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Zhirinovsky Takes Heat After Prostitute Remark

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Nationalist firebrand and presidential candidate Vladimir Zhirinovsky caused controversy Tuesday by calling beloved singer Alla Pugachyova, and all other artists, "prostitutes" in a televised debate with billionaire candidate Mikhail Prokhorov.

The 62-year-old singer, appearing during the debate in her capacity as a Prokhorov supporter, asked the Liberal Democratic Party leader whether he would change his "indecent" behavior if he were to become president.

In response, Zhirinovsky told her to "be quiet and sit down," then proceeded to deliver a tirade about how he had never changed the way he acts to please any leader.

"I behave in the manner that I consider necessary. I don't need image-makers. No one gave me allowances to create a party, as they have done to Mikhail [Prokhorov] — I created one myself. I was the first to become a presidential candidate, when it was still the Soviet Union," he said.

He went on to attack those whose political and personal behavior he deemed more flexible than his.

"You artists, like prostitutes, lie underneath any leader for money! You all lay under Brezhnev, under Gorbachev, under Yeltsin, under Putin. Tomorrow, I will enter the Kremlin, you will all lie under me, and I will spit on you and wipe my feet on you," Zhirinovsky shouted.

He also made repeated jibes about the marital status of the singer, who wed five times.

"She only has one rule: to change husbands every five minutes," he said.

The debate's host Vladimir Solovyov eventually stopped the rant, telling Zhirinovsky that he was "burying himself" and would lose public support for insulting the music icon.

The clip of the Channel One debate has gone viral online, drawing largely negative criticism on blogs.

"It doesn't matter that Zhirinovsky has struck himself out of any circle of decent people, because he was never in it," Kommersant columnist Oleg Kashin wrote on Twitter.

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