The Moscow Times
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Moscow ‘Stalin Shawarma’ Stand Ordered Closed After Outcry

January 11, 2021

Stalin Doner's menu featured dishes named after Stalin, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and notorious Soviet security service chief Lavrentiy Beria. **Moskva News Agency**

A Stalin-themed shawarma shop in Moscow has been forced to close shortly after it opened to outcry over its provocative branding featuring the dictator’s portrait and employees dressed in Soviet-era security service uniforms.

Owner Stanislav Voltman told Reuters on Saturday that police had initially forced him to take down the Stalin sign and that later “colossal pressure” from municipal authorities pushed him to close the Stalin Doner shop altogether. Earlier, state media reported that police had taken Voltman to a station after residents filed a complaint.

“There were no legal reasons” to close the stall, Voltman was quoted as saying.

Voltman said he plans to reopen his controversial but lucrative shawarma shop — whose menu featured dishes named after Stalin, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and notorious Soviet security service chief Lavrentiy Beria — as soon as he hires new staff. Two previous

employees had quit due to unwanted police attention, the Podyom news channel cited him as saying.

“There are people who are interested, but not everyone is willing to work under the conditions surrounding my poor spot,” Voltman told Podyom.

Conservative estimates say nearly 700,000 Soviet citizens were killed in the “Great Terror” under Stalin’s rule in 1937-38, with millions more imprisoned or sent to Gulag labor camps.

In post-Soviet Russia, Stalin's image has been gradually rehabilitated from that of a bloody autocrat to one of an “outstanding leader” who achieved victory against the Nazis in World War II. President Vladimir Putin has revived the Soviet anthem, Soviet-style military parades and a Soviet-era medal for labor during his presidency.

A record 70% of Russians approved of Stalin’s role in history in recent polling.

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