



SAINT VLADIMIR STATUE

Moscow, Russia

55.7496° N, 37.6102° E



Image by mos.ru via Wikimedia Commons CC BY 4.0

Executive Summary

On November 4, 2016, a statue of Vladimir the Great or Saint Vladimir, as he is known in Russian, was unveiled by President Putin in Moscow during the millennium commemoration of Vladimir's death (958–1015). Known as Volodymyr in Ukrainian, he is a major historical figure in both Russian and Ukrainian memory politics and understood, by each, to be the founder of their states. Upon its unveiling, Putin sought to emphasise Vladimir's role as a uniter of the Slavic people, and implicitly placed Russia at its core. This enormous statue was evidently meant to rival the statue of the figure in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, which has been there since 1853. This case study examines the significance of this monument in the context of memory wars with Ukraine and as part of the Russian state's discourse of a 1000-year-old Russia.

Introduction

On November 4, 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin unveiled a statue located just outside the Kremlin. It was designed to mark the 1000th anniversary of the death of Saint Vladimir (Russia)/Saint Volodymyr (Ukraine). Both states credit this prince with the founding of their respective nations and bringing Orthodox Christianity to the Slavic lands. As such, he is venerated as a saint. For Ukrainians, he is seen as the founder of their distinct and separate nation. For Russians, he is seen as the founder of Russia, which includes Ukraine. In 1853, Ukraine erected a statue of him in Kyiv. The Russian statue, it has been claimed, was designed to supersede this. Commissioned soon after the annexation of Crimea, the statue reinforces Russia's claim that Ukraine should be part of Russia, drawing on legends surrounding Saint Vladimir and his ties to Crimea. However, While the statue's meaning remains contested, so too was the Moscow authorities' decision to place it on Sparrow Hill, which was made without public consultation. However, following protests around the safety, legality and purpose of positioning the statue there, public pressure succeeded in having it relocated. However, this failed to satisfy everyone in Russia and was also opposed by UNESCO.

Background

Vladimir (Figure 1) was a prince of the Scandinavian people called the *Rus* (or Rowers). They were raiders and traders who used the rivers of Eastern Europe to extend their reach south into the lands of Byzantium and the Abbasid Caliphate from the 8th Century. Vladimir was a direct descendant of a leader of the group who captured the town of Kyiv and made it into a key trading post between the Baltic and Mediterranean worlds.¹ Although he started life as a pagan, in 988 he was credited with converting himself and his people to Orthodox Christianity after he formed an alliance with Byzantium.² Importantly, he was reportedly baptised in Chersonesos in modern-day Crimea, and carried out a mass baptism of his people in the Dnieper River, thus achieving sainthood for his role in bringing Orthodox Christianity to Eastern Europe.³



Figure 1: 'St Vladimir' Image by Tiburce57 via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY SA 4.0.

The Kyivan Rus state was based in modern-day Ukraine and stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea⁴ – with many different Slavic peoples under its banner. Although later claimed by Russia as part of Kyivan Rus, Crimea was actually under Byzantine influence at the time. The Kyivan Rus state collapsed due to internal conflicts and later the Mongol invasion. However,

¹ Martyn Whittock, "The saint at the heart of the war in Ukraine," *Christian Today*, March 8, 2022.

² BBC News. "Putin unveils 'provocative' Moscow statue of St Vladimir," *BBC*, November 4, 2016.

³ Ibid

⁴ Jamie Rann, "Chiselled features: the hard-nosed politics of Moscow's St Vladimir statue," *the Calvert Journal*, April 24, 2015.

Ukraine has continued to regard Prince Volodymyr not only as the ruler who introduced Orthodox Christianity to the region but also as the founder of their nation. In recognition of his legacy, a statue of him was erected in Kyiv on the banks of the Dnipro River in 1853 (Figure 2).



