

Prague Mayor Shows No Respect to Russians Who Liberated It from Nazism

By [Paul Antonopoulos](#)

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Marshal Ivan Konev, the famous Soviet general who was responsible for liberating most of Eastern Europe from Nazi Germany and its allies has been a figure of respect. He has been immortalized in a series of busts and statues that can be found throughout Eastern Europe, including Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Slovakia. However, Czechia is a country that is beginning to act in a very "un-European" way after removing a monument of Marshal Konev from Prague.

Konev was the first Allied commander to enter the Czechoslovakian capital after the Prague uprising in 1945 and was immortalized when a monument to him was erected in 1980. However, this cultural and historical monument was defiled when it was removed on April 3 by Prague District 6 mayor Ondřej Kolář. Kolář used the coronavirus state of emergency to remove the statue to avoid protests from "strange people from both the right and left scum," as he described the people who opposed the statues removal.

Czech President Miloš Zeman shared outrage over the removed statue as "an abuse of the state of emergency," but is yet to have the monument reinstated in Prague or delivered to Russia. Although Zeman may be friendly to Russia, there is little doubt he is an anomaly in a country that is continually moving towards Western liberalism.

The actions of Kolář is rather much closer akin to that of authoritarian and historical revisionist Ukraine who has long embarked in a process of removing all traces of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. Although Western countries may oppose the Soviet Union and its guiding socialist ideology, even in liberal United Kingdom, the grave and monument to Karl Marx is preserved and not harassed in Highgate Cemetery, along with other communist figures like Mansoor Hekmat and Claudia Jones.

Czechoslovakia surrendered to the Nazi war machine in 1938 without a fight by handing over all their weapons, unlike the Polish who resisted in 1939. Czechoslovakia only had its statehood restored when the Soviet Union expelled the Nazis from the entirety of Eastern Europe.

The [Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated](#):

"Czechia respects Red Army soldiers, where in addition to the Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and other nations of the then Soviet Union, fought for our liberation. The statue of Marshal Konev is a war memorial and is covered by the 1993 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, but the relocation of the

statue does not contradict its wording. The MFA expects the statue to be treated with dignity.”

The Ministry then states

“If the Russian Federation were interested in obtaining a statue of Marshal Konev, it would have to negotiate with its owner. This is not for the MFA. “

Effectively, although the Ministry claims it respects all victims of the Soviet Red Army and expects the statue to be treated with dignity, it is wiping its hands clean of taking any responsibility for the defiled monument. Czechia is not willing to go beyond words to defend its own history and those who died for its own statehood, and rather Mayor Kolář has free reign to do as he wants with no repercussion from the state. Kolář should be restrained at the state level and Prague should not keep aloof under far-fetched pretexts of non-interference in local self-government.

In other European countries – such as Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands – this would be absolutely unthinkable and only political marginals and radicals are capable of this. Yet Czechia, that has submissively swung towards the West, is acting in a manner that not even the West engages in.

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Paul Antonopoulos is a Research Fellow at the Center for Syncretic Studies.

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