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Victor A. Shnirelman

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Russian Christ. The Struggle of the Russian Orthodox Church to Introduce Religion into the Curriculum in the First Decade of the Twenty-first Century

Victor A. Shnirelman, Chief scientific researcher, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

Abstract • An interest towards a social role of religion including religious education (RE) is in increase in the European Union. Yet, whereas the Western educators focus mostly on potentials of religion for a dialogue and peaceful co-existence, in Russia religion is mostly viewed as a resource of an exclusive cultural-religious identity and a resistance to globalization. RE was introduced into the curriculum in Russia during the last ten to fifteen years. The author analyzes why, how and under which particular conditions RE was introduced in Russia, what this education means, and what social consequences it can entail.¹

Keywords • education, curriculum, religion, Russian Orthodox Church

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) has enjoyed the privilege of emancipation in post-Soviet Russia. Yet, after centuries of state paternalism and subsequent Soviet prosecution, it proved to be weak and unable to attract a wide public, and the number of adherents has not increased over the last twenty years. Yet, in order to successfully carry out its project of “state-religious messianism,”² it needs strong social support. As it cannot achieve this by its own means, it aspires to use institutions and administrative resources provided by the state. One of the most important institutions used to achieve this is the public education system. The aim of this article is therefore to study why, how and under what particular conditions religion was introduced into public education system in Russia, what this education means for Russia, and what social consequences it can entail. First, I will explain the ROC view of Russia, and how and why the ROC is seeking a privileged social status in Russian society. Second, I will analyze the ROC project of the “Basics of Orthodox Culture” as a compulsory denominational subject intended for all students without exception, as well as its invitation to join religion rather than just provide information

about religion. Third, I will examine the ROC conservative outlook and its unwillingness to recognize equality among religions, which violates the constitutional norm and causes conflicts in schools. The ROC view of tolerance will be examined as something which is both inconsistent and contradictory, as manifested in certain textbooks. Finally, I will study the ROC's struggle to introduce religious education (RE) into the curriculum, its victories and defeats, as well as the authorities' and the public attitudes to such innovations.

The Russian Orthodox Church's Claim to a Privileged Status

According to the federal "Law on Education" (1992), the Russian school is a secular institution. Yet, an aspiration of certain influential intellectuals to identify Russia as the "Orthodox Christian civilization," as well as the ROC's desire to reinforce its own social role, encouraged public interest in Russian Orthodox values. Indeed, at the onset of the twenty-first century, certain textbook authors and educators began to present Russia as the "Orthodox civilization."³ On 29 March 2011, this view was appreciated at the meeting of the Discussion Club of the World Russian National Council, where participants talked not only of Russian civilization, but also of the dominant ("state-shaping") role of the (ethnic) Russian people that had to be backed by a special law.⁴ This is based on the ROC definition of civilization in "political-legal terms," which leads to the presentation of Russia as the "Orthodox state."⁵

Keeping this in mind, the ROC advocates argued that, since knowledge of cultural matters was in great demand, it was impossible to discuss Russian culture with students while neglecting basic knowledge of Russian Orthodoxy. While blending religion with cultural identity, some educators went even further. They valued faith higher than reason and argued that only religion helped to "perceive life in all its entirety," and "opened the way to an ideal life."⁶

Over the last twenty years the ROC did its utmost (not without success) both to gain support from the state and to become a privileged religion in Russia. Certain influential clerics argued that the state had to develop its relationships with particular religious organizations in relation to the size of particular denominations, their contribution to national culture, and their lasting development in a given territory,⁷ which naturally provided Russian Orthodoxy with a head start. This approach did not acknowledge the equality of traditional religions, let alone non-traditional ones including Catholicism and Protestantism.

These claims were negatively interpreted by certain analysts and religious minorities. The ROC ignored the protests and attempted to extend its impact on society. Indeed, the clergy worried about a small num-

ber of believers who were unable to fill numerous newly opened churches. The ROC could not solve this problem without help from outside. Therefore, over the last decade, it strove to acquire access to public education in the hope of educating new believers and to enlarge its social support.

At the same time, the ROC was unable to gain victory over many competitors without state support. Indeed, in the 1990s, information about religion was already included in major and additional optional courses on philosophy, ethics, arts, cultural studies and ethnography. Yet, at that time the adherents of occult sciences were most active, and they promoted their faith as “academic knowledge” that was appreciated by many educators.⁸ The Russian Orthodox activists were alarmed and demanded that no access to schools should be granted to these teachings because they were “harmful,” “dangerous,” “non-scientific” and “violated the Russian law.” The activists were even less favorable towards an “abstract humanism.”⁹ To combat this trend, they suggested introducing the course on the “Basics of Orthodox Culture” (BOC) as if it could teach patriotism and consolidate the Russian identity of the students, providing them with knowledge of traditional culture, values and the norms of conduct.

In order to make the Church’s arguments sound more convincing, the highest clerics and the ROC advocates argued that RE was able to overcome “moral crisis” and to “stop a trend towards moral self-destruction,” and that the introduction of BOC was an “issue of national security” closely connected with the maintenance of the nation.¹⁰

Religious Education as a Project of the Russian Orthodox Church

Under the ROC pressure, many federal history textbooks from the late 1990s onwards included substantial sections on the ROC, its activists, and its relationships with the state.¹¹ In 2004, the first state educational standard in history was adopted which highlighted the “role of the Church in social life in Russia” as an obligatory topic. From this time, respective chapters were permanently included in federal textbooks on Russian history. By contrast, a discussion of religions other than Russian Orthodox Christianity was not required. Nonetheless, the Church was not satisfied with these measures.

After rather unsuccessful attempts of the early 1990s, the ROC began once again to promote RE in public schools in the late 1990s. On 26 September 1997, a law “on the freedom of conscience and on religious organizations” was passed which provided students with the right to learn religious subjects in public schools, yet only on request of their parents, on a voluntary basis and “outside the school hours.”¹² In June 1999, these principles were approved by the instructive letter of the Ministry of Educa-

tion. It was assumed that the basics of Orthodox culture would be taught within a flexible component¹³ of the general curriculum. In December 1999, the Moscow Patriarch Alexij II suggested that all the eparchies should take part in BOC teaching in public schools outside school hours and with special agreement with schools.¹⁴ Between 1997 and 1999, teaching Russian Orthodoxy as a school subject was appreciated by authorities and educational boards in several regions.

However, the ROC objective was to introduce the BOC into the federal curriculum and to make it a compulsory rather than optional subject for all students regardless of ethnic background and religious affiliation. While the ROC formally agreed that the course was optional, the influential clerics, including the Moscow patriarch, insisted that “it was time to spread the teaching of the BOC to all public schools in Russia” and that “one should not be confused if Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist children are present among the pupils.”¹⁵ They argued that it was “useful for a child from a minority [background] to know the basics of the religious culture of people among whom they lived,” that is, of the “dominant religion.”¹⁶

Thus, any free choices and the optional nature of the new course were dismissed. Instead, the course was treated by ROC activists as a compulsory subject not only for children from Orthodox families, but also for all Russian citizens and even for temporary guest workers. Indeed, in 2008, ROC clergy began to insist more forcefully on the compulsory nature of the BOC in public schools. However, they avoided discussing the possibility that Orthodox values may be different from those of the Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews or Buddhists. To be sure, the views and interests of non-religious people were also dismissed.

