities’ grip on the internet is growing by the day, often disguised as a measure to face cybercrimes.

‘Smart Voting’ is a strategy created by Alexey Navalny in 2018 to challenge Kremlin-backed candidates in many constituencies. Because opposition parties such as Navalny’s ‘Russia of the Future’ are unable to register most of their candidates, the tactical voting strategy calls the voters to support the systemic candidate with more chances to win against the United Russia or the Kremlin-backed one. This strategy thus creates a de-facto collaboration between traditional systemic opposition and the other types of opposition. This aims at tackling the issue of divided opposition and at benefitting from United Russia’s growing unpopularity. The strategy allowed to secure some seats in September 2020 local elections, for instance in Tomsk (Siberian Federal District) 16 city council seats were won by Smart Vote candidates.

The Russian opposition remains fragmented, ranging from Communists to nationalists, and coerced by national authorities through regularly reinforced legislation. The opposition suffers from difficulties to offer a unified agenda and tries to focus on mobilising popular support around anti-corruption. Despite these difficulties, the multiplication of protests in 2020 has shown that civil society can still be mobilised in Russia. Nevertheless, often these protests are often sector oriented (e.g. environment, urban issues, etc.) and it remains a challenge for the non-systemic opposition to turn them into clear political mobilisations.

3 Parties and organisations of the non-systemic opposition

3.1 RPR-PARNAS

RPR, initially named the Republican Party of Russia – People's Freedom Party, was founded in 1990. It is one of the oldest democratic parties in Russia.

It was a focal point for the liberal anti-Kremlin opposition during Putin’s regime in the 2000s, hence the party has been refused a formal registration from 2007 to 2011.

Boris Nemtsov, former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, Vladimir Ryzhkov and Vladimir Milov decided to create Parnas in 2010. The fight for Russia's European choice is the main task of the Party.

The decision to create the coalition between Parnas and RPR was taken by the party’s co-chairs to increase the chance of right-wingers to be elected to the State Duma.
The Ministry of Justice of Russia registered RPR-PARNAS on 2 August 2012. The party supported anti-Putin protests in 2011-2013, including the massive protests on Bolotnaya Square in 2012, but its leaders largely lost the public spotlight since then and faced accusations of ineffectiveness.

After the murder of Boris Nemtsov, Mikhail Kasyanov called for the unification of all democratic forces, and a Democratic Coalition was created on April 18, 2015. However, the Yabloko party refused to join it. In April 2016, the coalition broke up. The reason for the collapse of the coalition was the disagreement over the procedure for holding the primaries before the elections to the State Duma and the formation of electoral lists, as well as the participation of members of the coalition in financing the electoral campaign.

Ilya Yashin is one of key leaders of political party RPR-PARNAS nowadays. He is also the leader of the Moscow branch of the RPR-PARNAS and the head of Krasnoselsky municipality.

### 3.2 YABLOKO

The Russian United Democratic Party YABLOKO is one of the oldest Russian democratic parties. It was formed in 1993 as an electoral bloc.

The party has more than 28,000 members, 79 regional branches, over 600 local organisations. YABLOKO supports socially oriented market economy, equal opportunities, inviolability of private property, free competition in politics and economy, the strengthening of democratic institutions, rule of law, the system of checks and balances and citizens’ control over the government.

The party has several factions: Green Russia, Human Rights, Women’s (Gender) Faction, Youth Faction, Socio-Democratic Faction and Entrepreneurs’ Faction. YABLOKO also cooperates with human rights and environmental organisations, free trade unions, national culture societies, new civil initiatives and public organisations for protection of human rights in the social sphere. YABLOKO has been a full member of the Liberal International since 2002 and a full member of the ALDE party since 2006.

The key slogan of the party is “For Freedom and Justice!” The party has developed a number of programmes and initiatives including The Democratic Manifesto, The Road Map of the Russian Reforms (a plan for overcoming the consequences of the criminal privatisation and dismantling of the oligarchic capitalism) and Seven Steps Towards Equal Opportunities, as well as a programme called Land-Houses-Roads for overcoming the economic crisis. The party Chairman is Nikolai Rybakov, who was elected in December 2019. Among other party leaders are Ivan Bolshakov, Boris Vishnevsky, Sergey Ivanenko.

