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Squabbling with teachers — what is it?

Vladimir Platonenko

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There have been reports of harassment of teachers who taught schoolchildren using the Russian curriculum on the territory occupied by the Ukrainian armed forces. This includes both teachers who came from Russia and local teachers who agreed to teach their children using Russian textbooks and teaching aids. Some are outraged by this, some think it is the right thing to do. What can we say about this?

When teachers teach schoolchildren that Ukrainians and Russians are one people, or that these are two different peoples, that Kharkiv is Russia, or that Kharkiv is Ukraine, when they instill opinions on such questions, then they are the same ideological fighters as Solovyov and Simonyan or as Gordon and Arestovich — depending on which position they advocate, which idea they instill. And they will be treated by their friends and enemies exactly the same as any agitprop fighter. If someone tells me that teachers teach children not only who Crimea belongs to, but also purely practical things — they teach them mathematics or physics, I will answer that any mass media outlet gives ordinary information along with ideological one; an-

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other thing is that the higher they rank, the less ordinary and the more ideological information they give.

In this they are similar to the medieval clergy, who, on the one hand, fulfilled usual production work (a baby needs baptism, and a dead person needs burial service no less than the former needs mother's milk and nappies, and the latter the grave; thus, performance of religious rites was considered the same work as work of a peasant or a craftsman), and on the other hand, they taught people what is righteous and what is sinful. And the higher the place of the clergyman in the church hierarchy, the less he was occupied with rites and the more he preached and decided what was right and what was wrong.

Imagine that Christians took over part of a Muslim country, hung bells on the minarets and sent the priests to baptise the Basurians. And then the Muslims recaptured their land from the gyars and now try the captive priests according to Sharia law. Or vice versa, the Christians conquered the territory previously conquered by the Muslims and now judge the mullahs. Or, if you know Ukrainian history, remember how in the Cossack period in the Ukrainian land the Poles often massacred the Orthodox priests, and the Cossacks often massacred the Catholic and Uniate priests (and sometimes even the Orthodox, when they did not defend their positions zealously enough against the Uniates). Now, roughly the same thing is happening now in the east of Ukraine. To a modern person this comparison might seem wild, since the church in modern society is separated from the state in most countries. But ideology is not separated! The state cannot exist without ideology. And not only the state — in any society, there must be some notions of what is good and what is bad, what is allowed and what is not. A society cannot exist if its norms of existence are not defined.

Anarchism, which I adhere to, is also an ideology, and many people even compare it to a religion, although it would be more correct to call it “doctrine”. It is no wonder that the Spanish anarchists in the 1936–1939 revolution preyed on

the Catholic clergy — some historians have even considered it a belated “Spanish Reformation”, four centuries too late. Makhno was far more tolerant of priests. Yes, he sent to the furnace a priest who frightened Makhnovists during battle (!) with hellfire torments for resisting Denikin's army, but he did not touch them for their Christian sermons, not directly related to counter-revolutionary propaganda, much less simply for belonging to the “foal estate”.

This is probably the most sensible approach — we should consider each case separately and informally. But this, alas, will not be the case in the Russian Federation or Ukraine. And the primary schools teacher, who formally voiced Russian-World nonsense for a week to a class, will go to jail for a long time, and Shurik Neurozov, who for years indoctrinated this nonsense to the whole country, received Ukrainian citizenship and proudly calls himself a Ukrainian. Because it is beneficial to the Ukrainian state. Not to the majority of the Ukrainians, not to the Ukrainian people, but to the Ukrainian state, a bunch of officials who rule the common people. The state is also the state in Ukraine.