How is RE related to the secular nature of Russian schools, and how is education about religion integrated in them? In view of the ROC activists, there is no place for atheism at school at all. “A secular principle cannot be interpreted as a prohibition of teaching religion,” therefore, “secular education has to appreciate religious values, and the cultural basics of the national culture within which education takes place.”¹⁷ This point has been emphasized by such influential figures as the Moscow Patriarch Alexij II, the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Yu. S. Osipov, the President of the Russian Academy of Education N. D. Nikandrov and the rector of the Moscow State University V. A. Sadovnichy in April 2000 in their letter to the Minister of Education.

According to the Head of Department in the Institute of Family and Upbringing of the Russian Academy of Education, I. V. Metlik, secular principles imply a division of labor between state and religion rather than “anti-religiosity” or an “equal distance” between state and various denominations and a separation of the Church from the state. In his view, a division of labor brings about a “symphony of spiritual and secular power.”¹⁸

Metlik denies that denominational education in schools might result in the development of religious identity, yet, at the same time, he maintains that an introduction to religious values helps people to shape national and cultural identity. After all, [ethnic] Russian people are “oriented to Orthodoxy.”¹⁹ Thus, Metlik interprets the constitutional article on the “freedom of conscience” in favor of the ROC, while advocating (together with many clerics) RE as a covert means to prepare students for conversion. This is justified with reference to an association of the Russian Orthodoxy with “traditional culture.”

The ROC activists distinguish between two ways of teaching Russian Orthodoxy at school. The first one focuses on the basics of the faith as well as catechism, including obligatory prayers and other religious practices. The second one, presented as the BOC, is to inform students about religion and can be taught by non-believers. Besides religion it focuses on the idea of patriotism, and, therefore, children have to learn only the religion of their own people, that is, their own ethnic group.²⁰ This approach effectively disallows non-denominational religious studies (“History of World Religions”) because they appear to corrupt faith and cannot foster patriotism.²¹ Moreover, the reflective critical approach adopted in religious studies is identified with a “form of atheist propaganda,” whereas RE is considered to be based on emotions and values, which help to develop a positive attitude to “one’s own” religion.²² It is no accident that, in addition to “information,” Diakon Kuraev insists on shaping a “generous attitude towards one’s native faith” and “exaltation towards the churches.”²³ Another enthusiast dreamt of “introducing a student to distinct religious spiritual-moral tradition, culture, ethic, and way of life.”²⁴ Thus, the fundamentalist approach was manifested as one which is masked with cultural rhetoric. In other words, what the ROC activists actually think about is how to “get children to accept the faith.” They want education into religion rather than about religion.

This objective was confirmed by the Moscow patriarch himself. In December 1999 he issued a letter pointing out that the ROC had to have an impact on public education and suggested that the course on the “Basics of Orthodox Teaching” had to be introduced to schools. However, while expecting protests from both the general public and educators, he suggested that the course about the “Basics of Orthodox Culture” should be promoted.²⁵ At the opening of the fifteenth Christmas educational conference on 29 January 2007, he welcomed the introduction of the BOC and emphasized that students “had to know the basics of their own religion.” Following him, the Metropolitan of Voronezh and Borisoglebsk, Sergy, once told journalists that, “Teaching of the basics of the Russian Orthodoxy contradicts the principle of the separation of the Church from the state. Yet, if we teach the basics of Orthodox culture, this is a different matter. We should not introduce children to prayers; we have to tell them about

the Church and its importance. It is up to individual whether he is a believer or not.”²⁶ And in January 2011, Patriarch Kirill has pointed out that one had to shape the religious identity of students as well as teach them “to be able to confess the faith rigidly.”²⁷

With reference to opinion polls, the ROC activists claim that most respondents recognize the existence of God, whereas only a small minority denies this. Atheism, they insist, has been overcome, and the time has come to introduce religion to school.²⁸ In reality, however, most students are by no means true believers. Even when they and their parents associate themselves with Russian Orthodoxy, many of them search for cultural identity rather than faith.²⁹ And when some of them recognize the existence of God, they view him in various ways and often differently from the Orthodox dogma. At the same time, while arguing that students have to be familiar with their own “traditional” religion rather than religions of the world,³⁰ the advocates of this approach violate people’s right to access to information. Instead, they defend fundamentalism while considering that students from a Jewish background have to learn Judaism, those from “Muslim” families Islam, and those from an “Orthodox” background Russian Orthodoxy. They ignore the fact that most students grew up in non-religious families and therefore have a right to make a choice whether to attend religious courses or to opt out of them, and which religion they should learn.

The advocates of the ROC fail to recognize that such education into religion violates the constitutional rights of these students, who still make up the majority in schools. Instead, ROC activists recently advocated the introduction of a Federal Standard for Orthodox education and the continuation of RE covering all educational levels in public schools and even kindergartens.³¹

The Russian Orthodox Church’s Project Concerning Science, the Equality of Religions and the Problem of Tolerance

While focusing on cultural issues, the advocates of the ROC argue that Russian culture is shaped by the Russian Orthodoxy.³² Yet they fail to recognize that it is impossible to understand the Russian culture of the Silver Age without being familiar with theosophy and occult sciences, and that one has to know the basics of Marxism-Leninism to understand Soviet art and literature. Moreover, popular Orthodox Christianity includes many elements of pre-Christian beliefs, which also shape the culture. Finally, if the course focuses on the role of religious culture, why do they not acknowledge the religious heterogeneity of Russia? The ROC advocates persistently point out that no other religion has played such a major

role in the development of the Russian state, and that the ROC was a culture-shaping factor in central Russia.³³ In particular, they emphasize the role of church architecture. At the same time, they fail to mention to what extent its development has been affected by eastern and western cultural influences, including foreign church-builders themselves. Likewise, they neglect the Orthodoxy of Greeks, Romanians and southern Slavs. In short, the ROC's RE model equates Orthodoxy with "Russian religion."³⁴ To be sure, ROC advocates also fail to acknowledge the fact that the Church's conservative policy hampered the development of education in Russia for several centuries, and thus doomed the country to permanent backwardness.³⁵ Thus, the ROC's discussions of Russian cultural-religious identity romanticize the image of the ROC.

