The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Girls Twerking in 'Patriotic' Costumes Cause Outrage

By Anna Dolgov

April 14, 2015



Members of the Kredo dance school in Orenburg twerk in a “dance of the bees.”

Investigators said Tuesday they had detected “signs of indecency” in a video of teenage girls twerking provocatively at a dance school performance in Orenburg while wearing the orange and black colors associated with Russian patriotism.

The video of the dancing girls has garnered more than four million views since being posted to YouTube on Sunday and has stoked a flurry of comments from online media outlets ranging from supportive to scandalized.

The regional branch of the Investigative Committee told the Interfax news agency that it had found signs of indecency in the performance, as well as evidence of criminal negligence on the part of the dance school's management, the administration of the recreation center where the performance took place and local officials.

Municipal officials have ordered the dance school to cease its activities until the circumstances surrounding the performance are elucidated, local news site RIA Orenburzhye reported Tuesday.

The video of the concert opens with a tune from the Soviet-era animation film “Winnie the Pooh” and shows an actor on stage wearing a bear costume and holding a jar labeled “honey.” The music then shifts to a modern dance melody and a swarm of young “bees” flock to the stage and start twerking.

Children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov described the dance as “vulgar” and “insulting” in a Twitter post on Tuesday.

Some online media instead chose to focus on the orange and black colors of the dancers' outfits, which resembled Russia's St. George ribbons.

The ribbons have emerged over the past year as the colors of pro-Moscow insurgents in eastern Ukraine and have gained publicity as patriotic symbols amid Russia's preparations for Victory Day on May 9, which commemorates the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany during World War II.

“One has to admit that the dance looks somewhat dubious, and all the more so given that the costume's color combo resembles the color of St. George ribbons,” the Znak.ru news site said in an article about the video.

The costumes “very much resemble the St. George ribbon, and not bees at all,” the Komsomolskaya Pravda daily reported.

In an initial statement Monday, the Investigative Committee said that “underage girls” had featured in the video, suggesting it was the age of the performers — and not the color of their outfits — that had drawn its attention.

The head of Orenburg's Kredo dance school — where the video was reportedly shot — said the girls in the video were 16 years old, Moscow region's 360 television station reported.

The video was posted online without the school's knowledge and “without the agreement of children who took part in the performance, or their parents,” studio head Viktoria Yakovenko was quoted as saying by LifeNews.

She added that the dancers' outfits did not carry any patriotic suggestions and that the performance “had nothing to do with Victory Day,” Komsomolskaya Pravda reported.

The video incident comes after State Duma lawmaker Igor Zotov said he was drafting a bill that would introduce criminal penalties for “defiling” Russia's Victory Day symbols such as St. George ribbons, according to a report by Izvestia last week.

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