On 16 January 2020, three members of the ruling United Russia party submitted a bill to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly seeking to amend the Federal Law on Political Parties, which directly targets YABLOKO and would cause its dissolution.

### 3.3 The Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK). Russia of the Future. Smart Vote

The Anti-corruption Foundation (FBK) is the only Russia-based NGO that investigates, exposes and fights corruption among high-ranking Russian government officials and oligarchs.

The Foundation was established by Alexey Navalny in 2011. It is financed solely by donations from its supporters. Its staff includes 30 people, who research and investigate cases of corruption and illicit enrichment, prepare documents for legal actions and appeals to Russia’s Investigative Committee, the Department of Justice and the Public Utility Services. Representatives of FBK regularly appear before European Court of Human Rights.
Among the many investigative reports it issued, in February 2019, FBK published an investigation on mass food poisoning of children in kindergartens and schools in Moscow and blamed President Putin’s long term associate Yevgeny Prigozhin’s company - “Moskovsky Shkolnik” - for it. It also filed a complaint with a Moscow’s Court and the latter ordered Yevgeny Prigozhin’s company to compensate the parents of schoolchildren who suffered food poisoning. At the same time, however, Mr. Prigozhin also filed a complaint with the Moscow Arbitration Court against FBK for slander. In October 2019, the Court ordered FBK to pay 29.2 million rubles as compensation for a damage to the professional reputation of “Moskovsky Shkolnik”. The Court of Appeal upheld this decision.

As a result of the Court of Appeal’s decision, in July 2020, Navalny announced that the FBK would be liquidated. Navalny said that he intended to revive the FBK as another legal entity that would be free of any liability as regards the payment of the sum due to Mr. Prigozhin.

According to the independent analytical centre Levada, more than half of Russians know who Alexei Navalny is, and over the past seven years his recognition has grown (20% of respondents approve his activities, while 50% do not approve). Among those who know about politics, a neutral attitude towards him dominates. At the same time, the YouTube channel of Alexei Navalny has more than 4 million followers, Navalny LIVE channel and Navalny’s Twitter have more than two million followers each.

Vladimir Milov is one of the main collaborators of FBK, in particular through the Navalny LIVE Youtube channel. Lybov Sobol is another media-exposed leader of FBK. She was a candidate for State Duma elections, but was refused registration on dubious grounds.

Russia of the Future, initially known as the People’s Alliance and then as the Progress Party, is a political party of the opposition in Russia. It was founded on 15 December 2012 by Leonid Volkov, a member of the Russian opposition. On 19 May 2018, Alexei Navalny renamed the party as Russia of the Future.

The party supports the decentralisation of power, reducing of the number of government officials, limiting the president’s powers, strengthening the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

In June 2019, the Ministry of Justice refused to register the party, on the grounds that there was already an existing political party with the same name, which was the organisation “Political Party Russia of the Future”, former “Party of Free Citizens”, which was registered by the Ministry of Justice on 31 May, 2019. Members of Navalny’s team reported however on their website that they submitted documents on the registration of the Russia of the Future party in mid-May, thus before the registration date of the homonymous party.

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit Russia and the economic crisis started to bite, on 20 April 2020, Navalny published on his website the political initiative "5 steps: how to support the citizens of Russia and its economy". Navalny called on the Russian authorities to introduce one-time payments to adults and children, to cancel payments for housing and communal services during the quarantine period, to support small and medium-sized businesses, and to eliminate taxes for small business for one year, except for the personal income tax.

Alexei Navalny is also well known for inventing the “smart voting” (“SV”) system. The SV initiative was made public on 28 November 2018 ahead of the 2018 round of regional elections. The goal
of SV is to help citizens to unite around candidates not affiliated with the ruling party “United Russia”. In order to participate in the SV, voters need to enter their registration address on the project’s website or via a special Telegram bot (a popular messaging app). Upon registration, they receive a voting recommendation.

As a result of SV, in the elections to the Legislative Assembly of the Khabarovsky Territory and the Khabarovsky City Duma, the LDPR party (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which belong to the so called “systemic opposition”) won the majority, and a representative of the same party, Mr. Sergei Furgal, unexpectedly defeated the incumbent candidate from United Russia and was elected as governor. However, presumably in a retaliation attempt, Mr. Furgal was arrested in July 2020 on dubious charges. His arrest gave rise to massive street protests that are still ongoing, albeit smaller in size.