While distorting historical facts, this approach also violates the equality of religions. Justifying the discriminatory law of 1997, Metlik (among others) argues that "foreign religious organizations" cannot claim any equality with traditional religions.³⁶ The ROC activists develop this argument even further. Thus, in June 2008, archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin argued that, "The attempts to present a skeptical view of religions, teaching their equal truthfulness or equal falseness, an idea that all religions were invented by people and that they developed from primitive to more evolved ones as 'objective' and 'non-partial' is in principle incompatible with the Orthodox Christian's view." He requested schools to provide "knowledge of religion, which did not contradict the young believers' worldview."³⁷ And Metlik criticizes a "scientific view of the world," which is characteristic of contemporary schooling because, he claims, this is "far from what people really think."³⁸

These activists are seemingly not confused by the fact that, in this case, schools would have to justify the views of students who believe that the sun revolves around the earth.³⁹ Moreover, the quotations from the biology textbook were treated at the trial of Darwinism in 2007 as having offended feelings of Orthodox students.⁴⁰ Thus, obscurantism is carving its way into Russian schools together with RE promoted by the ROC. Yet conflict between such RE and what students learn from historical and biological courses shows that RE and scientific knowledge are incompatible. In addition, a denominational approach assumes that only one faith is truthful, while all the other denominations are false. One of the more ardent advocates of Orthodox education, Diakon Kuraev, recognizes that a "characteristic and inalienable part of Orthodoxy is its intolerance and its confidence in God's truth, which is entrusted to the Church."⁴¹ Such attitudes pave the way for intellectual and religious conflicts which will be artificially fostered by schools if the clerical view of RE gains the upper hand. The priests are not alarmed by this problem. For example, Metropolitan Kirill was convinced that RE never causes religious conflict. On

the contrary, he claimed that it fostered tolerance and restricted the influence of extremism.⁴² Recently, Kirill, who has already become the Moscow patriarch, claimed that participants and observers considered that the recent pilot project introducing religious subjects into public schools has caused neither religious separation in schools nor religious clashes.⁴³ However, it is too early to come to any definite conclusions on this matter.

Significantly, the ROC advocates' view of tolerance is inconsistent. While appreciating the tolerance of contemporary students, one of them recognized that most of his respondents considered that the ROC should become the sole denomination in Russia. He thereby failed to discuss how this related to tolerance.⁴⁴ The first Russian textbook on the BOC, by Alla Borodina, is particularly revealing in this context. The aim of the textbook was not only to provide students with basic knowledge of Christian teaching, but also to present the Russian Orthodoxy as the only genuine faith. This textbook has met with public criticism because Borodina not only accused the Jews for their request to Pontius Pilatus to execute Jesus Christ, but also claimed that the "chosen people" allegedly wanted to rule the world.⁴⁵ The textbook also encourages students to turn against the "new sects," which allegedly cultivate "lies and superstitions" and threaten to cause "psychological disorders."⁴⁶ Moreover, the textbook warns of the danger from the newcomers ("guests") because they "behave not always correctly in the territory of the Orthodox state."⁴⁷ Thus, while calling for tolerance, this textbook taught xenophobia and anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic attitudes.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the textbook was approved by institutions affiliated to the church and enjoyed popularity in several regions of Russia.

The negative attitude towards other religions expressed in Borodina's textbook was by no means an exception. Yet the ROC is obviously not concerned with this problem. The clergy is more alarmed with "moral relativism," allegedly fostered by non-denominational RE. Some priests claim that a general course in the history of religions promotes "cosmopolitanism and moral indifference."⁴⁹ And it is here that the priests perceive the greatest danger.

The ROC advocates usually refer to Europe, where, in many countries there are courses in public schools which aim to shape spiritual-moral culture, including religious subjects.⁵⁰ They argue that knowledge of religion emboldens students' rights to access to information and does not contradict secular education. While repeatedly criticizing the "Godless West" and manifesting loyalty to native traditions, the activists like to point to the European experience of religious teaching. Yet, contemporary western RE appreciates religious pluralism, equality of religions and the respect of human rights,⁵¹ which contradicts the goals of the ROC. This is also characteristic of religious education in Germany,⁵² which is often referred to by the Russian Orthodox activists as a good example to follow.

A Struggle for Religious Education and Public Opinion

The ROC's ambitious plans have not generally been shared by the general public. In 2002 Borodina's textbook was not only the object of scandal, but also triggered a negative response to an instructive letter of the minister of education, V. Filippov, who pointed out the importance of the BOC for consolidating Russian national (ethnic) identity. In the summer and autumn of 2002, human rights activists attempted to take Borodina to court, but the general prosecuting magistracy managed to bring the affair to a rapid conclusion.⁵³ After that, the Ministry of Education issued a further letter which clarified the fact that the BOC course was optional, and could be chosen voluntarily and only with parents' agreement.⁵⁴

After scandals concerning Borodina's textbook and Filippov's letter, the authorities in Moscow, the Moscow region and St. Petersburg decided not to introduce the BOC.⁵⁵ The attitude was different in certain regions where authorities and educators welcomed the course.⁵⁶ They made agreements with local eparchies about the collaboration, which aimed to introduce the optional BOC course into schools in twenty regions by the end of 2002.⁵⁷ As the human rights activist had warned, legislation was violated in some schools, where attempts were made to educate into religion instead of about religion.⁵⁸ During the 2004/2005 school year, the BOC was taught in many regions of Central Russia as an optional subject. Borodina's teaching materials, including the aforementioned textbook, were used to this end.

In February 2006, at the fourteenth Christmas educational conference, clerics did their very best to convince the new minister of science and education, A. Fursenko, that public schools needed a compulsory BOC course rather than one about the "History of Religions," which they assumed was incompatible with the Russian environment. Under pressure from the Church, the BOC course was declared to be compulsory within the flexible educational component in the schools of eight regions of central Russia in 2006/2007, and in the fifteen regions in 2007/2008. However, the BOC maintained its optional status in many schools. As a rule, there were no well-trained teachers to give the course properly. As part of the flexible component, the BOC course was, by law, run by the regional educational boards and therefore did not fall under the control of the Federal Ministry of Science and Education.

A new ROC assault on the Russian system of education took place in 2007. In March 2007 the eleventh World Russian People's Congress called for RE development in the country. In particular, they suggested that BOC should be introduced into all public schools as a compulsory subject. In the summer of 2007, several patriotic organizations began to actively promote teaching the BOC and even asked the Russian president to support the project.⁵⁹ In the autumn of 2007 the Orthodox

activists launched a pan-Russian campaign and, by the end of October, collected more than one hundred thousand signatures in support of the BOC as a school subject.⁶⁰ However, not all responses were favorable. A high-profile letter of the ten Russian academics to the President warned of a dangerous clericalization of both school and society.⁶¹ Public opinion and the threat of an uproar led the then President Putin to call for voluntary choice when it came to learning religious subjects in school.⁶²

The idea that the BOC should be introduced into schools as a compulsory denominational subject was rejected by the non-Orthodox clergy and some scholars who warned of the possible disintegration of Russia along religious lines.⁶³ Thus, some Muslim leaders in Moscow stood against a separation of students by religion and for an exclusion of the BOC from the school curriculum.⁶⁴ The response of the republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan was also negative.⁶⁵ Non-Orthodox religious activists in the Republic of Komi manifested the same attitude.⁶⁶ Certain experts pointed out that RE was illegal in a state that presented itself as a secular state; they also warned of a dangerous separation of students by religion.⁶⁷ However, the Russian authorities have ignored all these opinions. At the same time, in order to avoid violating religious equilibrium, the Russian parliament has approved corrections of the “Law on Education,” which eliminated the regional educational component,⁶⁸ which had approved the BOC course.

