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TV Channel Yanks Putin Poem

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In a surprising act of self-censorship, a liberal-minded cable television channel bailed Tuesday on airing a recital of a poem satirizing tensions in the country's "ruling tandem."

A show on Dozhd channel dubbed "Poet and Citizen" — a famous description of poet Alexander Pushkin — features recitals of poems by prominent writer and journalist Dmitry Bykov, who styles them on the works of Russia's past literary greats.

But a tongue-in-cheek monologue of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin rebuffing his protege, President Dmitry Medvedev, for opposing Putin was taken off the air Tuesday.

Dozhd chief Natalya Sindeyeva wrote on her Facebook page that certain passages in the poem might offend "a person, not a politician." She did not elaborate.

Bykov did not comment on the story Tuesday.

Medvedev has indirectly criticized Putin in recent months for his stance on Yukos and Libya, though no disputes have materialized. Both incidents are mentioned in the poem, which advises Medvedev to "remember who he is" and calls him "junior."

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