On 8 September 2019, during local elections, residents of Russian regions had the opportunity to use the SV again, with mixed results.

Indeed, in order to defeat the SV government officials and system politicians started enacting a counter-strategy based on refusing the registration to opposition candidates, creating fake political parties to distract from opposition candidates, placing some loyalists among independent candidates. As a result of this counter-strategy, all candidates from United Russia managed to secure their governors posts at the 2020 local elections. However, in the cities where the SV campaign had been more intense and involved the participation of Mr. Navalny personally, United Russia lost its majority in the city councils. In particular, the above happened in the cities of Tomsk, Novosibirsk and Tambov.

3.4 Open Russia. Solidarnost

Open Russia was created by Mikhail Khodorkovsky on 20 September, 2014. The movement shares the name of the Open Russia Foundation, launched by Khodorkovsky and Yukos Oil Company shareholders in 2001, with the aim to build and strengthen civil society in Russia.

The Open Russia Foundation had programmes such as the School of Public Politics, the Federation of Internet Education, New Civilisation, and the Club of Regional Journalism. By 2006, a systematic campaign of Russian authorities against the Foundation caused the liquidation of the organisation.

Open Russia today is about bringing together citizens living both inside and outside of Russia, who share the European values of a strong, dynamic, and forward-looking state founded upon effective democratic institutions and the rule of law. Open Russia enables these citizens to communicate and work together, to make their voices heard, and to mobilise effectively in the cause of common interests and goals. Open Russia is not a political organisation, but rather a “horizontal alliance” of individuals and groups that can make changes together. Mr Vladimir Kara-Murza is the vice-chairman of Open Russia.

In 2017, three NGOs founded by Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his allies were designated as “undesirable” by Russia’s Prosecutor General’s Office. The decree bans the UK-registered Open Russia and its sister organisation Open Russia Civic Movement, as well as the US-based Institute of Modern Russia, chaired by Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s son.
**Solidarnost** is a Russian liberal political movement. It was founded on 13 December 2008 by Russian democratic opposition, including Boris Nemtsov, Ilya Yashin, Garry Kasparov and others.

**Vladimir Milov** was a member of the Federal Political Council of the democratic movement Solidarnost (2008-2010). Ilya Yashin and Vladimir Kara-Murza are members of Solidarnost.

### 3.5 The Kremlin’s bid to limit opportunities for non-systemic opposition

In preparation for the elections to the State Duma in 2021, several current MPs proposed bills to limit the opportunities for non-systemic opposition.

In accordance with the recently proposed bills, people who are considered as "foreign agents" may be completely banned from participating in elections. The majority of the opposition risks falling in that category if the bill is passed. "Foreign agents" could also be prohibited from becoming state officials. Senators are also proposing to include communities of people, called "unregistered organisations", in the category of “foreign agents”.

In addition, the bills propose people having a previous conviction on their criminal record for a crime of average gravity might to be barred from participating in elections as well. To date, such a ban exists only for serious crimes.

As a result of the restrictions introduced because of COVID-19, Russian authorities decided to extend the voting time window by several days. This new rule has been exceptionally applied for the first time on the occasion of the all-Russia vote on the amendments to Russian Constitution (which took place from June 25 to July 1 2020). Subsequently, the possibility of holding a three-day voting in elections and referenda in Russia has been officially introduced in the Russian legislation. According to independent election monitors, this multi-day voting system gives more opportunities for election fraud. In addition, authorities tightened the rules for election monitors. For example, at regional and municipal elections and referenda, an observer must be a citizen of the Russian Federation with active voting rights in the region where the elections are held.

The Kremlin is aware of the substantial decrease in the popularity of the governing party United Russia. Therefore, purportedly, it would like to admit a large number of small parties to the elections to the State Duma in 2021, first and foremost to divert attention from genuine opposition parties and, secondly, to allow United Russia to receive additional mandates due to the redistribution of votes of parties that would not overcome the 5% threshold.
4 Biographies of the speakers

4.1 Alexei Navalny


Alexei Navalny is a Russian politician, lawyer, founder of the Anti-Corruption Foundation and leader of the political party “Russia of the Future”. In September 2013, he ran in the Moscow mayoral election from the RPR-Parnas party. He received 27% of the votes, behind Putin ally Sergei Sobyanin. Navalny claimed election fraud.

