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Siberian Schoolchildren Celebrate 'Putin Era' With Portrait Procession

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The children were photographed wearing the military-style uniforms and red berets of the "Youth Army" movement that Putin formed in 2015. **Peremen_irkutsk / Telegram**

Siberian schoolchildren marched with portraits of Russian President Vladimir Putin to celebrate his "era" during their town's processions dedicated to Victory Day, media reported Thursday.

The Irkutsk region children were photographed holding photos of Putin and wearing signature military-style uniforms and red berets of the "Youth Army" movement that the president formed in 2015. Critics accused authorities of militarizing society with the movement, a charge Russia's defense minister denied.

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Organizers in the town of Vikhorevka 4,500 kilometers east of Moscow said the march was part of a series of events marking the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II as well

as St. George's Day.

"We decided to mark our column with portraits of Putin and quotes from his speeches," Alexander Starukhin, head of the regional Youth Army branch, told the Siberia-based Tayga.info news website.

"Our project 'We're Bound by One Fate' is dedicated to St. George's Day and it includes several stages," Starukhin said.

He added that one of the stages includes a "costumed procession representing different eras, including the Putin era."

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