

Siberian Child Actors Depict Horrors of War in Nazi Labor Camp Re-Enactment

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Youtube / ZabTV

A youth theater group in Siberia dressed up in striped uniforms to act out violent scenes from Nazi labor camps as part of Victory Day festivities on May 9, drawing mixed reviews online.

The May 9 national holiday marking the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II is among the most widely celebrated holidays in Russia. Millions of Soviet soldiers and civilians perished in German concentration and labor camps during the war.

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“Wardens lead screaming and crying prisoners past the revelers. They push and beat [them] with whips, not sparing either women or children,” the Siberian Zab.tv television channel [reported](#) about the re-enactment scenes in Chita.

The overwrought performance put on by the “Zabaikalskye Uzory” (Trans-Baikal Patterns) state ethnic culture theater was designed to stir emotions among visitors, its directors [explained](#).

Sergei Makhovitsky, a young actor who played a Nazi officer, [told](#) Zab.ru he “really wanted to end all this, but I had to continue to show the viewers that the fascists spared no one.”

Oleg Shcherbakov, one of the actors playing a camp prisoner, recounted that “everyone was crying, both girls and boys when we stepped out on the field.”

Online reactions to the week-old performance ranged from the supportive to the indignant. One critic said that the performance was more appropriate for International Holocaust Remembrance Day, while the popular satirical online community “Lentach” ironized that the performance “made do without gas chambers.”

Theater director Maria Guskova defended the “Concentration Camps” performance against negative reviews, explaining that “sometimes people don’t need to be emotionally protected.”

“Not wishing to see the horrors of war is a normal reaction because we grew up in peacetime [...] If we talk about war and victory as something exclusively joyous, then everyone will think that war is good,” Zab.ru cited her as saying.

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