Figure 2: 'Volodymyr the Great' Image by Enrico Stocchi via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0

In recent years, Russia has increasingly emphasised Prince Vladimir as a national figure, linking the origins of the Russian Empire (Grand Duchy of Muscovy) back to Kyivian Rus. As a saint in the Eastern Orthodox church, he is annually commemorated on the 28th of July – in Russia this is called 'the Day of [the] Baptism of Russia.'⁵ Although Moscow and the Russian state did not exist during Prince Vladimir's time, he has become a key figure for the Kremlin in the last decade. According to the Russian state news outlet Rossiya 1, celebrating him aims to 'unite Orthodox believers across the world' under the concept of the Russian World.⁶ Reflecting this narrative, Putin and former pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich attended a prayer service at Volodymyr's Hill and the consecration of the bell of St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Tauric Chersonese to mark the occasion.⁷

At the same time, Saint Vladimir's legacy was invoked to justify the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Putin's anti-Western stance has led him to emphasise Russia's distinct identity, particularly through the Orthodox Church, which is often portrayed as 'uncorrupted' by the Enlightenment.⁸ This ideological framework also draws upon the history of the Russian

⁵ RBC. "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir," *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

⁶ Olga Bugorkova and Natasha Matyukhina. "Medieval Prince Vladimir deepens Russia-Ukraine split," *BBC*, July 28, 2015.

⁷ RBC. "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir," *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

⁸ Michael Hirsh. "Putin's Thousand-Year War," *Foreign Policy*, March 12th, 2022

Empire to justify expansion into former Soviet and imperial Russian territories. This narrative played a crucial role in the annexation of Crimea. When addressing his federal assembly, Putin justified the move by stating: 'Here [in Crimea] lies ancient Chersonese, where the holy Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat – the conversion to Orthodoxy – determined the common cultural, value, and civilisational foundation that unites the peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.'⁹ This rhetoric also allowed Putin to draw parallels between himself and the warrior prince. Historian Nikolai Svanidze told the RBK website, that 'Prince Vladimir was baptised in Crimea and Putin returned Crimea to Russia.'¹⁰ These ideas of a unified Russian identity subsequently fuelled further interventions in the Donbas region and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In 2013, in preparation for the 1000th anniversary of Saint Vladimir's death in 2015, Putin commissioned a statue in his honour. Shortly after returning from the saint's day celebrations in Kyiv, he assembled a working group to oversee the project.¹¹ Initially, the statue was intended for Sparrow Hill. However, locals opposed the plan due to lack of consultation and geological issues, prompting alternative proposals.¹² In response, the pro-Kremlin Russian Military-Historical Society proposed three alternative locations:¹³ Lubyanka Square, an area near the Red Square next to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, and Smolensk Square.¹⁴

Despite concerns from UNESCO, the statue was unveiled on November 4, 2016, in front of the Kremlin. The statue portrays Saint Vladimir holding a cross, symbolising his role in converting Kyivan Rus to Christianity, and a sword, which can be interpreted as a reflection of Putin's vision of restoring Russia's imperial past—a symbolism that has gained even more significance following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, its primary purpose was to reinforce two key narratives: that Russia and Ukraine share a common heritage and should be united, and that since Vladimir had strong ties to Crimea and was regarded as the founder of Russia, the annexation of Crimea – and any future territorial claims over former Kyivan Rus lands – was justified.

The statue's unveiling sparked outrage in Ukraine, where celebrations of Saint Vladimir had been more reserved and conducted independently of Russia. Russian state television described the Moscow statue as 'the first monument to Vladimir the Great,' to which the official Ukraine government's Twitter account responded reminding them of their much older statue.¹⁵ In Ukraine, this symbolised an attempt to erase their history. Olexiy Kopytko, an analyst at the Information Resistance think-tank, described it as 'a shining example of the

⁹ RBC. "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir," *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

¹⁰ Olga Bugorkova and Natasha Matyukhina. "Medieval Prince Vladimir deepens Russia-Ukraine split," *BBC*, July 28, 2015.

¹¹ RBC. "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir," *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

¹² Tom Balmforth, "In Moscow, Plans For Statue Of Kyiv Prince Vladimir Face Opposition," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, June 6, 2015.

¹³ Will Wright, "Muscovites Protest Placement of Giant St. Vladimir Monument," *Global Voices*, June 26, 2015.

¹⁴ Shaun Walker, "Why a giant statue of Vladimir is causing a public outcry in Moscow," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2015.

