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Ludmila Ulitskaya Is the Latest Russian Writer Under Fire

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Writer Ludmila Ulitskaya. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

The writer Ludmila Ulitskaya is the latest Russian author to be banned in Russia.

A few days ago Ulitskaya was the victim of a prank by Vovan and Lexus, pseudonyms of Vladimir Krasnov and Alexei Stolyarov, who have been pranking celebrities and politicians by telephone since 2011. According to reports, they called Ulitskaya and pretended to be Andriy Yermak, Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. In the course of the conversation, Ulitskaya mentioned that she was sending royalties from her books to aid Ukraine, including on books sold in Russia.

This set into motion a series of measures against Ulitskaya.

First "activists" complained to the Russian Investigative Committee. Almost immediately the Mendeleyev Russian Chemical Technical University in Moscow rescinded the honorary title of professor bestowed on her last summer.

Within a day AST, her publisher, pulled her books out of bookstores and announced that they had stopped all payments on all contracts with Ulitskaya “in connection with the author’s announcement that she was transferring royalties to Ukraine... until the situation is clarified.”

At the same time libraries took her books off the shelves and were not lending them to readers who asked for them. The Agentstvo publishers reported that since Wednesday, libraries were marking her books “damaged” in order to remove them, or were simply tossing them in the recycling bin.

Yesterday there was a column in RIA Novosti asking why it took so long; after all “Lyusya Ulitskaya, as she is called in Moscow, is a provincial woman who came to Moscow where the dissy-dissidents took her on and put everything into publicizing her.... But she never could write."

"To call her a writer," the column continued, "is as dishonest as calling the recently deceased Lev Rubinstein a poet.”

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