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Russia's Third-Largest City to Pay Tribute to Stalin With New Statue

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Mikhail Tereschenko / Moskva News Agency

A new Stalin statue will be erected in Russia's third-largest city of Novosibirsk next spring as the legacy of the Soviet dictator continues to divide society.

Contemporary attitudes are split in Russia toward the historical role of Stalin, who is responsible for the deaths and suffering of millions of Soviet citizens during his rule from 1924 until his death in 1953. Polls show Russians view him as a "remarkable" figure and the younger population is unaware of Stalin-era purges, while President Vladimir Putin has dismissed attacks on Stalin as a ploy to demonize Russia.

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A Novosibirsk action group voted Saturday to install a Stalin bust at the Communist party regional committee's headquarters, its leader Alexei Denisyuk told Russia's Komsomolskaya

Pravda tabloid.

“We propose placing the monument in a parking lot,” he was quoted as saying.

The initiative group has required the party to shoulder the installation and repair costs of the monument, according to the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

Denisyuk has lobbied to install the monument in a public place since the election of a communist mayor in the city in April 2014.

Denisyuk’s initiative group held a vote weeks after users supported the idea online, but the Novosibirsk art council argued on Nov. 9 that it would provoke acts of vandalism from opponents.

“In connection with city hall’s refusal to agree on the placement of the Stalin monument on public land, we accept the Communist party regional committee’s offer to install the monument on its private territory,” RIA quotes a representative of the action group as saying.

The heated debate over the Stalin monument has spilled over into the streets, where locals discovered snow sculptures depicting Stalin’s bust.

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