

Swastikas Cover 'Blood-Stained' Russian Supermarket Amid Boycott

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Swastikas were reportedly painted across the facade of a St. Petersburg area supermarket after politicians called for a boycott and one federal lawmaker described it as "stained with blood."

The Magnit chain supermarket on the island town of Kronstadt last week called police on an 81-year-old woman, whom employees accused of having stolen three packs of butter.

The woman, known to have survived the Nazi siege in the 1940s, died of an apparent heart attack soon after being taken into police custody.

A [surveillance video](#) posted online in recent days shows the pensioner appearing to have forgotten the butter in her shopping cart and then attempting to pay for it after a cashier noticed the item.

Local news site Bloknot.ru reported that the supermarket has been vandalized several times

since the incident.

One of Russia's largest supermarket chains, Magnit said last week that it planned to open more stores this year than in any other year.

The chain said it was confident that its low prices would win over customers who are struggling with the country's economic downturn.

But some Russian politicians in the meantime called for a boycott.

Yaroslav Nilov, who represents the nationalist LDPR in the State Duma, said Friday in comments carried by state news agency RIA Novosti that the store deserves "a boycott at the very least."

The entire chain should probably be rebranded, he said, because "the name Magnit is stained with blood."

Sergei Malinkovich, who heads the St. Petersburg branch of the Communists of Russia, said Thursday that the store's employees had a lot of soul-searching to do.

"We would certainly call on people to stop shopping there, for hiring the kind of people who act in such a way," Malinkovich was citing by radio station Govorit Moskva as saying.

"Just don't buy anything there," he said. "Each of us should bring the manager of that store three packs of butter and have her eat them in front of us."

The supermarket's manager was the one who reportedly called police after employees accused the pensioner of theft.

A representative for St. Petersburg's Prosecutor's Office said Thursday in comments carried by the Russian News Service that "the video shows that right there at the cash register, she offers to pay, her hands are shaking, but store employees refuse and call the police."

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