The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Serebrennikov's Lawyer Disowns Open Letter to German Actor

September 04, 2017



Kardashov Anton / Moskva News Agency

Russian theater director Kirill Serebrennikov's lawyer on Monday said a letter allegedly written by the director from prison circulating on social media was fake.

"There was no letter from Kirill Serebrennikov to Lars Eidenger," Dmitry Kharitnov told the RBC news outlet on Monday morning.

In the letter, published on actor Eidenger's Instagram on Sunday, Serebrennikov supposedly urged his supporters to remain calm, asking them to "not fall to the provocations of some political scammers who are trying to make money on any story which can be turned against the authorities."

"I ask you not to incite hatred in attempts to intercede for me and not turn people against each other," the English-language text reads.

Eidenger, who plays Tsar Nicholas II in the upcoming Russian historical drama "Mathilde,"

claimed that Serebrennikov had given him the text during his last visit to Germany, with instructions to publish in the case of his arrest. He was sentenced to house arrest on Aug. 23 by a Moscow court.

Related article: The Show Trial of a Russian Theater Director (Op-ed)

Serebrennikov, the artistic director of Russia's leading avant-garde theater Gogol Center, has been accused of embezzling 68 million rubles ($1.1 million) of state subsidies in an ongoing case that is widely believed to be politically motivated.

"Kirill did not send him anything and did not ask for any help," his lawyer Kharitnov was cited as saying by RBC. "We assume this is a provocation."

Related article: Russian Culture at a Crossroads: The Case of Kirill Serebrennikov (Op-ed)

In the contested letter, Serebrennikov allegedly writes he "received an offer from Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to head a Ukrainian theater and shoot a propaganda film with the financial support of the state."

The director blamed "forces of obscurantism" in Russia for his detention. Serebrennikov ends the letter denied by lawyer affirming he is "not a thief but an artist, and artists do not steal but give away."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/09/04/german-actor-publishes-letter-from-kirill-serbrennikov-a58841