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Ridiculed Star of Internet Meme to Join NTV

By The Moscow Times

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This December interview of Svetlana Kuritsyna went viral after being posted to YouTube, with nearly 2 million views.

A woman who unwittingly became a ridiculed Internet sensation after praising the ruling United Russia party because she can now "dress better" has been hired by NTV to interview celebrities and politicians on her very own talk show.

Nineteen-year-old Svetlana Kuritsyna, known popularly as Sveta from Ivanovo, will host a show called Ray of Light — the Russian name Sveta is similar to the word for light — which will air Saturdays beginning July 21 at 7:25 p.m., NTV said.

"Everyone knows that Sveta from Ivanovo is not afraid of the camera and tough issues," NTV said in a statement. "And although Sveta does not have experience in television, an education

in journalism, or connections, she has character and is bursting with energy and sincerity. What else you need to work as a TV host?"

The outspoken Kuritsyna skyrocketed to fame when an interview by Moskovskiye Novosti correspondent Yevgeny Gladin went viral on the Internet.

Asked why she supports United Russia, the young women responds, "We've started to dress better. They didn't have what we do now. It a very big achievement," adding that agriculture was doing well because "there has become more land ... um, well, vegetables and all that."

Kuritsyna has stepped into the spotlight since becoming a famous Internet meme, giving interviews, guest-hosting television shows and becoming a staple at pro-Kremlin youth events.

The aspiring journalist is a member of Stal, a division of Nashi that gained notoriety for placing pictures of opposition leaders, rights defenders and even a U.S. secretary of state on stakes wearing hats with swastikas.

She also studies accounting in Ivanovo, a Golden Ring city just under 300 kilometers from Moscow that carries the moniker "city of brides" for the numerous textile factories where predominately women have been employed. It was not immediately clear whether she would resume her studies in the future.

Rumors that Kuritsyna would join state-controlled NTV emerged in late June, though Kuritsyna denied that she had accepted an offer of employment. NTV general director Vladimir Kulistikov told Izvestia at the time that no one at the company had offered her a position.

In March, the station was mired in controversy over a documentary-style film about opposition figures in recent mass rallies, alleging among other things that participants in anti-Kremlin rallies were paid to attend.

The film sparked outrage from opposition figures, who held a picket outside the station and called for a boycott of organizations that support the station through advertising.

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