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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

2 Million Ruble Patriotic Graffiti on Crimea Painted Over in Moscow

By The Moscow Times

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According to activist Alexander Dyagilev, the mural on Ulitsa Solzhenitzina cost 2 million rubles to make.

A graffitied wall bearing the words "Crimea and Russia together forever" has been painted over in Moscow, much to the disgust of the pro-Kremlin activist who commissioned the original artwork.

In a post published Wednesday on his Vkontakte social-networking page, activist Alexander Dyagilev offered up a 100,000 ruble ($2,900) reward to anyone who had information about the cover up of the patriotic mural.

Andrei Novichkov, a member of the preservation group Arkhnadzor, said Friday on his Twitter page that he had asked Moscow's central administrative district authorities to remove the artwork, which had earlier drawn complaints from a local district councillor.

> Граффити "Крым и Россия вместе навсегда" убрали с дома на Таганке http://t.co/SCl9I0gnvj pic.twitter.com/MsaCurPvVd
>
> — Йод (@YodNews) 12 июля 2014

The controversial mural appeared on the side of a historical building on Ulitsa Solzhenitzina shortly after Russia's annexation of the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea in March. News agency Yopolis reported the design had been cleared by central administrative district authorities.

Dyagilev, a former member of pro-Kremlin youth groups Nashi and Molodaya Gvardiya, told Metro newspaper in March that he had paid for the artwork out of his own pocket, costing him about 2 million rubles ($58,000).

The artwork was part of a design project called "2000 houses in Russia," which aims to cover the walls of thousands of buildings with patriotic artwork.

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