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Russia 'Ready' for New Comedy on Gay Activists' 1970s Soviet Visit, Producer Says

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In the Soviet Union, male homosexuality was punishable by two to eight years in prison. **Oleg Porokhovnikov / TASS Archive**

Oscar-nominated Russian producer Alexander Rodnyansky has announced a new television series based on the real-life story of a group of LGBT activists who visited the Soviet Union on a mistaken invitation.

The comedic series will portray the Homosexuelle Aktion Westberlin (HAW) activists' 1978 trip to Moscow after a high-ranking Soviet official mistook their gay liberation protest for Communist Party activism in West Berlin. In the Soviet Union, male homosexuality was punishable by two to eight years in prison, a law that remained in place from the mid-1930s until Russia decriminalized homosexuality in 1993.

Embed:



Посмотреть эту публикацию в Instagram

Публикация от Alexander Rodnyansky (@alexander.rodnyansky) 7 Май 2020 в 10:44 PDT

“‘Red Rainbow’ is the story of their adventures in the capital of the U.S.S.R., where the ‘delegation’ spent 10 days,” Rodnyansky wrote on his Instagram on May 8.

“It’s a conversation about intolerance to the ‘others’: to people of different beliefs, religion, race or sexual orientation,” he wrote.

Saying he’s drawn by “the opportunity to tell a very serious story in a language that’s understandable to the widest audience,” Rodnyansky teased plans to hire a well-known

British screenwriter to tell the story.

In an interview with The Independent published Monday, Rodnyansky said he was unfazed by Russia's recent homophobic turn. While recent polling has suggested that Russians' approval of equal rights for LGBT people are at their highest levels in years, intolerance toward same-sex relationships remains prevalent and a 2013 law prohibits the display of "homosexual propaganda" toward minors.

Related article: How The Soviet Union Tried to 'Cure' My Homosexuality

"I've always believed Russian society is more humane than its laws," Rodnyansky told The Independent.

"I'm certain the time has come to talk about tolerance using the full range of human emotions. Calmly, authentically, dramatically, sympathetically, but not without irony either," he added.

Rodnyansky's production company boasts two Oscar nominations for director Andrei Zvyagintsev's critically acclaimed films "Leviathan" and "Loveless."

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