The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Prominent Academics Speak Out Against Russian Culture Minister

October 28, 2016

Denis Abramov / Vedomosti

A group of 24 prominent academics have declared their support for efforts to rescind Russian Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky's doctorate over accusations of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, the Kommersant newspaper reported.

In their statement, the July 1st Club, an informal group of professors and academics opposed to reforms of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN), issued a statement criticizing the Higher Attestation Committee's recent decision to drop a case against Medinsky in the dissertation committee of Urals Federal University. They also called for the current attestation committee to be dissolved and for its future iteration to be placed under RAN's control.

The academics accuse Medinsky of "replacing historical facts with pseudoscientific myths" and argue that "patriotic rhetoric must not serve as an excuse for incompetence."

But the Ministry of Culture calls the opposition to Medinsky, a historian, a politically-motivated smear campaign. They cite the large number of mathematicians and physicists in

the July 1st Group as evidence of this.

The case against Medinsky was launched by several historians and an expert from Dissernet, a volunteer organization that fights plagiarism in the Russian academia. The group has gained prominence for investigations revealing plagiarism in the doctoral dissertations of State Duma deputies.

As Medinsky's dissertation committee had long been disbanded, the activists submitted their case directly to Urals Federal University. However, the scheduled hearing on the matter was canceled when Medinsky could not attend due to work-related travel. Soon the Higher Attestation Committee announced that the allowable time for considering the case had passed and the matter would be dismissed.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/10/28/prominent-academics-speak-out-against-russian-culture-minister-a55920