The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Lawmaker Suggests Replacing 'Gulag Archipelago' With Bible Study in Russian Schools

July 01, 2019



Moskva News Agency

A senior Russian lawmaker has backed an Orthodox Church proposal to teach the Bible in schools, suggesting it be included in curriculums instead of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's seminal "Gulag Archipelago."

A Church spokesman, spurred by President Vladimir Putin's endorsement of the texts, had offered over the weekend to include the Bible, the Torah and the Quran in literature classes at Russian schools. The proposal comes amid Russia's increasing additions of religious and military components into the school curriculum and an arguably conservative pivot in the country's leadership over the past decade.

Related article: Russia to Re-Educate 'Brainwashed' Youth in Patriotic Camps

Oleg Smolin, a Communist lawmaker and deputy chairman of the State Duma Education Committee, called the proposal to teach the Bible "useful for children's general development."

"There are some works of modern literature that can be removed from the school curriculum without great harm. 'Gulag Archipelago,' for example, gives quite a small amount of insight into the real historical process," Smolin told the Govorit Moskva radio station on Sunday.

Related article: How Ultraconservatism Became the Russian Elite's Chosen Path

"I, a supporter of secular education in public school, would support this proposal. The literature curriculum is too large as is," he said. "We need to look at [school] programs and remove all that's politicized."

He said teachers should teach the Bible no later than eighth grade in order to introduce pupils to "imagery from classical religious works that make it into literary fiction."

Putin had recommended that children read the Bible, Torah and the Quran for "the world to be better, more peaceful and stable" during a meeting with heads of international news agencies last month.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/07/01/lawmaker-suggests-replacing-gulag-archipelago-with-bible-study-in-russian-schools-a66236