Navalny became well known through his LiveJournal blog and then YouTube channel, where he has over four million subscribers. On Twitter, he has over two million followers. He publishes videos and documents about corruption cases, organises political demonstrations and promotes his campaigns.

He created the Anti-Corruption Foundation in 2011. Navalny was nominated for the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize.

In December 2016, Navalny told about his intention to run for President of Russia during the 2018 election. However, Russia’s Central Electoral Commission denied his registration in December 2017 on the basis of his prior criminal conviction, seen as politically motivated. The Supreme Court of Russia rejected his appeal.

Mr Navalny graduated in law at Moscow's Friendship of the Peoples University in 1998, became a Yale World Fellow in 2010. He is married and has two children.

4.2 Vladimir Kara-Murza

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Vladimir Kara-Murza is a Russian democracy activist, politician, author, and filmmaker. He was a longtime colleague of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov and chairs the Boris Nemtsov Foundation for Freedom. Kara-Murza is a former deputy leader of the People’s Freedom Party and was a candidate for the Russian State Duma. He has testified before Parliaments in Europe and North America and played a key role in the passage of the Magnitsky legislation that imposed targeted sanctions on Russian human rights violators in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and several EU countries.

Twice, in 2015 and 2017, Kara-Murza was poisoned with an unknown substance and left in a coma; the attempts on his life were widely viewed as politically motivated. He is a contributing writer at the Washington Post and hosts a weekly show on Echo of Moscow radio, and has previously worked for the BBC, RTVi, Kommersant, and other media outlets.

He has directed three documentary films and is the author of Reform or Revolution: The Quest for Responsible Government in the First Russian State Duma and a contributor to several volumes, including Russian Liberalism: Ideas and People, Europe Whole and Free: Vision and Reality, and Boris Nemtsov and Russian Politics: Power and Resistance.

He is a vice president of the Open Russia Foundation and a senior fellow at the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights; and has been a visiting fellow at the University of Chicago, leading a seminar course on contemporary Russia.

He holds an M.A. (Cantab.) in History from Cambridge. He is married, with three children.

4.3 Vladimir Milov


Author of major energy reform concepts, including the concept of market restructuring and unbundling of Gazprom, which was banned from implementation by President Vladimir Putin. Founder and president of the Institute of Energy Policy, a leading independent Russian energy policy think tank (since 2003).
Columnist of major Russian political and business editions, including Forbes Russia, frequent commentator on Russian political and economic affairs in major Western media outlets (The New York Times, The Financial Times, The Washington Post, The Economist, etc.).

Since leaving Russian Government in 2002, Mr. Milov had become a vocal public critic of Vladimir Putin’s dirigiste and authoritarian course. Mr. Milov is also active in the Russian opposition politics, serving as Chairman of the Democratic Choice opposition party, and is also known as co-author of the critical public report on Vladimir Putin’s Presidential legacy called Putin. The Results, written together with Boris Nemtsov (several editions published since 2008).

4.4 Ilya Yashin


Ilya Yashin is a Russian politician and local government representative. He is the head of the Council of deputies of the municipal district Krasnoselsky of the city of Moscow since 7 October 2017.

Yashin is an active participant in the Strategy-31 campaign for freedom of assembly. In 2005, he advocated against the Nashi movement, which supports President Vladimir Putin.

He was the leader of the party RPR-PARNAS (2012–2016), as well as co-founder and one of the leaders of the political movement Solidarnost. He is also the leader of the Moscow branch of the RPR-PARNAS. In 2005, he was coordinator and one of the founders of the civic youth movement Oborona.

On 10 September, 2017, Yashin was elected a deputy of the Krasnoselsky district of Moscow.

On 11 April, 2018, Yashin announced his intention to run in the election for a mayor of Moscow.

Ilya Yashin was a leader in the Yabloko Party from 2000 to 2008. Until 2008, he was the leader of Yabloko party’s youth wing, organising mass protests and speaking to the media about its causes. However, when he became an active member of the Solidarnost, Yabloko expelled him for "causing political damage".

He attended International Independent Environmental and Political University. Since 2007, Yashin continued his studies at the Department of Applied Political Science at the Higher School of Economics.