

Ponomaryov Cries Plagiarism, Zhirinovsky Cries Libel

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky on Wednesday will ask Russia's top investigator, Alexander Bastrykin, to open a criminal case against State Duma deputy Ilya Ponomaryov on libel charges for Ponomaryov's allegation that Zhirinovsky plagiarized his Ph.D. dissertation.

On Monday, A Just Russia deputy Ponomaryov [appealed](#) to Prosecutor General Yury Chaika to strip Zhirinovsky of his Duma seat, citing media reports that accused Zhirinovsky of plagiarizing and falsifying his dissertation, titled "The Future, the Present and the Past of the Russian Nation." The dissertation earned him his Ph.D. degree in 1998.

If the media reports are confirmed, the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles would be obliged to strip Zhirinovsky of his degree.

Zhirinovsky intends to appeal to Bastrykin when the latter speaks to the Duma on Wednesday,

Itar-Tass [reported](#) Tuesday.

Zhirinovsky denied that his dissertation was plagiarized or falsified, saying the "hundreds of thousands of pages" written by him and available online prove his innocence.

"What I have said and written would be enough for hundreds of dissertations, and to become an academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences twice," the blustering leader said in comments carried by Itar-Tass.

Zhirinovsky faces up to two years in prison if charged and convicted of fraud, among other charges, while Ponomaryov faces up to 480 hours of public service or a 5 million ruble (\$166,000) fine if he is found guilty of libel.

Libel was returned to the Criminal Code in July eight months after it was decriminalized by then-President Dmitry Medvedev.

"Since we have returned [the libel article], we will use it to make Ponomaryov the first one convicted," Zhirinovsky said.

The issue of plagiarism took center stage in November, when alumni of the Kolmogorov school, affiliated with the Moscow State University, complained to the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles that the dissertation of the school's director, Andrei Andriyanov, contained links to non-existent publications.

The head of the university's dissertation council, Alexander Danilov, was fired over the scandal, and Andriyanov resigned in early February.

The scandal also led to calls by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev for a major campaign to combat plagiarism.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Dmitry Livanov signed an order Tuesday to strip 11 candidates and doctors of sciences of their degrees because their dissertations, defended at the Moscow State Pedagogical University, were found to be falsified, Interfax [reported](#).

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