In response, the ROC suggested that the federal compulsory curriculum should include a new subject about Orthodox culture entitled “Spiritual and Moral Culture.” The ROC refused any teaching of comparative religion studies because, in its view, such an approach could not achieve the goal of spiritual-moral youth education.⁶⁹ Moreover, whereas students formerly learned moral values in the lessons about Russian literature and history, the ROC now argues that moral authority must come exclusively from the Orthodox Christian canon.⁷⁰

The ROC activists aimed to introduce “religious education into state and municipal schools to provide the basis of a religious worldview and with the participation of religious organizations, including the BOC subject; to promote BOC teaching throughout schooling; to promote the church-theological expertise of all teaching materials.” This religious education had to be state-funded. It aimed to shape the “spiritual-moral development of child’s personality, and his/her worldview, as well as ethno-cultural and ethno-religious identity.” Any criticism of this education was identified as “stirring up hostility” against the ROC and Orthodox people, which had to be resisted by all means.⁷¹ The Orthodox activists requested the “restoration of Orthodoxy as the spiritual-moral basis of children’s upbringing in Russian schools.”⁷² In other words, the ROC focuses on the given religious faith rather than any common human values.

Although the Ministry of Science and Education did not share these perspectives, it had to make a concession. Initially there was a plan to in-

roduce RE to almost all levels of education from September 2009.⁷³ Then a decision was made to launch a pilot project in April 2010 in nineteen regions of Russia, where “spiritual-moral upbringing,” instead of the BOC, had to be introduced into the curriculum for the fourth and fifth grades. This included six compulsory courses, which may be voluntarily chosen by either students or their parents. Thus, students may learn either one of the four traditional religions of Russia, or the history of world religions, or the basics of secular ethics by choice. Only secular teachers could give these courses.⁷⁴

In my view, this was an attempt to develop and to introduce a new state ideology. Indeed, a sharp rejection of communist ideology and a no less hostile attitude towards liberal values manifested by the Russian authorities over the last decade have left the ruling elite with no choice but to shift to conservative ideology. Indeed, the latter was adopted as a creed by the dominant party of “United Russia.” However, conservative ideology is usually based on religion. While observing the growing problems of the youth, yet without the means to provide it with attractive ethical ideas, the Russian authorities have made an attempt to pass this uneasy task on to the Church, because the latter was dreaming of turning society back to “spiritual traditions of our fathers and grandfathers.”⁷⁵

In July 2009, at a meeting in Barvikha, President Dm. Medvedev welcomed an introduction of “spiritual-moral upbringing” to the school curriculum. At the same time, the President evoked the secular nature of the Russian state and an obligation to observe a principle of voluntary choice in school.⁷⁶ The religious leaders acknowledged the president’s decision. However, this was a forced compromise for some non-Orthodox religious activists. Indeed, certain Muslim leaders were still against separating students according to religion. However, their loyalty to the president meant that they began writing a textbook about the basics of Islam.⁷⁷

On the surface, public opinion appeared to be favorable for the ROC. In August 2009, opinion polls reported that the majority of respondents (69 percent) supported the introduction of Orthodox education, whereas its opponents accounted for only 19 percent.⁷⁸ This might be treated as a positive shift of public opinion in favor of RE, because the survey of the youngsters in 2006 reported less positive attitudes. At that time, only 6,8 percent of respondents supported teaching the BOC as a compulsory subject, and 39 percent wanted it to be optional, whereas more than a half of the responses were negative.⁷⁹

The true attitudes of children and their parents became evident in the spring of 2010, and confirmed what skeptics had warned of for years. In their struggle with the Ministry of Sciences and Education, ROC activists had persistently referred to the “people,” whose interests they allegedly championed. However, people’s responses to the ROC initiative

were inconsolable. In the spring of 2010 the pilot project encompassed ten thousand public schools in nineteen regions of Russia (in 2011 two more regions joined the project – the Yaroslavl' region and the Republic of Marii-El), which accounted for 240 thousand students and fifteen thousand teachers. Yet, evidently, many parents were afraid of the clericalization of society.

According to the Prosveshchenie Publishing House, textbooks about secular ethics were most popular. 240 thousand copies of these were issued, which accounted for one third of all the orders. The BOC orders accounted for only a quarter of the orders (about ninety thousand copies). The choice of particular schools was affected by recommendations made by the local education boards; and small schools in the countryside had no choice at all.⁸⁰ In May 2010, opinion polls reported that the majority of students (42,1 percent) learned the “Basics of Secular Ethics,” one third (30,6 percent) the BOC, and one fifth (20 percent) the “Basics of the World Religious Cultures.” The “Basics of Islam” were learned by 5,2 percent, Buddhism by 2 percent, and Judaism by 0,1 percent.

In short, the BOC was appreciated by the majority only in six to seven out of twenty regions, mostly in central Russia. Schools in the Urals, the Volga region, Siberia, the far east and north west generally preferred secular ethics. A more diverse pattern was apparent in the northern Caucasus. Even in the Tver' region (central Russia) the situation was by no means simple. Although the BOC proved to be the preferred choice in this region, most parents in the city of Tver' (55 percent) chose secular ethics.⁸¹ This pattern was characteristic of the larger modern cities. Taking into consideration that ethnic Russians account for about 80 percent and “Muslims” for about 10 to 12 percent of the population in Russia,⁸² it is evident that values of the contemporary modern world are more important to many of them than “traditional faith.”

Unwilling to accept the frustrating results of the pilot project, the ROC activists treated them as “sabotage” and as the intrigue of “conspirologists.”⁸³ Some Orthodox priests and their Moscow sympathizers claimed that the main shortcoming of the new education was that it imposed “religious pluralism” and “cultural and religious relativism” upon children, which, in their view, might cause a “deformation” or even “destruction of the spiritual-personal potential of students.” They were irritated by some educators' suggestions that “Orthodox children” might become familiar not only with the Bible, but also with the Torah and Qur'an. They could not accept that students might become aware of the close relationships between Judaism and Christianity. They spread fear among the general public that the pilot project would destroy the traditional identity of ethnic Russians and other peoples of Russia. For them, “cosmopolitan education” threatened state security. They also argued that the project encroached upon the freedom of students' conscience. They warned of “violation of the secular nature of education” in the new courses, as op-

posed to the teaching of the BOC.⁸⁴ In short, while advocating a conservative approach, they confirmed that the BOC course had to shape a fundamentalist Orthodox identity among the students.

