The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ukrainian Party Intends to Join Putin's All-Russia People's Front

July 27, 2011



The All-Russia People's Front may need to rethink its name after a Ukrainian political party promoting a return to the Soviet Union announced plans to join.

The Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine has been invited to join forces with the All-Russia front by International Russia, a social association that is also signing up, party head Natalya Vitrenko told Interfax late Tuesday.

The party's presidium approved the move because "the will of our people is to be united with Russia and Belarus," Vitrenko said. "Forms of cooperation will be determined by September."

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin founded the All-Russia People's Front in May to nominate candidates for the upcoming State Duma elections, participation in which is closed to foreigners.

But Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov welcomed Vitrenko's party Wednesday, saying the front is open to all supporters, Interfax reported.

The Progressive Socialist Party has a controversial reputation in its home country, as does its head, whom media reports have dubbed the "Ukrainian Zhirinovsky," after flamboyant Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

Vitrenko, 59, co-founded the party in 1996 with a goal to restore the Soviet regime, complete with a planned economy and a unification with Russia and Belarus.

Many analysts, however, have denounced the party as a publicity stunt orchestrated by spin doctors close to former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to lure voters away from other leftist groups.

The party was represented in Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, from 1998 to 2002.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/07/27/ukrainian-party-intends-to-join-putins-all-russia-peoples-front-a8540