

Russian Textbook Claiming Disabled People are 'Not Individuals' Is Yanked From Sale

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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A Russian publishing company has suspended the sale of a social studies textbook that prompted an outcry with its message that people with developmental disabilities are neither individuals nor citizens.

The Moscow-based Drofa publishing house will submit the textbook for "additional expert analysis," and would be "ready to recall" the book and offer an alternative manual if the original text fails to secure experts' approval, the company's chief editor Ruslan Gagkuyev said in a statement on the publishers' website Thursday.

The eighth-grade textbook provoked outrage after a Moscow-based literary critic, Anna Narinskaya, said she heard her son reading out from the book and posted scans of its pages on Facebook social network.

"Imagine a person who suffers from a serious psychological disorder since early childhood," the textbook reads. "He is incapable of studying, working, creating a family, of anything that forms the spiritual world of an individual. In other words, he is not an individual."

The textbook analyzes the concept of a "citizen," saying that only those who are individuals — as previously defined — qualify as citizens.

The book — co-edited by Drofa's former chief of history and social sciences department, Tatyana Nikitina, and a doctor of education and laureate of a presidential award, Anatoly Nikitin — is included on the Education and Science Ministry's list of recommended school manuals, according to an order published on the ministry's website.

The textbook had "passed all the necessary expert reviews, and having received positive evaluations, was included in the federal list of [school] manuals," Gagkuyev said in his statement.

Copies of this textbook for Moscow schools have been paid for out of the state budget, Izvestia daily reported Wednesday.

Russian activists published a petition on the Change.org website, urging the Education and Science Ministry to recall the textbook — which they compared to the writings of "Nazi psychiatrist" Alfred Hoche, who called for the killing of mentally ill persons, deeming them "ballast existences."

The petition seeks 1,500 signatures, and by Friday morning, it had gathered more than 1,000.

One of the petition's authors, Yelena Klochko, who sits on Russia's Civic Chamber and on the government's advisory panel on social issues, said the textbook "goes against common sense, against humanity, against the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," Gazeta.ru reported Wednesday.

Head of the Center for Autism Problems, Yekaterina Men, denounced the textbook's assertions as "fascist," the report said.

"Any ideas claiming there is a group of people that is worse than another group of people are fascist," she said, Gazeta.ru reported. "And if we are talking about people, it does not matter what disabilities they might have; this cannot be grounds for somebody to decide whether they are individuals, whether they can study, work, have rights. Because everyone has human rights."

Besides denying people with developmental disabilities their individuality and citizens' rights, the textbook also offers Russian schoolchildren wisdom on gender issues, claiming

a "real man" must be intelligent and strong, while a "real woman" must be pretty.

"A man, even if he is still attending school, wants to be a real man — intelligent and strong," the passage reads. "A girl, even if she is still very young in age, can already guess that a real woman is pretty, elegant, possessed of a supple, athletic walk and a confident glance."

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