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'Crooks' and their rights

As Mikhail Khodorkovsky and other Yukos shareholders were going to trial in Strasbourg yesterday against Vladimir Putin for unlawful expropriation, Zdeněk Bakala was suing ČSSD Vice Chair Lubomír Zaorálek in Prague for slander about the old OKD flats. Lawyer Robert Amsterdam, who represents both Khodorkovsky and Bakala, was in Prague. (A bird in the hand is worth two in a Siberian jail.) Amsterdam has declined to compare the two cases, but both involve the rule of law and pit powerful politicians against post-revolution billionaires. Putin and Zaorálek claim their adversaries are "crooks" who profited from the wild 1990s. A key issue is how far back the courts should go. Is the recipient of "stolen goods" entitled to full constitutional rights? In Central and Eastern Europe, it has depended more so far on a person's political standing than a reading of the laws or the constitution.

*Definitions: encarta.msn.com

public affairs (Noun)

*Issues that affect people generally, or issues arising from the relationship of the public to an organization such as a government body or a financial institution.**

public relations (Noun)

*Management function that creates, develops, and carries out policies and programs to influence public opinion or public reaction about an idea, a product, or an organization.**