¹⁵ Walker, Shaun. "From one Vladimir to another: Putin unveils huge statue in Moscow," *The Guardian*, November 4, 2016.

manipulations that help Russia to wage a war against Ukraine over its history.¹⁶ This was further reinforced by the plans to engrave the historically incorrect phrases ‘A host of holy princes – collectors of Russian lands’ and ‘The Baptism of Russia by Prince Vladimir’ on the pedestal.¹⁷

History of the Contestation

The statue was contentious not only because of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which it symbolised and epitomised, but also within Russia and Moscow for various reasons. Firstly, there were questions raised as to whether or not he was really an appropriate figure to pay so much attention to, especially in Moscow, which did not exist when Vladimir was baptised.¹⁸ Carnegie Centre expert, Maxim Samorukov, asked, ‘Is there really no-one in Russian history, apart from dubious characters from the 10th Century, with real, unquestioned achievements?’¹⁹ This was refuted by pro-Kremlin blogger and columnist Amiram Grigorov on the LifeNews website, who wrote Russia ‘has every right’ to commemorate the Ukrainian Prince.²⁰ This tied into questions about whether this was merely a political monument, aimed at legitimising Russia’s claim to Crimea and Ukraine, with no concern paid to its aesthetic value or location.

Next, as mentioned, there were concerns about the location and aesthetics of the proposed monument. A petition signed by over 60,000²¹ Muscovites complained firstly that the riverbank where it was to be built was structurally unsound and secondly that placing it in front of Moscow State University violated federal and regional cultural heritage protection laws.²² Many felt the location choice was politically motivated rather than based on aesthetics. Marina Ivlieva, a university employee, argued that the statue would obstruct the city’s view of the university.²³ In an interview with RBC, she described the statue’s placement as ‘political in nature.’²⁴ Similarly, Jamie Rann of the Calvert Journal suggested that the clergy, who funded the monument and were closely aligned with Putin, may have deliberately chosen this location to obstruct the view of the university, a Soviet-era institution built when the church held little power.²⁵ On top of this, other locals were concerned about its location in such a prominent park outside of the city limits. The area, known for its leisure activities and scenic views, had remained free of political monuments and was seen as a symbol of Moscow’s embourgeoisement. Sergei Govinov, a biker who used Sparrow Hill as a meeting place asked ‘Who is this statue for? I think it’s totally

¹⁶ Olga Bugorkova and Natasha Matyukhina “Medieval Prince Vladimir deepens Russia–Ukraine split,” *BBC*, July 28, 2015.

¹⁷ RBC “More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir,” *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

¹⁸ Olga Bugorkova and Natasha Matyukhina, “Medieval Prince Vladimir deepens Russia–Ukraine split,” *BBC*, July 28, 2015.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Ivan Nechepurenk, “Moscow, Kyiv Grapple With Historic Ties to Prince Vladimir,” *The Moscow Times*, July 28, 2015.

²² Will Wright, “Muscovites Protest Placement of Giant St. Vladimir Monument,” *Global Voices*, June 26, 2015.

²³ RBC, “More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir,” *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Jamie Rann, “Chiselled features: the hard-nosed politics of Moscow’s St Vladimir statue,” *The Calvert Journal*, April 24, 2015.

inappropriate here,' and wondered 'Where are we going to meet now?'"²⁶ Clearly, people were unhappy about the proposed location of the monument.

Questions were also raised about the process of commissioning and constructing it. As mentioned, a working group to consult on it was put together in 2013, and a representative from Crimea was later added in 2015.²⁷ However, no public consultations occurred, which partially explains the large backlash.²⁸ Lyubov Sobol, a lawyer and activist for opposition leader Aleksei Navalny's Anticorruption Foundation went even further and claimed that design engineers started days before a supposed competition was held to choose a construction company – going as far as to file documents to the courts.²⁹

However, supporters of the statue, including members of the church and Putin's allies, dismissed the claims made by the Anti-Corruption Foundation. Having gained significant influence under Putin, they backed his imperial ambitions and defended the monument's significance. Patriarch Krill responded to criticisms of its purpose and location by arguing that 'A monument to a father can be anywhere his children live, ... But it's bad when those same children forget that they had one father to begin with.'³⁰ At the same time, an Orthodox youth group gathered over 62,000 signatures in a counter-petition supporting the project.³¹ Meanwhile, on a more direct level, pro-Kremlin Orthodox bikers from the Night Wolves and Orthodox activists from the group Forty by Forty frequently clashed with protesters at the site.

