

# Bulgarian Red Army Monument Painted Pink in Prague Spring Apology

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Soviet Army monument in Sofia has been painted pink in an "artistic apology" for Bulgaria's support of Soviet troops which crushed Czechoslovakia's Prague Spring uprising against its Communist rulers on its 45th anniversary.

Echoing earlier protests against Soviet rule, unknown artists painted the sculpture, depicting nine soldiers to commemorate the Red Army advance during World War Two, overnight and wrote "Bulgaria apologizes" in Bulgarian and in Czech.

The color was in apparent homage to Czech artist David Cerny, who with his friends in 1991, painted a Monument of Soviet Tank Crews, a Second World War memorial in central Prague, pink.

Cerny was arrested and the tank was repainted. But deputies painted the tank pink again. It is now in a military museum.

Bulgaria, once Moscow's most obedient satellite, which once considered becoming part of the Soviet Union, took part in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that smashed the Prague Spring movement on Aug. 20, 1968. Poland and Hungary also took part.

The monument has been at the centre of disputes between Russophiles and anti-communists in Bulgaria, who argue that it should have been demolished after the collapse of Communist rule in 1989.

The Russophiles believe it should be preserved, among suggestions it should be moved to the country's Museum of Communism, which opened in 2011. They believe the monument to be significant in documenting Bulgaria's liberation from a fascist regime and feel that its destruction or even relocation amounts to a rewriting of history.

It is not the first time the monument has been targeted. In 2011, the soldiers were painted as Superman, Captain America and Ronald McDonald, with a U.S. flag flying in the background, prompting an official protest by the Russian embassy in Sofia.

A year later, the soldiers were clothed in brightly covered balaclavas, similar to those worn by members of Russian punk band Pussy Riot.

Soviet memorials in former republics have spawned frequent controversy in the post-Soviet era. In 2009 the Russian Embassy in Bucharest sent a note of protest to the Foreign Ministry of Romania after a military memorial in the city was doused with red paint and inscribed it with terms deemed "offensive to the memory of the heroes who died for the liberation of Romania."

Controversy also erupted surrounding the Bronze Soldier in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, which was subject to at least two consecutive red paint attacks. In 2007, attempts were made by a small collective to place a wreath of barbed wire (allegedly decorated with a swastika) around the neck of the monument, making the Russian press extremely indignant. Its relocation in April the same year sparked city-wide riots.

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