It is for this reason that the results of preliminary opinion polls and the real behavior of students and their parents were so different. Indeed, the majority of people treat religion as a form of cultural heritage, a symbol of identity rather than as religious faith as such. This is what they expect of school education. And they do not want to any new ideological control.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, on 3 March 2011, the pilot project was approved by the Council for Collaboration with Religious Organizations at the Russian president's office, which decided to continue the project.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Over the last ten years, interest in the social role of religion and RE has increased in the European Union. However, whereas Western scholars and educators focus mainly on the potential of religious dialogue, the education of tolerance and peaceful co-existence,⁸⁷ religion in Russia is viewed as the resource of both exclusive cultural-religious identity and resistance to globalization. Whereas the Western approach to RE is based on democratic values, the ROC takes an anti-democratic and anti-liberal stance.⁸⁸ Whereas most European students favor optional and non-denominational RE,⁸⁹ the ROC promotes the very opposite. Instead of peaceful co-existence, this RE evidently (albeit unconsciously) introduces conflict into Russian schools. Religion has thus been introduced into Russian public schools in spite of article 14 of the Russian constitution, which defines Russia as a secular state, where religion is separated from the state by law, where different religions are equal before the law, and where state or obligatory religions are unacceptable.

Denominational RE was introduced into schools following lobbying by the ROC. All the other denominations expressed doubt about this, for they anticipated that such a step would cause a divide in Russian society. Moreover, some popular textbooks which point towards Jews as those who demanded that Jesus Christ should be crucified show that Judophobia is being introduced into public schools.

By the twenty-first century, the ROC was challenged by a shocking phenomenon. Although it retrieved much property and restored churches and monasteries, the number of true believers did not grow. Whereas the great majority of ethnic Russians identified themselves as Orthodox Christians, few of them visited churches regularly, attended services and observed rituals there. This pattern is corroborated by all opinion polls carried out over the last two decades. This has caused alarm among the clergy. After the ROC recovered, following the Russian authorities' generous support,

the clergy did its best to enlarge the community of believers. One way of achieving this goal was by using the state system of public education. Therefore, about fifteen years ago, the ROC did its best to introduce into public schools a course focused on Russian Orthodoxy.

As a result, RE was introduced into the curriculum as a compulsory subject, albeit not in a way which met the full approval of the ROC. First, it is still a pilot project aimed only at the fourth and fifth grades. Second, the new curriculum acknowledges the religious heterogeneity of society (although it recognizes only four “traditional religions”), and includes a non-denominational course (called “Basics of World Religious Cultures”) and even a non-religious course (called “Basics of Secular Ethics”). Third, what was most frustrating for the ROC is that the majority of students voted for non-religious and (to a lesser extent) non-denominational courses rather than for the BOC.

To conclude, the Russian state still demonstrates no clear view of its relation to religion. In her analysis of a similar case in India, a Swedish scholar has concluded that, instead of separating religion from state entirely, the Indian authorities have chosen to demonstrate “equal respect to all the religions.” As a result, the state has to intervene in religious affairs and to support various denominations in order to ensure that Indians can observe their religious rituals on an equal footing.⁹⁰ Although, according to the Russian constitution, religion is separated from the state, contemporary Russian authorities are by no means disinterested in religion. Like India, they declare their equal respect towards all religions, but are in fact most sympathetic towards the ROC and provide it with substantial material and moral support. This violates religious equality. The introduction of the compulsory denominational religious courses to public school threatens to separate students according to their religion and provide a basis for religious conflicts. The ROC’s concept of RE is designed to entrench a hierarchy of religions, segregate people in terms of religion and ethnicity, gather all ethnic Russians under the Russian Orthodox umbrella and control their minds. In all these respects, the ROC shares the attitudes of the European New Right.

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² A. Krasikov, 'Globalizatsiia i pravoslavie' in *Religiia i globalizatsiia na prostorakh Evrazii*, A. Malashenko, S. Falikov, eds. (Moscow: Neostrom, 2005), 52.

³ E. Zakharova, *Osobennosti rossiiskoi tsivilizatsii. Mezhdru Zapadom i Vostokom. Posobie dlia uchashchikhsia i uchitelei* (Moscow: ARKTI, 2002), 7; I. N. Ionov, *Rossiiskaia tsivilizatsiia, 9 – nachalo 20 vv. Uchebnik po istorii dlia 10–11 klassov* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 2003), 8, 52-53; I. V. Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie v svetskoi shkole* (Moscow: Planeta-2000, 2004), 70-71.

⁴ Protoierei Vsevolod Chaplin: "Libo samoorganizatsiia russkogo naroda proizoidet, libo stranu zhdet kaos, vechnyi kaos," *Russkaia narodnaia liniia*, 30 March 2011, http://ruskline.ru/news_rl/2011/03/30/protoierej_vsevolod_chaplin_libo_samoorganizatsiia_russkogo_naroda_proizojdet_libo_stranu_zhdet_haos_vechnyj_haos/ (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁵ Krasikov, 'Globalizatsiia i pravoslavie', 52, 55, 58, 65.

⁶ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 10, 36-37.

⁷ 'Vystuplenie zamglavy Otdela vneshnikh tserkovnykh sviazei Moskovskogo Patriarkhata Protoiereia Vsevoloda Chaplina na rabochei gruppe Arkhiereiskogo Sobora "Tserkov", gosudarstvo i obshchestvo,' *Interfax-religiia*, 25 June 2008, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=documents&div=786> (accessed 6 April 2011); 'Gosudarstvo dolzhno podderzhivat' religioznye obshchiny proporsional'no ikh roli v zhizni obshchestva – patriarkh Kirill,' *Interfax-religiia*, 29 December 2009, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=33590> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁸ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 346-376; N. Mitrokhin, *Klerikalizatsiia obrazovaniia v Rossii. K obshchestvennoi diskussii o vvedenii predmeta "Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury" v programmu srednikh shkol* (Moscow: IIF "SPROS Konf OP", 2005), 61.

⁹ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*.

¹⁰ 'Svetskaia shkola – eto shkola, svobodnaia ot klerikalizma,' *NG-religii*, 30 October 2002, 3; 'Mitropolit Kirill schitaet, chto vvedenie OPK v shkolakh – vopros natsional'noi bezopasnosti v otdel'nykh raionakh,' *Interfax-religiia*, 18 January 2007, <http://www.religare.ru/article37138.htm> (accessed 6 April 2011); I. V. Metlik, 'Religioznoe obrazovanie v rossiiskoi shkole i problema integratsii rossiiskogo obshchestva', *Natsional'nye interesy* 4 (2009): 18-21; K. Matsan, 'Deti k vechnym voprosam gotovy. Gotovy li govorit' s nimi vzroslye?' *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 30 September – 6 October 2009, 4.

¹¹ For the corpus of examined textbooks in history see: Victor Shnirelman, 'Stigmatized by history or by historians? Peoples of Russia in the school textbooks in history', *History and Memory* 21, no. 2 (2009): 144-149.

