

## Kiev Plans to Ban Russian Culture

Ukrainian Parliament approved bill to ban Russian music and literature, showing once again that Maidan Junta is not willing to cooperate for peace.

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*Once again, the Ukrainian government demonstrates that it is not interested in cooperating for peace, but in further intensifying its anti-Russian policies. Now, the Kiev Parliament has passed a bill to ban Russian music and literature, boosting the search for “cultural cancellation” against the Russian people. Amidst a context of conflict, the act sounds like a message to Moscow and the Donbass republics, stating that the position Kiev has held for the past eight years will not change anytime soon.*

On Sunday, June 19, the Ukrainian legislators approved a veto on Russian music and the sale of Russian books throughout the national territory. The law will act in two ways against Russian cultural products: banning Russian music from the media, public and cultural collective spaces and barring the importation of all written material whose authors have Russian or Belarusian nationality. The distribution of books that are already in Ukrainian territory will also be stopped.

Another important point of the bill is the ban on tours by musicians who have Russian or Belarusian citizenship, with the exception of those who have explicitly positioned themselves condemning the Putin government and the special military operation.

Furthermore, scientific, technical, and academic cooperation agreements involving Russian and Ukrainian individuals or institutions would be ended. In the same vein, some Parliamentarians also voted in favor of banning Ukrainian participation in a regional agreement that promotes cooperation between small businesses within the ex-Soviet community. Some deputies who support the measure said this would be important for what they call “decommunization” of Ukraine - which looks like nothing more than Kiev’s attempt to “cancel” its own history and cultural ties to the region.

The author of the bill is **Yaroslav Zhelezniak**, an economist who previously served as a direct adviser to the Ukrainian Prime Minister and Minister of Economy. Zhelezniak leads the parliamentary faction of Holos, an ultra-liberal party with a pro-European orientation, and

since the beginning of the Russian special military operation, he has stood out for his nationalist activism and for encouraging the intensification of anti-Russian policies, as can be seen in this new bill.

Previously, Russian government's spokespeople and experts had already criticized the project, claiming it was just another attempt at forced assimilation of the Ukrainian Russian-speaker minority. In fact, by banning cultural items, the Ukrainian government seems to be once again adhering to policies that could be classified as ethnocidal, even more strongly within the scope of the concept of "cultural genocide", which refers precisely to attempts to suppress the existence of a culture through vertical impositions.

Since 2014, when the law which allowed the use of Russian in official documents in Russian-majority regions was banned, the Maidan Junta has been working to make Ukraine a Russian-culture-free country. These openly racist policies were the fundamental reason for the self-defense insurrections in the east, which resulted in civil war. Over the course of eight years, several other genocidal measures were taken by Kiev, such as the systematic extermination of ethnic Russians, creating a scenario of terror for the local populations so strong that Moscow had no alternative but to launch the current military operation as a measure of humanitarian support for Russian speakers.

The main problem is that since the operation started, instead of renouncing institutional racism, Kiev has demonstrated day after day that it is determined to proceed with its anti-Russian policies. More than that, Ukraine's western allies have opened a wave of "cancellation" against Russia, trying to forge a reality where the existence of Russia and the Russian people is ignored.

Sanctions that ban Russian products, travels to Russia or the dissemination of information from Russian websites have this clear objective of making it appear that Russia simply "does not exist". In practice, this only encourages the Maidan Junta to intensify its racism, even though it is at its most fragile moment in eighty years, considering the evident military defeat.

So, once again it seems that the Ukrainian government is not really willing to cooperate for peace but making it clear that the current government is committed to creating a Ukraine where Russian culture does not exist, willing to further intensify the violent assimilation of ethnic minorities, even under military pressure. What this means is that there will possibly be no alternative but to continue carrying the conflict forward until some change takes place.

In this context, Ukraine's allies should take their own humanitarian principles seriously and help to pressure Zelensky to ban this racist bill and accept the peace conditions, as this is not a matter of conflict of interests between Russia and the West, but of a search for the quickest and most peaceful solution in a conflict that directly affects all Ukrainian citizens.

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