

Putin Says West Trying to ‘Cancel’ Russian Culture

Vladimir Putin compares the cancellation of Russian cultural events over the Ukraine war to Nazi book burnings.

By [Al-Jazeera](#)

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President Vladimir Putin has accused the West of trying to cancel Russian culture, including the works of great composers such as Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

At a televised meeting with leading cultural figures on Friday, Putin compared the cancellation of a number of Russian cultural events in recent weeks with the actions of Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

“Today, they are trying to cancel a thousand-year-old country,” Putin said.

“I am talking about the progressive discrimination against everything connected with Russia, about this trend that is unfolding in a number of Western states, with the full connivance and sometimes with the encouragement of Western elites,” Putin added.

“The proverbial ‘cancel culture’ has become a cancellation of culture,” Putin said, adding that works by Russian composers were being excluded from concerts and books by Russian authors were being “banned”.

“The last time such a mass campaign to destroy unwanted literature was carried out was by the Nazis in Germany almost 90 years ago ... books were burned right on the squares,” Putin said.

Since Putin sent [Russian troops into Ukraine on February 24](#), the West has piled sanctions on Moscow that have seen Russia increasingly isolated, politically and financially, and extending to spheres such as sports and [culture](#).

Speaking about “cancel culture”, Putin singled out British author JK Rowling, who was criticised following controversial tweets about transgender people.

“Not so long ago children’s author JK Rowling was cancelled because she, a writer of books that have sold millions of copies around the world, didn’t please fans of so-called ‘gender freedoms’,” Putin said.

A number of events involving Russian cultural figures who have voiced support for the war have been cancelled, including some involving Valery Gergiev, general director of the St Petersburg Mariinsky Theatre, who spoke to Putin during Friday’s meeting.

Our thanks to Al Jazeera for bringing this article to our attention

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