¹² D. Shchipkov, 'Zakon Bozhii ili 'pravoslavnaia kul'turologiia.' Chinovniki i Tserkov' ob'ediniautsia dlia vospitaniia detei.' *NG-religii*, 30 October 2002, 1, 3.

¹³ Before 2008 the regions enjoyed the right to supplement the general curriculum with their own subjects by choice which made up a flexible component.

¹⁴ Aleksij II, 'Vsem eparkhial'nym preosveshchennym.' *Nauchnyi ateizm*, December 1999, <http://www.atheism.ru/archive/archive.phtml?id=25> (accessed 6 April 2011).

¹⁵ V. Vigilianskii, "'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury" kak ozdorovlenie natsii,' in *Predely svetskosti*, A. Verkhovskii, ed. (Moscow: Tsentr "SOVA", 2005), 139.

¹⁶ 'Svetskaia shkola – eto shkola, svobodnaia ot klerikalizma'; A. Kuraev, *Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury kak lekarstvo ot ekstremizma. Ochen' lichnye razmyshleniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Soveta Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, 2003), 22; 'Mitropolit RPTs MP Kliment obratilsia k gubernatoru Kaluzhskoi oblasti s pros'boi vvesti OPK v kachestve obiazatel'nogo predmeta v shkolakh regiona,' *Portal-Credo.ru*, 4 September 2008, <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=65066&cf> (accessed 6 April 2011); 'Archiepiskop Hilarion: "Est' li budushchee u bezreligioznogo obshchestva?";' *Pravoslavie i mir*, 12 October 2009, <http://www.pravmir.ru/arxiepiskop-ilarion-est-li-budushchee-u-bezreligioznogo-obshchestva/> (accessed 6 April 2011).

¹⁷ O. V. Rozina, "'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury" v gosudarstvennoi shkole,' *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole* 3 (2005): 40-41.

¹⁸ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 81-89, 176-178.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 185-189, 219-220.

²⁰ In this context patriotism is blended with ethnic nationalism.

²¹ O. Kirianova, 'VIII Mezhdunarodnye Rozhdestvenskie obrazovatel'nye chteniia,' *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii* 3 (2000): 43; Kuraev, *Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury*, 10-18, 54, 80; Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 150, 185, 190; I. V. Ponkin and M. N. Kuznetsov, *Beschestnaia diskussiiia o religioznom obrazovanii v svetskoi shkole: lozh, podmeny, agressivnaia ksenofobiia. Pravovoi analiz* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo UNTs DO, 2005), 23-27.

²² Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 106-144.

²³ Kuraev, *Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury*, 50-51.

²⁴ Metlik, 'Religioznoe obrazovanie v rossiiskoi shkole,' 20.

²⁵ Aleksij II, 'Vsem eparkhial'nym preosveshchennym.'

²⁶ 'Ot prepodavaniia osnov kul'tury – k nasazhdeniiu osnov religii,' *NIA Khakasiia*, 18 July 2006, <http://www.19rus.ru/newsinfo.asp?ID=9952> (accessed 6 April 2011).

²⁷ 'Vystuplenie Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi Kirilla na otkrytii XIX Mezhdunarodnykh Rozhdestvenskikh obrazovatel'nykh chtenii,' *Otdel religioznogo obrazovaniia i katekhizatsii*, 25 January 2011, http://www.otdelro.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1352:-xix-&catid=18:news&Itemid=2 (accessed 6 April 2011).

²⁸ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 38-63; Rozina, 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury,' 40-41; Fedor Kozyrev and Pille Valk, 'Saint-Petersburg students' views about religion in education – results of the quantitative survey,' in *Teenagers' perspectives on the role of religion in their lives, schools and societies. A European quantitative study*, Pille Valk, Gerdien Bertram-Troost, Markus Friederici, and Céline Béraud, eds. (Münster: Waxmann, 2009), 341.

²⁹ This is by no means unique in contemporary world. For that see: Mark Juergensmeyer, *The new cold war? Religious nationalism confronts the secular state* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

³⁰ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*; Rozina, 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury,' 41.

³¹ 'Doklad Predsedatelia Otdela religioznogo obrazovaniia i katekhizatsii.'

³² Vigilianskii, 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury,' 141; Matsan, 'Deti k vechnym voprosam gotovy.'

³³ Rozina, 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury,' 41.

³⁴ In many contexts the ROC clerics view the term "Russian" as ethnic Russian. See: Krasikov, 'Globalizatsiia i pravoslavie,' 55.

³⁵ Fedor Kozyrev and Vladimir Fedorov, 'Religion and education in Russia. Historical roots, cultural context and recent development,' in *Religion and Education in Europe. Development, Context and Debates*, Robert Jackson et al., eds. (Münster: Waxmann, 2007), 148; S. A. Magaril, 'Mifologiiia "Tretiego Rima" v rossiiskom obrazovatel'nom soobshchestve,' in *Ideologiiia "osobogo puti" v Rossii i Germanii: istoki, sodержanie, posledstviia*, E. A. Pain, ed. (Moscow: Tri kvadrata, 2010), 127-156.

³⁶ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 181, 193.

³⁷ 'Vystuplenie zamglavy Otdela vneshnikh tserkovnykh sviazei.'

³⁸ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 224.

³⁹ According to a recent opinion poll, 32 per cent of the Russians believe that it is Sun, which runs around the Earth. See: 'Solntse – sputnik Zemli, ili reiting nauchnykh zabluzhdenii rossiian.' *VTsIOM Press-vypusk* 1684 (8 February 2011), <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=111345> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁴⁰ A. Kupriianov, 'Oskorblenie litsedeistvom,' *Polit.ru*, 27 February 2007, http://scepstis.ru/library/id_1147.html (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁴¹ Kuraev, *Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury*, 102-103.

⁴² 'Ne dolzhno but' mesta dlia konfliktov mezhdu konfessiiami,' *Kommersant*, 14 March 2001, 9; 'Svetskaia shkola – eto shkola, svobodnaia ot klerikalizma.' Also see: Metlik, 'Religioznoe obrazovanie v rossiiskoi shkole,' 20.

⁴³ 'Vystuplenie Patriarkha Moskovskogo i vseia Rusi Kirilla.'

⁴⁴ Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 41-42. In the German case, such a position is treated as containing "very aggressive undertones." See: Dan-Paul Jozsa, 'Religious education in North-Rhine Westphalia: views and experiences of students,' in *Encountering religious pluralism in school and society. A qualitative study of teenage perspectives in Europe*, Thorsten Knauth, Dan-Paul Jozsa,

Gerdien Bertram-Troost and Julia Ipgrave, eds. (Münster: Waxmann, 2008), 196.

