



Russian Patriotism and Values

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past several years, patriotism has become a prominent theme among Kremlin officials, the Russian media and society. Citing recent poll data, the first brief excerpt from the pro-business site *Kommersant* points out, today “89% of Russians consider themselves patriots.” However, as these poll results make clear, the Russian definition of patriotism does not necessarily translate into support for the current Kremlin administration or its policies. When asked to “name the person living now, whom the country could be proud of,” 51% could not name anyone. According to the poll, only 13% of the respondents claimed that they were “proud of Vladimir Putin,” followed by [Defense Minister] Sergey Shoigu (6%). When queried which events over the past decade Russians were most proud of, just 16% mentioned the “annexation of Crimea,” followed by 10% supporting “the holding of the Olympics.”

The second excerpt from the centrist *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* describes pending legislation that would mandate “universal patriotic education for schoolchildren, college students and university students.” A chief sponsor of the bill posited that such education “will foster respect for law and order, a person of work and the older generation, respect for the cultural heritage and traditions of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, for nature and the environment.” However, despite these noble goals, the article cites a recent study “examining the content of patriotic education programs in the Russian Federation,” which found that “98% of them contain militaristic tasks.”

The third excerpt from the liberal *Novaya Izvestiya* cites the results of another recent poll designed “to find out the so-called values professed by Russian citizens.” As the excerpt points out, “the results were somewhat unexpected,” in that Russians preferred “a happy, well-fed life with relatives and friends, as well as material well-being,” over “patriotism, the so-called ‘traditional values’ and religion.” The article cites an analyst who asserts that “Russians are adherents of normal Western liberal values,” despite the attempts of various Kremlin officials (who themselves are “bathing in luxury,”) to proclaim “spiritual over material values...” While not necessarily authoritative, these articles suggest that despite Kremlin efforts to promulgate a state-approved, top-down form of patriotism, Russians have continued to develop their own values and love of country.

End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

“89% of Russians surveyed consider themselves patriots...”

Source: “ВЦИОМ: почти 90% россиян считают себя патриотами (VTsIOM: almost 90% of Russians consider themselves patriots),” *Kommersant*, 11 June 2020. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4348137>

89% of Russians surveyed consider themselves patriots, follows from a survey conducted by VTsIOM.... 35% of respondents found it difficult to name an event in the life of the country over the past 10-15 years, which causes them a sense of pride. 16% of respondents chose the annexation of Crimea as such an event, 10% - holding the Olympics in Sochi...

...Half of the respondents (51%) could not name the person living now, whom the country could be proud of. 13% of Russians surveyed believe that the country can be proud of Vladimir Putin, 6% - Sergey Shoigu....

Source: Elena Gerasimova, “Депутатский запрос на выращивание поколения будущих победителей (Deputy request for growing a generation of future winners),” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 1 July 2020. https://www.ng.ru/education/2020-07-01/1_7899_winners.html

The other day, the State Duma of the Russian Federation adopted in the first reading amendments to the law on education in 2012 on the introduction in schools of universal patriotic education for schoolchildren, college students and university students....

Education Minister Sergei Kravtsov, introducing the current bill in the State Duma, listed his principles. This is the formation of a sense of patriotism and citizenship, respect for the memory of the defenders of the Fatherland and the exploits of its heroes. Also, according to him, the children will “foster respect for law and order, a person of work and the older generation, respect for the cultural heritage and traditions of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, for nature and the environment.”

...In addition, examining the content of patriotic education programs in the Russian Federation, sociologists at the Higher School of Economics National Research University concluded that 98% of them contain militaristic tasks....

Source: “Никакой духовности... Опрос показал, что россиянам важнее сытость, чем патриотизм (No spirituality ... The survey showed that satiety is more important to Russians than patriotism),” *Novaya Izvestiya*, 23 June 2020. <https://newizv.ru/article/general/23-06-2020/nikakoy-duhovnosti-opros-pokazal-cto-rossiyanam-vazhnee-sytost-chem-patriotizm>

Family and material well-being turned out to be much more valuable for Russian citizens than love of the motherland and faith in God.

Experts of the ZIRCON research group (Center for Intellectual Resources and Cooperation in the Social Sciences) tried to find out the so-called values professed by Russian citizens. The results were somewhat unexpected: all the first places in the preferences of the Russians were given to a happy, well-fed life within a narrow circle of relatives and friends, as well as material well-being. But at the end of the list were contrary to the assurances of the propagandists - patriotism, the so-called ‘traditional values’ and religion.

Network analyst Dmitry Milin commented on this chart as follows: “Russians are adherents of normal Western liberal values, in spite of budget parasites like Patrushev and Co. preaching for others (but not for themselves, who are bathing in luxury) spiritual over material values ...”