

'Clowns for War' in St. Petersburg Make Fun of Putin's Aggressive Militarism Opinion

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The demonstrators carried placards reading "We need enemies," "We need traditional values" and "imaginary enemies," "A clown state," and "I didn't serve, I'm not a clown"

By Paul Goble for "Window on Eurasia": September 18 – In an action yesterday explicitly timed to coincide with the start of the Zapad-2017 military exercise, a group of anti-war activists dressed as clowns made their point by satirizing Vladimir Putin's focus on enemies and war to the neglect of the needs of the Russian people at home. On the decks of the Aurora battleship whose guns signaled the start of the Bolshevik revolution, the activists declared that "it is unjust that schools, hospitals and pensioners still have some support while for the money being spent on them, we could hold military exercise and then kill!" (sobkorr.ru/news/59BF75952E1D8.html). "It isn't important," they continued, "who the enemy is; it is only important that war is something joyous!" The demonstrators carried placards reading "We need enemies," "We need traditional values" and "imaginary enemies," "A clown state," and "I didn't serve, I'm not a clown" (graniru.org/Politics/Russia/activism/m.264047.html). According to local television which covered the action, the clowns were quickly driven off the ship. No one was arrested but the guardians of public order seemed especially concerned that there be no photographs. Nonetheless, many have been posted online ([rtvi.com/news/4234-v-peterburge-antivoennyie-aktivisty-ustroili-aktsiyu-na-kreysere-avrora_-fotorepo](http://rtvi.com/news/4234-v-peterburge-antivoennyie-aktivisty-ustroili-aktsiyu-na-kreysere-avrora_-fotoreportaj)
rtaj and newizv.ru/news/society/18-09-2017/antivoennye-aktivisty-naryadilis-v-klounov-i-proveli-aktsiyu-na-kreysere-avrora).

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The commentary above is from Paul Goble's "Window on Eurasia" series and appears here with the author's permission. Contact Goble at: paul.goble@gmail.com