

Report: Pro-Putin Crowd Got Stiffed

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Participants in the Feb. 4 Anti-Orange rally at Poklonnaya Gora have claimed that they did not receive payment as they were promised in exchange for attending.

"We stood there until the end. True, they didn't give us signs to hold — they just said to stand there, and then they were supposed to pay us at Shokoladnitsa," one unnamed demonstrator told Gazeta.ru.

"In the end, the organizers brought only a fraction of the money, and there wasn't enough for everyone. And now they won't answer the phone," he said.

Another participant who identified himself as a "recruiter of actors" complained that his group was promised 82,500 rubles (\$2,750), but the phone number he was given to call to collect the money turned out to be disconnected.

United Russia's No. 3 official Sergei Neverov told Gazeta.ru that his party had no role in organizing the event so he could not comment on the allegations.

"These people say they were promised money by some kind of middleman. In my opinion,

these middlemen are always provocateurs," Neverov said.

Estimates of total attendance at the Poklonnaya Gora rally varied widely, from 25,000 to 140,000. There were reports before the event of some demonstrators having been pressured to attend by their employers.

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