⁴⁵ A. B. Borodina, *Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury* (Moscow: Pokrov, 2002), 112.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁸ Ya. Krotov, 'Tserkovnyi pokrov nad svetskoi shkoloj,' *Ezhenedel'nyi zhurnal* 23 (2002), <http://e-journal.ru/023/life/04church/index.html> (accessed 11 September 2005); S. Soloviev and D. Subbotin, 'Izvrashchenie k istokam. Zachem nuzhny 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury'?', http://scepis.ru/library/id_320.html (accessed 6 April 2011); Mitrokhin, *Klerikalizatsiia obrazovaniia v Rossii*, 46; M. Pozdniaev, 'Borodinskaia bitva,' *Novye Izvestiia*, 26 June 2007, 7; Joachim Willems, *Religiöse Bildung in Russlands Schulen* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), 131; idem. 'Foundations of Orthodox Culture (FOC): a new subject in Russia's schools,' *British Journal of Religious Education* 29, no. 3 (2007): 238.

⁴⁹ 'Doklad Predsedatelia Otdela religioznogo obrazovaniia i katekhizatsii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi episkopa Zaraiskogo Merkurii na otkrytii XIX Mezhdunarodnykh Rozhdestvenskikh obrazovatel'nykh chtenii,' *Otdel religioznogo obrazovaniia i katekhizatsii*, 25 January 2011, http://www.otdelro.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1353:-xix-&catid=18:news&Itemid=2 (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁵⁰ 'Ne dolzhno but' mesta dlia konfliktov'; Metlik, *Religiia i obrazovanie*, 152-173; K. Pisenko, 'Uroki religii v gosudarstvennoi shkole – norma svetskogo pravovogo gosudarstva. Chast' 1-2,' *Interzhurnal Sretenskogo monastyrja*, 11-12 February 2009, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/jurnal/29260.htm>, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/jurnal/29267.htm> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁵¹ *Religion and education in Europe. Development, Context and Debates*, Robert Jackson, Siebren Miedema, Wolfram Weisse and Jean-Paul Willaime, eds. (Münster: Waxmann 2007).

⁵² Thorsten Knauth, 'Religious education in Germany: a contribution to dialogue or source of conflict? Historical and contextual analysis of the development since the 1960s,' in *Religion and education in Europe*, 243-265; Willems, *Religiöse Bildung*, 20-30; idem, 'Foundations of Orthodox Culture,' 240-241.

⁵³ E. Ikhlov, 'Virus klerikalizma i ksenofobii,' *Gazeta regional'nykh pravozashchitnykh organizatsii*, 10 (January 2003), 14-15; V. Vigilianskii, 'SMI i pravoslavie,' *Novyi mir* 9 (2003): 152; Mitrokhin, *Klerikalizatsiia obrazovaniia v Rossii*, 36-39, 46-50. Also see: www.sem40.ru/anti/dgihad/1544 from 3 April 2003 (accessed 11 September 2005).

⁵⁴ Rozina, 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury,' 43.

⁵⁵ Mitrokhin, *Klerikalizatsiia obrazovaniia v Rossii*, 41-42; V. Lukhovitskii, 'Religioznoe obrazovanie v svetskoi shkole,' in *Predely svetskosti*, A. Verkhovskii, ed. (Moscow: Tsentr "SOVA", 2005), 150-152.

⁵⁶ For a media discussions see: Vigilianskii, 'SMI i pravoslavie.'

⁵⁷ Vigilianskii, 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul'tury,' 140.

⁵⁸ Mitrokhin, *Klerikalizatsiia obrazovaniia v Rossii*, 37.

⁵⁹ Pozdniaev, 'Borodinskaia bitva.'

⁶⁰ O. Lipich, 'Za prepodavanie "Osnov pravoslavnoi kul'tury" sobrano 100,000 podpisei,' *news.mail.ru*, 31 October 2007, <http://news.mail.ru/society/1470707/> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶¹ 'Politika RPTs MP: konsolidatsiia ili razval strany? Otkrytoe pis'mo akademikov RAN prezidentu V. V. Putinu,' *Portal-Credo.Ru*, 23 July 2007, <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=news&id=55762> (accessed 6 April 2011); V. A. Kuvakin, 'Sueta vokrug "dela akademikov",' *V zashchitu nauki* 3 (2008): 170-177.

⁶² 'Putin za dobrovol'noe izuchenie religii v shkolakh,' <http://news.mail.ru/politics/1489584/> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶³ O. Panfilova, 'Musul'mane trebuiut zapretit' v shkolakh uroki pravoslaviia,' *Novyi region-2*, 15 September 2006, <http://www.nr2.ru/society/83211.html> (accessed 6 April 2011); A. Chernoianova, 'Novyi shkol'nyi predmet: 'RPTs vypuskaet dzhina iz butylki',' *Infox.ru*, 24 March 2010, <http://infox.ru/authority/state/2010/03/24/intyervyu.phtml> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶⁴ 'V Sovete muftiev Rosii vystupaiut protiv kontseptsii "Dukhovno-nravstvennoi kul'tury" v shkolakh, predlozhennoi RPTs,' *NEWS.ru*, 2 September 2008, <http://txt.newsru.com/religy/02sep2008/murtasin.html> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶⁵ ‘Glava Bashkirii protiv vvedeniia v shkolakh ‘Osnov pravoslavnoi kul’turny,’ schitaia, chto eto sozdast ugrozu mezhreligioznomu miru v Rossii,’ *Interfax*, 21 April 2006, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=11012> (accessed 6 April 2011); M. Pozdniaev, ‘Krest na shkole,’ *Novye Izvestiia*, 30 August 2006, 1, 7; Ia. Stashkevich, ‘Prezident Tatarstana vystupil s poslaniem,’ *I16.ru*, 12 November 2008, <http://116.ru/newsline/28266.html> (accessed 6 April 2011); ‘V Tatarstane schitaiut, chto ‘Osnov pravoslavnoi kul’turny’ mogut byt’ opasnymi,’ *Regnum*, 28 Juli 2009, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1190656.html> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶⁶ ‘Khristianskaia i musul’ manskaia obshchestvennost’ Respubliki Komi vystupila protiv naviazvaniia pravoslaviia i prinuzhdeniia detei k ispolneniiu pravoslavnykh religioznykh obriadov,’ *Slavianskii pravovoi tsentr*, 23 July 2008, <http://www.sclj.ru/news/detail.php?ID=1937> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶⁷ N. Vel’k, ‘Eksperiment s osnovami religioznykh kul’tur nezakonen,’ *Infox.ru*, 26 March 2010, http://infox.ru/authority/mans/2010/03/26/Ekspyerimiyent_s_osno.phtml (accessed 6 April 2011). It is worth noting that in France they passed a special law (March 15, 2004) prohibiting “the wearing of signs or clothes by which the students ostensibly demonstrate a religious affiliation.” They kept in mind “the Muslim headscarf, the yarmulke, or a clearly oversized cross.” This was to ease tensions in school. See: Céline Béraud, Bérengère Massignon, Séverine Mathieu and Jean-Paul Williame, ‘The school – an appropriate institution in France for acquiring knowledge on religious diversity and experiencing it firsthand?’ in *Teenagers’ perspectives on the role of religion in their lives, schools and societies. A European quantitative study*, 132. As we see, they do quite the opposite in Russia.