Decision-Making Processes

As the community was not consulted, much of the activism against the erection of the monument on Sparrow Hill was undertaken at a grassroots level. As mentioned, a petition was signed by over 60,000 people³² and Anti-Corruption Foundation submitted legal notices.³³ The initiative group, of which Ivlieva was a member, sent complaints to the Main Control Directorate of Moscow, the departments of nature management and cultural heritage, and the Federal Antimonopoly Service.³⁴ This group was even supported by Olga Zakharova, the government-appointed director of Gorky Park.³⁵ Additionally, demonstrations at the site escalated between the start of construction in May 2015 and June of that year. On the 5th of June, students protesting the statue gathered on Sparrow Hill and were met by

²⁶ Agence France-Presse, "Giant Statue of Orthodox Prince Vladimir the Great Stirs Controversy in Moscow," NDTV, June 12, 2015.

²⁷ RBC "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir," *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

²⁸ Elise Morton, "No Vladimir the Great statue on Sparrow Hills," *The Calvert Journal*, July 1, 2015.

²⁹ Wright, Will, "Muscovites Protest Placement of Giant St. Vladimir Monument," *Global Voices*, June 26, 2015.

³⁰ Greg Myre, "Volodymyr vs. Vladimir: How rival statues explain the Russia-Ukraine conflict," NPR, June 2, 2022.

³¹ Agence France-Presse, "Giant Statue of Orthodox Prince Vladimir the Great Stirs Controversy in Moscow," NDTV, June 12, 2015.

³² Ivan Nechepurenk, "Moscow, Kyiv Grapple With Historic Ties to Prince Vladimir," *The Moscow Times*, July 28, 2015.

³³ Will Wright, "Muscovites Protest Placement of Giant St. Vladimir Monument," *Global Voices*, June 26, 2015.

³⁴ RBC, "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir," *RBC Online*, May 21, 2015.

³⁵ Shaun Walker, "Why a giant statue of Vladimir is causing a public outcry in Moscow," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2015.

counter-protesters, the aforementioned Night Wolves and the Forty by Forty.³⁶

This effort proved successful – on June 9, the city announced that the statue's location would be reconsidered at the next Moscow City Duma meeting. When they convened on June 14, they decided to relocate the statue. The pro-Putin Russian Military–Historical Society, who had sponsored the project, claimed this was because of the structural risks of the site,³⁷ and instead suggested three alternative locations, Lubyanka Square, an area near the Red Square next to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior or Smolensk Square.³⁸ Initially, it was announced that Putin had decided on Lubyanka Square, which had once been home to a statue of the founder of the Soviet secret police.³⁹ However, the final location was determined via a poll on the 'Active Citizen' online referendum, resulting in the statue being placed at Borovitskaya Square, just outside the Kremlin.

The placement of Saint Vladimir's statue near the Kremlin reflects an effort to integrate Russia's imperial, Soviet, and Orthodox legacies into a unified historical narrative. Situated in close proximity to the Kremlin Necropolis, where Soviet leaders, including Stalin, are buried, the statue occupies a space already embedded with historical and political significance. Stalin's grave, which continues to receive regular tributes, and the Soviet-era red stars atop the Kremlin towers highlight the enduring presence of Soviet symbolism within the site. By situating the monument in this location, the Russian state reinforces a broader narrative of historical continuity, aligning pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet identities within a single commemorative landscape. This placement also exemplifies Putin's ability to blend these historical narratives into a single, depoliticised vision of continuity, reinforcing his portrayal of an unbroken lineage of power from Ivan the Terrible to Stalin and himself.

The location was criticised by UNESCO, who claimed it could have a 'negative impact' on the Kremlin's 'historical urban landscape,'⁴⁰ threatening to remove the Kremlin's UNESCO World Heritage status as they feared it would violate the requirements of the heritage convention. They sent a letter to the Kremlin expressing concerns, which Vladimir Tsvetnov, director of the Department of State Protection of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture, claimed they would respond to. When they did respond, they alleged they had satisfied all the stipulated commitments by reducing the height of the pedestal from 25 to 17.5 meters, so it did not tower over the Kremlin walls. Despite this, UNESCO continued to oppose the construction. Some Russians also opposed the new location, Kudryavtsev from the Council for the Protection of Monuments of the RAASN appealed to Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, along with dozens of other architects, claiming it violated Russian heritage protection laws. However, RBC reported

³⁶ Will Wright, "Muscovites Protest Placement of Giant St. Vladimir Monument," *Global Voices*, June 26, 2015.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Shaun Walker, "Why a giant statue of Vladimir is causing a public outcry in Moscow," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2015.

³⁹ Elise Morton, "No Vladimir the Great statue on Sparrow Hills," *The Calvert Journal*, July 1, 2015.

