

Why are Ukrainian Students Less Proud of their Country than their Contemporaries in Poland, Russia and Kazakhstan? – expert poll.

The Gorshenin Institute has conducted an opinion poll asking experts to answer the following question: “Why are Ukrainian Students Less Proud of their Country than their Contemporaries in Poland, Russia and Kazakhstan?”

The Kyiv-based Gorshenin Institute carried out the “Students – an image of the Future” research in 2011. The survey was taken among young people in Ukraine, Russia, Poland and Kazakhstan. The survey showed that 55.4 per cent of the polled students in Ukraine are proud of being citizens of their country, while in Kazakhstan a total of 68.2 per cent of those polled gave a positive answer to this question, in Russia – 66.5 per cent, in Poland – 61.9 per cent. A total of 13.5 per cent of Ukrainian students are not proud of being citizens of their country while in Russia this number is 12.1 per cent, in Poland – 10.5 per cent, in Kazakhstan - 9.1 per cent.

The chairman of the Ukrainian parliament’s sub-committee for youth policy, family and childhood, Kateryna Lukyanova: “To change the situation, the attitude of politicians towards their works needs to be changed. They are the ones to blame for the people’s moods. Our attitude to each other and to our country expressed on TV talk-shows and interviews, our violent language bring to the minds of ordinary people an idea like: ‘Why do I need all this if those who are supposed to protect the country allow themselves to talk like this?’ “The state should become a state for every one of its citizens. Nothing special has to be done specifically for young people or for pensioners. Any separation into orange, blue, white or red leads to a split. But I believe that we have to unite rather than separate”.

Vadym Kolesnichenko, one of the deputy heads of the Party of Region’s parliamentary faction: “The drop in patriotism among young people is the result of the work of Mr Yushchenko. The orange clan killed history and patriotism in Ukraine. Today some political forces continue killing our history by organizing a campaign against celebrating the 9 May as Victory Day, thus calling all Soviet soldiers invaders. But children are very sensitive. For the last five years of re-writing history children realized one thing: the only heroes of World War II were members of the Bandera movement [the nationalist movement in Western Ukraine in 1940-50s]. There is a notion of double moral and double standards. When young people see monuments, when their grandparents who remember this war are still alive, but the government represented by the Ministry of Education teaches them otherwise, the children become very sensitive to betrayal and falsehood. They started realizing that being a patriot is not honourable. This is where anarchy in their minds came from, this is why they have no spirituality or ideals. The objective of this government is to restore these ideals. Moreover, when there are heroes are among us. And these heroes are not those who used to live in caches at the time of the war and were shooting in our soldiers backs. Now decades are needed to revive patriotism in Ukraine”.

The former Ukrainian Minister of Family, Youth and Sports (2005-06), Yuriy Pavlenko: “I do not think that the level of patriotism in Ukraine is low. If it is lower than in other countries, then I can say that you should not compare Ukraine and Poland, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Ukraine is a very young country, it is only 20 years old. Practically, only one generation grew up who were born in this country. The Poles, they had their country earlier, and Russia is the legal successor of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, much depends on what Ukraine as a country does to make its citizens feel trust in their

country in the sphere of propaganda, in the sphere of knowledge of history, in the sphere of believing in the chance of becoming successful on one's own territory, in one's own country. In Kazakhstan and Russia there is very strong propaganda aimed at reviving patriotism while in Ukraine we still continue discussing the issue "Does Ukraine exist or not?" Nevertheless, I do not see a problem with these figures, they will change from one generation to another, while Ukraine will stay forever".

The former Ukrainian Minister of Science and Education (2005-07), Stanislav Nikolayenko: "Our politicians have the same level of patriotism, if not lower. Our leaders do not like their country, and that is why young people have the same attitude. In order to have some changes, the country's leadership should not serve a small group of business tycoons who are hated by everyone, but their state. I recently met Turkish students. They actively discuss the issue of building a new channel in Istanbul. But what do they discuss here? The incomes of business tycoons are on the rise".