⁶⁸ B. Klin, ‘V shkole ne budet osnov Pravoslavnoi kul’turny,’ *Izvestiia*, 14 November 2007, 2.

⁶⁹ M. Pozdniaev, ‘OPK vkluchili v DNK,’ *Novye Izvestiia*, 24 December 2007, 7.

⁷⁰ For example see: ‘Vystuplenie predsedatelia Otdela vneshnikh tserkovnykh sviazei Mitropolita Volokolamskogo Hilariona na XIX Mezhdunarodnykh Rozhdestvenskikh obrazovatel’nykh chtenii,’ *Otdel religioznogo obrazovaniia i katekhizatsii*, 25 January 2011, http://www.otdelro.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1389:-xix-&catid=18:news&Itemid=2 (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷¹ ‘Rezoliutsiia konferentsii ‘Pravoslavnaia kul’tura v sovremennoi shkole: praktika, problemy, perspektivy,’ 8 February 2008, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/359284.html>, (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷² ‘Rezoliutsiia, priniataia uchastnikami kruglogo stola ‘Prepodavanie Pravoslavnoi kul’turny v novykh usloviakh,’ 1 February 2010, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1060077.html> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷³ T. Solntseva, ‘Religiia stanet urokom,’ *Trud*, 25 March 2008, 1.

⁷⁴ ‘Izuchenie osnov religii i svetskoi etiki budet obiazatel’nym i variativnym, kurs budet nazyvat’sia ‘Dukhovno-nravstvennoe vospitanie’ – Fursenko,’ *Interfax*, 22 July 2009, <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=31164> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷⁵ ‘Patriarkh: izuchenie religii v shkole uluchshit otnoshenie k migrantam,’ *Gazeta.ru*, 14 March 2008, http://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2008/03/14/n_1192602.shtml (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷⁶ V. Kuz’mín and K. Latukhina, ‘Veroi i pravom,’ *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 22 July 2009, 1-2; N. Krasilova, ‘Nachnem, pomolias’. Religiia pridet v shkolu i armiiu,’ *Novye Izvestiia*, 22 July 2009, 2.

⁷⁷ N. Vel’k, ‘Delit’ shkol’nikov po konfessiiam nepravil’no i opasno,’ *Infox.ru*, 31 August 2009, http://www.infox.ru/authority/state/2009/07/31/ryeligiya_v_shkolah.phtml (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷⁸ *Obshchestvennoe mnenie – 2009*, N. Zorkaia, ed. (Moscow: Levada-Tsentr, 2009), 72.

⁷⁹ Pozdniaev, ‘Krest na shkole.’

⁸⁰ V. S. Vorontsov, O. V. Kul’bachevsksa, O. N. Podlesnykh, ‘O vvedenii v shkolakh kursa po osnovam religioznoi kul’turny i svetskoi etiki,’ in *Etnokul’turnoe obrazovanie. Metody sotsial’noi orientatsii rossiiskoi shkoly*. Vyp. 1. V. V. Stepanov, ed. (Moscow: IEA RAN, 2010), 175.

⁸¹ ‘Tver’: roditeli detei, kotorye uzhe izuchali OPK v shkolakh, vybiraiut znakomstvo s mirovymi religiiami ili svetskuiu etiku,’ *Portal-Credo.Ru*, 27 October 2010, <http://portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=80484> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁸² Tentative data of the national census of 2010 (unpublished). By “Muslims” I mean those who have a respective cultural-historical background rather than believers, the latter accounting for less than a half of that number.

⁸³ A. Kuraev, ‘Chinovniki staviat pod udar sam smysl eksperimenta v shkole,’ *Regnum*, March 2010, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1266900.html> (accessed 6 April 2011); M. Moshkin, ‘Boga podvergli

tsenzure. Eksperiment po vvedeniiu 'dukhovno-nravstvennogo' kursa v shkolakh gotovili v avral'nom rezhime,' *Vremia novostei*, 26 March 2010, 3; Iu. Zaitseva, 'Eksperimental'noe vvedenie 'Osnov religioznykh kul'tur' – 'sabotazh' ili 'provokatsiia'? Ob etom sporili uchastniki diskussii v IA 'Rosbalt',' *Blagovest*, 26 March 2010, <http://www.blagovest-info.ru/index.php?ss=2&s=3&id=33378> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁸⁴ 'O sushchestvennom iskazhenii pervonachal'nogo zamysla i tselei prepodavaniia 'Osnov pravoslavnoi kul'tury' pri organizatsii Ministerstvom obrazovaniia i nauki RF aprobatsii kompleksnogo uchebnogo kursa 'Osnovy religioznykh kul'tur i svetskoi etiki',' *Nravstvennost' i zakon*, 5 June 2010, [http://www.moral-](http://www.moral-law.ru/publ/ehksperiment_orkiseh/o_sushhestvennom_iskazhenii_zamysla_i_celej_prepodavaniija_osnov_ppravoslavnoi_kul'tury_pri_organizatsii_aprobatsii_kursa_orkiseh_05_06_2010/51-1-0-155)

[law.ru/publ/ehksperiment_orkiseh/o_sushhestvennom_iskazhenii_zamysla_i_celej_prepodavaniija_osnov_ppravoslavnoi_kul'tury_pri_organizatsii_aprobatsii_kursa_orkiseh_05_06_2010/51-1-0-155](http://www.moral-law.ru/publ/ehksperiment_orkiseh/o_sushhestvennom_iskazhenii_zamysla_i_celej_prepodavaniija_osnov_ppravoslavnoi_kul'tury_pri_organizatsii_aprobatsii_kursa_orkiseh_05_06_2010/51-1-0-155) (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁸⁵ Kozyrev and Fedorov, 'Religion and education in Russia,' 151.

⁸⁶ A. Artasheva, 'Shkoly primut na veru. Pravitel'stvo pereraspredelit religioznuu nagruzku na uchashchikhsia,' *Novye Izvestiia*, 3 March 2011, 5.

⁸⁷ *Religion and education in Europe. Development, Context and Debates*, Robert Jackson, Siebren Miedema, Wolfram Weisse, Jean-Paul Willaime, eds. (Münster: Waxmann 2007); *Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools* (Warsaw: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe,

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⁸⁸ For a critical analysis see: Krasikov, 'Globalizatsiia i pravoslavie.'

⁸⁹ *Teenagers' perspectives on the role of religion in their lives, schools and societies. A European quantitative study*, Pille Valk, Gerdien Bertram-Troost, Markus Friederici and Céline Béraud, eds. (Münster: Waxmann, 2009).

⁹⁰ Catarina Kinnivall, 'Nationalism, religion and the search for chosen traumas,' *Ethnicities* 2, no. 1 (2002): 91.