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Notorious Russian Activist Demands Santa Claus Be Labeled a 'Foreign Agent'

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Father Frost and a policeman on Red Square in Moscow. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

A prominent pro-Kremlin activist has called on Russian authorities to designate Santa Claus as a "foreign agent," arguing the Western holiday figure undermines traditional Russian values.

In a letter addressed to the Prosecutor General and quoted by The New Times, Vitaly Borodin claimed that Santa's rising popularity in Russia jeopardizes Ded Moroz (Father Frost), the cultural figure central to Russia's New Year celebrations.

Ded Moroz, depicted as hailing from Veliky Ustyug in the Vologda region, is traditionally accompanied by his granddaughter and helper, Snegurochka. He was a key figure during the Soviet era, embodying the New Year spirit. However, since the fall of the Soviet Union and the spread of Western culture and capitalism, Santa Claus has become increasingly prominent, particularly in advertising.

Pointing to the $1.6 trillion global value of Santa Claus trademarks, Borodin expressed

concern that international corporations could exploit his image to erode Russian cultural norms.

“There is a high probability that foreign companies might fund the image of Santa in Russia to undermine traditional Russian values,” Borodin stated.

He further suggested that the phenomenon is part of a broader strategy aimed at replacing domestic traditions with foreign symbols.

This campaign aligns with similar initiatives by other officials.

Mikhail Ivanov, a regional legislator, recently advocated for the removal of Santa Claus figurines from store shelves in favor of Russian holiday symbols. Ivanov criticized Santa Claus as a commercialized figure disconnected from the spiritual essence of Christmas, describing his prominence in Russian storefronts as emblematic of aggressive marketing.

Borodin is well-known in Russia for filing politically charged police reports targeting independent media, celebrities and Kremlin critics.

His previous complaints have implicated figures such as singer Alla Pugacheva, former presidential hopeful Boris Nadezhdin and organizations like the investigative news outlet Proekt.

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