

New Bill Proposes Fines for Online Maidan Video Game

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A lawmaker has submitted a bill to the State Duma that would introduce fines for the distribution of video games that allow the player to command fascist forces.

Oleg Mikheyev, a Duma deputy from the A Just Russia party, has accused several video games of glorifying fascist exploits and degrading Russia, the party's press service said, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Mikheyev was offended by *Soldiers: Heroes of WWII*, which allows the player to control Nazi troops, but also took exception to *Company of Heroes 2*, in which gamers command a rough-and-tumble Soviet army unit that is at one point ordered to punish civilians for collaborating with Nazis, and a new online strategy game called *Maidan*, linked to recent street protests in Kiev.

"There is only one fact: the computer game *Soldiers: Heroes of WWII*, released in Ukraine, is

the only game on the market in which a player can act as a soldier of the Third Reich. In American games this is impossible," Mikheyev said.

However, the option to assume the role German soldiers in World War II is quite commonplace in U.S. video games. Battlefield 1942 and all of the early Call of Duty games featured online multiplayer components in which players were split into two teams — one German and the other comprising one of the three Allied powers. Gamers can also command Nazi units in strategy games like Axis & Allies, the Silent Hunter series, in which the player commands a German U-Boat tasked with sinking Allied merchant vessels in the North Atlantic, and various combat flight simulators.

Company of Heroes II came under fire from Russian officials following its release in 2013, with some voicing concerns that it was teaching Russians the wrong lessons about the Red Army's exploits during World War II, Izvestia reported.

In one scene from the game, an officer shoots a retreating conscript in a cavalier fashion, while in another scene the player is instructed to burn down civilians' homes, painting a picture of the Red Army as little more than a mass of marauding bandits on their way to Berlin.

This prompted the Culture Ministry to fund the production of "patriotic" video games, the first of which is being created by the Russian Military History Society.

Mikheyev's bill recommends fines of up to 3,000 rubles (\$84) for individuals and between 100,000 rubles and 500,000 rubles for corporate bodies.

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