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Moscow's Pioner Cinema Fined for Showing Film Featuring Depardieu as Stalin

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Le divan de Staline / Alfama Films

The only movie theater in Moscow to screen a banned satirical feature about Josef Stalin death's has been fined over a lesser-known film about the Soviet dictator.

Police raided the historic Pioner Cinema last month on the second screening of "The Death of Stalin" after Russia's Culture Ministry banned it on ideological grounds.

Related article: Why Russia Has a Problem With 'The Death of Stalin' (Op-ed)

The magistrate court fined Pioner 80,000 rubles (almost $1,400) for screening the French-language drama "Stalin's Couch" without a license around the same time as "The Death of Stalin," the Vedomosti business daily reported Tuesday.

According to Vedomosti, Pioner's legal defense has argued that "Stalin's Couch" — starring

French-Russian citizen Gerard Depardieu — did not need a distribution license because it was screened as part of a festival.

If the court sides with the Culture Ministry over "The Death of Stalin," Pioner Cinema could face a fine of up to 200,000 rubles or a 90-day ban for a repeat offense.

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