

Plaster Monument to 'Iron Felix' Erected in Front of Former KGB Headquarters

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A monument to Cheka founder Felix Dzerzhinsky was erected in front of the FSB's headquarters on Lubyanka Square on Thursday as part of Communist activists' initiative to mark the 137th anniversary of the birth of "Iron Felix."

"Today, when war is at the borders of our state, it is not a bad thing to remember [Dzerzhinsky]," Communist Duma Deputy Vladimir Rodin said, according to *Moskovsky Komsomolets*.

Dzerzhinsky is known for having established the Soviet security forces, originally known as the Cheka, which were notorious for carrying out mass executions during the Russian Civil War and the Red Terror.

In 1958, some 32 years after Dzerzhinsky's death, a 15-ton sculpture of him was erected in front of KGB headquarters, on present-day Lubyanka Square.

The original monument was toppled by protesters in August 1991 following a failed coup

by hard-line members of the Communist Party against reform-oriented Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The statue has not been rehabilitated since, despite sporadic appeals by some lawmakers.

A handful of Communist Party members and activists encircled Lubyanka square Thursday, waving their party's emblematic red flags. Others brandished signs that read, "Let's bring back the Knight of the Revolution," the nearly life-sized plaster statue looming behind them.

The Communist Party has not specified how long they hope to keep the statue in place. The Soviet-era monument to Dzerzhinsky can still be seen at Moscow's Fallen Monument Park.

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