

Yabloko 'Veggies' Ad Banned by Metro

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The  Moscow Times

The head of the Moscow metro ordered election ads for the opposition party Yabloko to be removed from stations and then threatened to cancel a long-term contract with the advertising company involved, the political group claimed.

In a statement [posted](#) on its web site Friday, Yabloko — Russian for apple — said stickers reading: "Tired of vegetables? Vote for YABLOKO" that were posted Nov. 2 to 3 at the entrances to 85 stations were removed just days later.

The removal followed a letter from metro chief Ivan Besedin to the advertising company Avto Sell, saying the notices "grossly violated" conditions on political advertising, which require prior approval by metro officials and City Hall's media department.

When Yabloko resubmitted a new series of stickers to City Hall with new slogans, including "Russia demands changes, we will bring back your hope," media department head, Vladimir Chernikov, said it was not his division's responsibility, Kommersant [reported](#).

Yabloko spokesman Igor Yakovlev told Kommersant that metro officials then "made it clear" that "there will be no campaign materials" for Yabloko in the stations, or Avto Sell would have

its contract terminated.

"I understand the resentment of Mr. Besedin who was offended by the fact that a category of organisms, to which he belongs, is featured as something people are fed up with," Yabloko leader Sergei Mitrokhin said in the statement.

Calls to metro spokesman Pavel Sukharnikov and an e-mail to Avto Sell went unanswered.

Earlier, metro officials refused A Just Russia and the Communist Party permission to post campaign materials underground, citing what the Communist Party called an "unofficial" ban on political advertising in the metro, Kommersant reported.

Meanwhile, opposition activists in Chuvashia have filmed what they called illegal campaigning by the ruling United Russia party at the Chuvashia State University, whose deputy dean arranged speeches of the party's candidates for students and urged them to vote for United Russia, Dozhd TV [reported](#) on its web site Friday.

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