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Election Fraud Guide for Foreigners

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Фальсификация: fraud, often said of election results

Thanks for tuning in to WTMT radio! It's the top of the hour here in Moscow, and we'll return to our nonstop coverage of political events right after this brief commercial message.

Sleepless? Anxious? Frustrated? Is Google Translate mangling the Russian news stories you're reading? Do you understand the words but miss the allusions in protest banners? Do you wish you could understand what people are saying in those YouTube videos at polling places?

Help is here! For anyone struggling to negotiate the linguistic puzzles of the new Russian political activism, we've developed a new multimedia guide: "Russian Election Fraud for Foreigners."

In this guide we'll help you understand the various terms — both wonky and slangy — for election fraud. For example, we'll examine how general фальсификация (falsification, vote-rigging) differs from вброс бюллетеней (ballot-stuffing). We'll go back in time

to understand the origins of the phrase подтасовка результатов голосования (vote-rigging). Did you know that подтасовка comes from the verb подтасовать, and originally meant dealing a card from the bottom of the deck?

In video clips you'll see for yourself how бюллетени (ballots) are pulled out from under coats — just like a card from the bottom of a deck — and stuffed into the ballot box.

Have you been wondering what a children's ride — карусель (carousel) — has to do with elections? Wonder no more! We'll show you the testimony of students paid to circle around the city, stopping at избирательные участки (polling places) to cast their votes over and over again.

Then the guide will take you right into the thick of митинги (demonstrations), where you'll hear for yourself how демонстранты скандируют (demonstrators chant). We'll listen to those кричалки (shouted slogans) together. And not just the simple ones, like Верните честные выборы! (Give us back fair elections!); Перевыборы! (New elections!); Парламент — ширма для воров! (The parliament is a screen for thieves!); and Требуем пересчёта голосов! (We demand a recount!). We'll also decipher those oh-so-puzzling abbreviations, like ЦИК — министерство лжи (The Central Elections Commission is the Ministry of Lies).

We'll look around at the banners, too. Some might be easy to understand, like the illustrated Я не баран (I'm not a sheep). But what about the one with a drawing of Vladimir Putin holding a woman painted in the Russian tricolor as the embodiment of the nation? What does the matching text Третий раз не дадим mean? Our guide will show you the slang meaning of давать (to give) — to put out sexually — and you'll be able to translate the banner yourself like a pro: Russia won't put out a third time!

Our guide isn't afraid of racy language, either. Broadcast standards don't allow us to show you all those signs right now, but you'll see how prefixes combine with basic verbs of action to produce signs that mean "We've been screwed over!"

And what about that sign that reads Свобода! Равенство! Упячка! (Freedom! Equality! ... huh?) We'll show you the site where this made-up, nonsense word comes from. Maybe you'll be cooler than us and get why fake words, dancing stick figures, and cartoon cats eating popcorn are funny. We'll also reveal the hidden abbreviation in the banner — С.Р.У. It is the first-person singular of the verb срать (to crap on something). Get it? See how easy it is? You're already on the fast-track to becoming a political and linguistic insider!

Russia's political life just got interesting! Don't miss out on the linguistic fun. Get WTMT's "Guide to Russian Election Fraud for Foreigners" now. Available wherever fine newspapers are distributed.

And now — back to our regularly scheduled programming.

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