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Popular St. Petersburg Bookstore Fined $10K for 'LGBT Propaganda'

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Podpisniye Izdaniya. **vk.com/izdaniya**

A judge in St. Petersburg ordered the century-old bookstore Podpisniye Izdaniya to pay a fine of 800,000 rubles ($10,000) after it was found to promote "LGBT propaganda," local media reported Wednesday.

Podpisniye Izdaniya was accused of violating Russia's anti-LGBT laws for selling works by authors like Susan Sontag and Olivia Laing, according to officials. The charges stem from an April search during which law enforcement authorities ordered the bookstore to remove 48 books.

The Kuibyshevsky District Court found the bookstore guilty of disseminating banned content Wednesday afternoon, according to the local news outlet Fontanka.

The ruling comes amid a wider crackdown on independent bookstores across Russia. In recent weeks, law enforcement has raided bookshops in Moscow and Novosibirsk, while three current and former employees of Russia's largest publishing house were charged with

distributing “LGBT propaganda” and engaging in “extremist” activity.

Russia first outlawed “LGBT propaganda” in 2013 and expanded the ban in late 2022 to apply to all types of media, including books. The law prohibits depictions of same-sex relationships and what authorities label “non-traditional lifestyles.”

Although the government claims it does not maintain an official list of banned literature, journalists and booksellers have circulated extensive unofficial lists. Many major booksellers have removed LGBTQ+ books from their shelves preemptively in an effort to avoid legal repercussions.

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