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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Gun-Toting Russian Schoolkids Sing 'God Is With Us' in Military March

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vsevolodovskaia_shkola_42

Young Russian schoolchildren were filmed holding mock weapons and marching in military formation at an event marking Soviet victory in World War II last Friday.

Footage shared by the MBKh Media news website showed the children singing "We are Russians, God is with us" while marching around the schoolyard holding the weapons resembling Soviet submachine guns with drum magazines. The RBC news website identified the phrase as a lyric from pop songwriter Alexander Shaganov's work.

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Публикация от МБОУ "Всеволодовская СОШ 42" (@vsevolodovskaia_shkola_42)

“This event is dedicated to Victory Day, it’s an annual review competition,” Yelena Karpacheva, vice principal of School No. 42 in the village of Vsevolodovo 50 kilometers east of Moscow, told MBKh Media.

“The competition has been held since 2017,” Karpacheva said.

One of the students’ parents who shared the video said that only third graders marched with toy guns at the event, which took place one week after Russia marked the 76th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany.

Karpacheva confirmed to RBC that the students were third-graders and insisted that no parents had expressed their disapproval with their children brandishing small arms.

The school event comes amid Russia's increasing militarization of its youth through education and the media.

Russia's school curriculum has been bolstered with war history in recent years, reflecting President Vladimir Putin's efforts to cement patriotism as a unifying national idea. State television in 2019 launched a youth-oriented channel with 24/7 World War II coverage.

Putin in 2015 created a military-patriotic youth movement called the "Youth Army," while officials in recent years began sending delinquent juveniles to military-patriotic re-education camps.

These efforts have been accompanied by a growing number of reports showing Russian schoolchildren being taught marching drills and gun assembly skills.

A planned "baby parade" among Russian kindergarteners earlier this month was postponed, citing coronavirus concerns, after receiving media attention and coming under public scrutiny.

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