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Russian Town Upsets Locals After Dressing Lenin Statue as Santa Claus

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irbit.official / VK

Authorities in the small Russian town of Irbit sparked controversy by dressing statues of Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin and Empress Catherine the Great as festive New Year's characters.

Lenin was clad in a red gown resembling Ded Moroz, a bearded figure akin to Santa Claus, while Catherine the Great was adorned in a blue dress traditionally associated with Snegurochka, Ded Moroz's granddaughter and helper.

The unconventional decorations faced backlash from some residents, who described the move as "disrespectful" and "stupid." Others called for the town's mayor to resign, with some even suggesting criminal charges for vandalism.

"Our society is degrading. What kind of example are we setting for future generations if some adults think this is amusing?" the Telegram channel Irbit Incident quoted one local as saying.

Despite the criticism, local officials defended their decision.

“The organizers of this ‘dress-up’ did not intend to offend Irbit residents or their [political] views,” the town council wrote on social media. “The sole aim was to create a festive New Year’s atmosphere. The costumes will be removed after the holidays.”

Irbit, located in the Sverdlovsk region, has a population of less than 40,000 people.

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