⁴⁰ Neil MacFarquhar, "A New Vladimir Overlooking Moscow," *The New York Times*, November 4, 2016.

that he backed down when UNESCO would not fully support him. The Arkhnadzor movement, dedicated to protecting cultural heritage, remains opposed to the statue and fears that it could lead to the removal of UNESCO World Heritage status. However, most academics have since accepted the monument.⁴¹ Despite all these concerns and ongoing opposition, the monument was unveiled on the 4th of November 2016, and UNESCO has not stripped it of its status as a World Heritage Site.

Summary and Conclusions

The statue of St. Vladimir underscores the ongoing tensions between Russia and Ukraine, having been deliberately positioned to supersede Ukraine's 1853 statue and to promote the idea of Slavic unity – at least from the perspective of some in Russia. However, this interpretation relies on a selective reading of history. Resolving this aspect of the debate remains highly unlikely, given the ongoing war and both nations' claims to St. Vladimir as their founder. Ukraine is unlikely to relinquish its association with him, as he was both a saint and a ruler based in Kyiv, while Russia continues to emphasise his legacy as a symbol of Kremlin-backed ideology and policy.

Within Russia, initial debates over the monument's placement on Sparrow Hill centred around concerns over unstable ground conditions (later cited as the official reason for relocation) and a lack of public consultation, with many fearing it was a political decision rather than a practical one. Even after the new location near the Kremlin was chosen via a public poll, the controversy persisted. Russian academics, campaigners, and UNESCO expressed concerns that it violated heritage laws, despite Russia scaling down the monument and claiming to have complied with UNESCO's requests. The outcome demonstrates that public pressure influenced the final decision, with the government appearing to acknowledge these concerns while ultimately proceeding with its broader symbolic and political objectives.

Research contributed by George Crosfield and Chaya Steinsaltz

Last updated March 2025

References

- Balmforth, Tom. "In Moscow, Plans For Statue Of Kyiv Prince Vladimir Face Opposition." Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, June 6, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-prince-vladimir-statue-moscow-kyiv/27056982.html>.
 BBC, "Putin unveils 'provocative' Moscow statue of St Vladimir." BBC, November 4, 2016 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37871793>.

⁴¹ Dmitry Okrest and Vyacheslav Kozlov, "UNESCO demanded from Russia a report on the monument to Prince Vladimir," *RBC*, October 18, 2016,

- Bugorkova, Olga. and Matyukhina, Natasha. "Medieval Prince Vladimir deepens Russia–Ukraine split." BBC, July 28, 2015, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-33689641>.
- France–Presse, Agence "Giant Statue of Orthodox Prince Vladimir the Great Stirs Controversy in Moscow." NDTV, June 12, 2015, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/giant-statue-of-orthodox-prince-stirs-controversy-in-moscow-770968>.
- Greg Myre, "Volodymyr vs. Vladimir: How rival statues explain the Russia–Ukraine conflict" NPR, 2nd June 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/02/1101918984/volodymyr-vs-vladimir-how-rival-statues-explain-the-russia-ukraine-conflict>.
- Hirsh, Michael. "Putin's Thousand–Year War" Foreign Policy, March 12, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/12/putins-thousand-year-war/>.
- MacFarquhar, Neil. "A New Vladimir Overlooking Moscow." The New York Times, November 4, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/05/world/europe/vladimir-statue-moscow-kremlin.html>.
- Morton, Elise. "No Vladimir the Great statue on Sparrow Hills." The Calvert Journal July 1, 2015, <https://www.new-east-archive.org/articles/show/4352/no-vladimir-the-great-statue-on-sparrow-hills>.
- Nechepurenko, Ivan. "Moscow, Kiev Grapple With Historic Ties to Prince Vladimir" The Moscow Times, July 28, 2015, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/07/28/moscow-kiev-grapple-with-historic-ties-to-prince-vladimir-a48575>.
- Wakefield, Mary. "The myth that Russia and Ukraine are fighting over." The Spectator, March 12, 2022, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-myth-that-russia-and-ukraine-are-fighting-over/>.
- Okrest, Dmitry. And Kozlov, Vyacheslav. "UNESCO demanded from Russia a report on the monument to Prince Vladimir" RBC, October 18, 2016, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/18/10/2016/5805f5839a7947012a729858>.
- Rann, Jamie. "Chiselled features: the hard–nosed politics of Moscow's St Vladimir statue." The Calvert Journal, April 24, 2015, <https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/3979/St–Vladimir–statue–Sparrow–Hills–Moscow>.
- RBC, "More than 1 billion rubles will be spent on celebrations in honor of the holy prince Vladimir." RBC Online, May 21, 2015, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/21/05/2015/555c4c609a79476fc40b2037>.
- RFE/RL, "Moscow Monument To St. Vladimir Scaled Down." Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, June 9, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/moscow-monument-to-st-vladimir-scaled-down/27062863.html>.
- Sofuoglu, Murat. "Which political thoughts inspire today's Vladimir Putin?" TRT World, March 23, 2022,

