

Russian Turned Away at Lithuanian Border for Soviet Emblem on Car

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Lithuanian State Border Guard Service officers turned away a traveler from Russia who refused to remove a sticker depicting a Soviet hammer and sickle from his car's trunk, the Lithuanian news website Delfi reported Tuesday.

The 38-year-old Russian national was traveling in a car with Russian license plates from the Kaliningrad region, Russia's Baltic exclave, the report said. At the border, Lithuanian officials warned him that Lithuanian laws forbid the demonstration of Communist symbols, and that he would have to either remove the sticker or continue his journey on foot. The Russian refused to remove the sticker and drove back to the Kaliningrad region.

Under Lithuanian law, the distribution or demonstration of Nazi and Communist symbols is an offense punishable by a fine of 144-289 euros (\$159-\$319). The Russian man in question wasn't fined since he didn't enter Lithuania, Delfi reported.

In recent years, several former Soviet countries, including the Baltic states — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — have launched a crusade against Soviet symbols, dismantling Soviet monuments and war memorials. The practice has been condemned by Russian officials, who accuse the countries' governments of trying to rewrite history.

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