

Putin Offers Revisionist Spin on Ivan the Terrible

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Ilya Repin's depiction of Ivan the Terrible murdering his eldest son.

During a question and answer session last week, President Vladimir Putin [cast doubt](#) on historical accounts that Ivan the Terrible killed his own son.

At a meeting with workers of the Lebedinsky Mining and Processing Company, Putin said the version in which first Russian tsar killed his offspring was created by a Vatican emissary to Moscow in order to discredit the Russian leader.

“Many researchers think that [Ivan] didn’t kill anyone at all,” Putin said, “and that this [story] was concocted by the Papal emissary who came to Russia for negotiations and wanted to turn Orthodox Russia into Catholic Russia.”

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It is widely believed that in a fit of rage and paranoia the tsar murdered his son. The incident

instigated a succession crisis that plunged the country into prolonged chaos and civil war.

"But after Ivan refused and told him to get lost — several legends began to spring up," Putin continued. "They began to label him 'Ivan the Terrible' — the super cruel person."

Putin's comments came during his explanation for why Russia's history is regularly tarnished abroad.

"What concerns the distortion of our history? This has been a trend throughout the entirety of our history. Why? Because, as Alexander III wrote, 'our vastness is feared by everyone.'"

Ivan, who ruled from 1530 to 1584 remains one of Russia's most divisive rulers. Under his reign Russia transformed from a medieval state into a vast empire.

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