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Russian Town to Honor Stalin With New Monument

By The Moscow Times

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A monument to Soviet leader Josef Stalin is to be installed in the central Russian town of Surgut, the Meduza news website reported Tuesday.

A local civic group, "Russkiy Dukh" (The Russian Soul), is behind the project, having bought the b
ust of Stalin in an antique shop in Yekaterinburg. Some 150,000 rubles ($2,300) has
been raised to cover the cost of installing the monument.

"If the municipal authorities agree, we'll set it up on municipal territory," according to group spokesperson Denis Hanzhin
. "If not, we'll put it on private land.
Either way, it will
be installed before the end of the summer."

A petition against the monument has so far gathered more than 320 signatures, according to Meduza.

Stalin's regime is thought to have killed some 6 million people in the Soviet Union, although estimates vary widely. He still enjoys some support in Russia, with one controversial poll in 2006 claiming that 35 percent of Russians would vote for Stalin if he were still alive.

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