

Kamchatka Drops the Ball On Cinderella

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian attempts at political correctness can cause people to do foolish things. Few incidents in recent memory top efforts by regional officials to crack down on a theatrical performance of “Cinderella” because it purportedly insulted Kamchatka Governor Alexei Kuzmitsky.

Regional officials ordered a rendition of Charles Perrault’s 17th-century “Cinderella” canceled after a deputy governor complained that a scene where the king turns the clock back an hour to keep Cinderella at the ball evoked “unhealthy emotions.” Apparently, the officials felt the scene mocked Kuzmitsky and an unpopular Kremlin-inspired initiative to set Kamchatka’s time zone an hour closer to Moscow.

The ban was later lifted, and local officials rewrote the script — which actors, to their credit, ignored in a subsequent performance last weekend. Kuzmitsky on Thursday ordered an investigation into the brouhaha.

How Perrault had the foresight to scorn the time-zone change evades us. But if Kamchatka officials really want to be “politically correct,” they shouldn’t stop with Cinderella. Perhaps it

is time to ban people from reading Snow White, the story of the wicked queen who kills her stepdaughter with a poisoned apple. Might this Brothers Grimm tale actually evoke unpleasant images of the tea poisoning death in London of former Federal Security Service officer Alexander Litvinenko?

Then there is A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh. Bloggers commonly refer to President Dmitry Medvedev as "Vinny Pukh," in a nod to his slight physical resemblance to the roly-poly and charmingly naive bear. A crackdown on Winnie-the-Pooh would not be without precedent. The Justice Ministry included depictions of Winnie-the-Pooh — with a swastika — on its federal list of banned extremist materials in 2009 after police found such an image among items confiscated from a suspected extremist.

The drive to be politically correct could be expanded from children's stories. Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" and Jean-Jacque Rousseau's "The Social Contract" could also be banned because they risk revealing the bankruptcy of the Kremlin's models of state capitalism and sovereign democracy.

In fact, officials could target the best-selling book of all time — the Bible — that not only repeatedly condemns bribery, selective justice, theft and arrogance but warns that authorities who engage in these practices will fail. Take, for example, this warning from King Solomon: "By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down" (Proverbs 29:4 NIV).

Here's some advice for Kamchatka officials, courtesy of Cinderella: If the shoe fits, wear it.

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