<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/which-political-thoughts-inspire-today-s-vladimir-putin-55748>.

Synder, Timothy, "Putin's rationale for Ukraine invasion gets the history wrong." The Washington Post, February 25, 2022,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2022/02/25/vladimir-great-putin-ukraine/>.

Walker, Shaun. "From one Vladimir to another: Putin unveils huge statue in Moscow" The Guardian, November 4, 2016,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/04/vladimir-great-statue-unveiled-putin-moscow>.

Walker, Shaun. "Why a giant statue of Vladimir is causing a public outcry in Moscow." The Guardian, June 11, 2015,

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jun/11/moscow-vladimir-the-great-statue-public-outcry>.

Whittock, Martyn. "The saint at the heart of the war in Ukraine." Christian Today, March 8, 2022,

<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/the.saint.at.the.heart.of.the.war.in.ukraine/138286.htm>.

Wright, Will "Muscovites Protest Placement of Giant St. Vladimir Monument." Global Voices, June 26, 2015,

<https://globalvoices.org/2015/06/26/russia-muscovites-protest-placement-of-giant-st-vladimir-monument/>.

Figures

Image by mos.ru, "Monument to Vladimir the Great (Moscow) on the opening day." via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0, November 6, 2016.

[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BB:%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BC%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA_%D0%92%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%80%D1%83_%D0%92%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%83_\(%D0%9C%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B2%D0%B0\)_%D0%B2_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8C_%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BA%D1%80%D1%8B%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%8F.jpg#/media/Файл:Памятник_Владимиру_Великому_\(Москва\)_в_день_открытия.jpg](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BB:%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BC%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA_%D0%92%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%80%D1%83_%D0%92%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%83_(%D0%9C%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B2%D0%B0)_%D0%B2_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8C_%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BA%D1%80%D1%8B%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%8F.jpg#/media/Файл:Памятник_Владимиру_Великому_(Москва)_в_день_открытия.jpg). (Cover Image)

Image by Strocchi, Enrico. "Volodymyr The Great Monument." Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0, October 6, 2018. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/strocchi/32516462597>. (Figure 2)

Image by Tiburce57, "Saint Vladimir le Grand." via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY SA 4.0, August 15, 2017. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Vladimir_le_Grand.jpg. (Figure 1)

About Contested Histories

Many contestations have been over memorials, street names, and other physical representations of historical legacies in public spaces in recent years. These contestations often reflect deeper societal tensions, whether triggered by political transitions, demographic shifts, inter-ethnic strife, or a growing awareness of unaddressed historical injustices.

Contested Histories is a multi-year initiative designed to identify principles, processes, and best practices for addressing these contestations at the community or municipal level and in the classroom. Conflicts about history, heritage, and memory are a global phenomenon. Although each case is different, comparative cases can indicate lessons learned and reflect best practices.

About IHJR at EuroClio

The Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) is a research centre at the European Association for History Educators (EuroClio) in The Hague, The Netherlands. The IHJR works with educational and public policy institutions to organise and sponsor historical discourse in pursuit of acknowledgement and the resolution of historical disputes in divided communities and societies.

Contact information

Paula O'Donohoe
Program Director

Institute for Historical Justice &
Reconciliation
contestedhistories.org

EuroClio - European Association of
History Educators
Bankplein 2, 2585 EV
The Hague, The Netherlands
+31 70 3817836
contestedhistories@euroclio.eu

To cite this publication:

Contested Histories, "St Vladimir Statue in Moscow, Russia", *Contested Histories Case Study #223* (June 2026),
Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) at the European Association of History Educators
(EuroClio), retrieved from [link], [CC BY 4.0](#).

Contested Histories is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



EuroClio
Inspiring History and Citizenship Educators



Co-funded by
the European Union