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Russian 'Anti-Maidan' Activists to Fight Western Influence With Voodoo

By Anna Dolgov

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The Perm region, where the voodoo dolls are expected to be sold, has made a series of recent moves aimed at stifling dissent.

"Anti-Maidan" activists are turning to voodoo in a bid to advance their pro-Kremlin and pro-Orthodox Christian agenda.

Perm's regional division of the Anti-Maidan movement plans to produce and sell "Voodoo Maidan" dolls, complete with a set of pins and stickers featuring images of U.S. and Ukrainian politicians, local 59.ru news site reported Wednesday.

In an apparent effort to ensure that no one views the project as malicious, organizers insist that its purpose is humanitarian: Proceeds from the sale of the dolls — which will be offered for 1,000 rubles ($16) a pop — will be used to support children in eastern Ukraine, organizers said, according to Ekho Moskvy radio's regional affiliate, Ekho Permi.

Customers can use their own discretion in deciding "whether to apply [the stickers depicting the politicians] and stick pins into some specific political figure," the editor-in-chief of Ural Inform television, Alina Lvova, who is involved in the project, was quoted as saying.

Alternatively, customers can simply opt to leave the dolls blank, and use them to "fight against Maidan," Lvova added in reference to the protest movement that led to the ouster of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in February last year. The Anti-Maidan movement was established in January with the aim of fighting any would-be Maidan movements or "color revolutions" in Russia, and countering Western influence.

"As for the proceeds, we will send them to help the peaceful residents of Novorossia," she added, referring to the rebel-held regions of eastern Ukraine.

The voodoo project was inspired by an adult-sized orange doll referred to as the "corpse of Maidan" that Anti-Maidan activists carried during a rally in Moscow last month, organizers said.

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A museum in Perm commemorating the victims of Soviet-era political repression is closing down after local authorities cut its funding, and then its electricity and water supplies, during months of mounting pressure. Human rights activists reportedly said this week that the museum has been taken over by new management that plans to reopen it as a memorial to the prison camp system.

Late last year, Perm authorities opened a criminal case on "extremism" charges against an artist who sent posters to an exhibition in Kiev, calling on Ukrainians to quash pro-Russian separatists in the country's east.

No response to the voodoo project was immediately available from Anti-Maidan's national leadership, which is comprised of minor celebrities and pro-Kremlin politicians.

One of the leaders, Night Wolves biker gang chief Alexander "the Surgeon" Zaldostanov, said earlier that the Feb. 21 rally in Moscow was dedicated to protecting Christian values — along with the Kremlin's values.

"I would not separate the Russian state from Orthodox Christianity here," he was quoted by state-run RIA Novosti as saying.

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