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## **Interview of Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia Alexander Bastrykin to Rossiyskaya Gazeta**



### **The Head of the Investigative Committee - about the causes of violent crimes of teenagers**

**In recent years, cases of violent crimes committed by very young people - schoolchildren and students - have become more frequent. Among their victims are not only classmates, random passers-by, but even their loved ones. And the reasons for such acts, when the investigation begins to look into them, are often so insignificant that they cannot be logically explained.**

Let's discuss this dangerous situation with the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Russia, Alexander Bastrykin.

**Alexander Ivanovich, where, in your opinion, are the roots of this problem?**

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**Alexander Bastrykin:** There are several aspects to this problem. First of all, what ideals and values we instill in our children.

But, unfortunately, we have to admit that not only we ourselves, but also everything around us is involved in this process. Due to the high level of economic and technological development, children draw information from outside, which has a very destructive effect on them. And this is a global problem that is noted at the highest level, in the National Security Strategy, approved by the head of state. It says that the basic moral and cultural norms, the institution of marriage and family values are under destructive influence. Freedom of the individual is being absolutized; permissiveness, immorality and selfishness are being promoted; drugs are being legalized in some countries. A cult of violence, consumption and pleasure is inculcated, and communities that deny the natural continuation of life are formed. Problems of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations also generate enmity and hatred, becoming a subject of geopolitical games and speculation.

**There was a wild case in Smolensk region. A 14-year-old schoolgirl, who was prevented by her mother and stepfather from taking her boy for a midnight walk, decided to deal with her relatives by instigating her acquaintance. They stabbed her mother and stepfather while they were asleep. How can this be explained?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** We face a blurring and changing of moral values, ideals and guidelines alien to us, the desire of young people to get rich by any means or to get what they want.

This is a case where a certain absoluteness of individual freedom is opposed to other, equally important values, such as human life.

The example in Smolensk region is not the only one. For example, in Lipetsk region a minor was convicted who also incited a young man to commit an assault on her father and his spouse.

In St. Petersburg, a young man, tired of his parents' hyperprotection, opened fire on them with a shotgun.

In Volgograd Region, a criminal case was investigated against a teenager who tried to sell drugs for mercenary motives, wanting to make his own money.

In Voronezh Region, there was a case where a minor also had financial difficulties and attempted to sell drugs.

The danger is that all this becomes the norm for young people. Thus, we are facing a revision of the basic norms of morality, psychological manipulation. All this causes damage to human moral health, encourages destructive behavior, and creates conditions for the self-destruction of society. The gap between generations is significantly widening.

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And this is fertile ground for nationalism, xenophobia, religious extremism and terrorism.

The issue of educating young people is an important factor in the internal security of the country. If we don't educate them, others will.

## **Percentage of someone else's life**

**The cases you described are terrible. But in general, what scale of juvenile delinquency are we talking about?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** Since 2013, there has been a decline in the number of criminal cases involving crimes committed by juveniles, but the 2020 with 8,804 investigated criminal cases showed a slight increase compared to 2019.

In the first 11 months of this year, 7,761 criminal cases involving crimes committed by minors have been sent to court.

Almost half of these crimes were committed as part of a group, and more than 200 minors were involved in committing crimes by adults.

In the structure of juvenile crime, the overwhelming majority are socially dangerous acts related to theft - 56.8 percent. 11.9 percent were drug-related crimes, 9.2 percent were motor vehicle thefts, 3.5 percent were rapes and violent acts of a sexual nature, and 1.6 percent were murders and infliction of grave harm to health resulting in the death of the victim.

In order to understand the scale of the problem, we must also add such cases where children are under the age of criminal responsibility at the time of the crime, and there are more than 3,000 of them, and this is also a big problem.

If we analyze the data on the number of persons per 100,000 population against whom cases were sent to court, the most criminal regions today are the republics of Buryatia, Tyva, Zabaykalsky Territory, Kurgan, Magadan, Novgorod and Sakhalin Regions.

## **Imported Anger**

**From your point of view, do the negative attitudes that attract young people form spontaneously, by themselves? Or are there still those who benefit from the promotion of such a "product" in our environment?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** This is a very good question. I share the position that such a "product" is part of the hybrid warfare waged against Russia by certain Western institutions.

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By focusing on hitting young people, they understand perfectly well how they can destabilize the situation in our country. It is no secret that such methods are used in relation to other states, and many experts before me have already touched on this topic.

Using digital technology, the resource of the media, and popular Internet services, on the one hand they discredit Russia on the international stage, and on the other, they strike at us from within. And we must act quickly and systematically to respond to these challenges.

**Let's be more specific about what actions we are talking about, shall we?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** If we do not take into account the actions of diplomats and politicians, it is the production of cultural and mass production of a certain orientation.

Western cinema and the producers of computer games that attract young people are permeated by a desire to portray our country in a negative light. As we know, their characters with Russian surnames and obviously exaggerated personalities are often the antagonists of various works and computer games.

The logic of confronting, as they put it, the "Russian threat" is "sewn" into the plot of many very popular and talented works, even of the fantasy genre, which makes them also a latent weapon of propaganda.

If we talk about the values that are emphasized by many foreign films consumed by our youth, they are also quite simple - the right of the strong, selfishness, violence and even murder, committed ostensibly for the greater good, are often encouraged.

We are confronted with the imposition of alien values and ideals on our younger generation. The National Security Strategy determines that information and psychological diversions and the "Westernization" of culture increase the threat of the Russian Federation losing its cultural sovereignty.

In continuation of this, we are faced with attempts to falsify Russian and world history, distort the historical truth and destroy the historical memory. Thus, a completely different worldview is being formed, which hinders the development of the individual and, as a consequence, the loss of the moral health of society.

**It turns out that such "soft power" can and has already led to serious consequences in our country...**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** Quite right. Gradually there are those who are ready for more active and even criminal actions.

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We see attacks on educational institutions in Kazan, Perm, and the Moscow region, as well as in other regions. In Khabarovsk schoolgirls aged 16 and 14 beat an elderly man to death. There are many examples of youth involvement in the financing of terrorism.

Recently, the Security Council discussed the continuing threats posed by the activities of illegal groups on the Internet to radicalize adolescents and young people and lead them to engage in the use of illegal substances and to participate in extremist activities. This, too, is part of the very hybrid warfare being waged against our citizens.

So far, this trend has not crossed a critical line, but we see that there is a problem, and it must be solved quickly. There is no time to delay. And here we should not talk about bans, but about offering young people something that will really interest, motivate and move them forward.

## **Not to punish, but to give the right to choose**

**If these are not bans and additional punishments, what specific actions are we talking about?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** Clear coordinated action by authorities and law enforcement agencies is needed at all levels.

We need an effective youth policy that applies to all young people. At the same time, I would like to note that certain specialized agencies are already doing the appropriate work, and it is yielding results.

As an example, uniting different structures and agencies, is set by the project "Without Statute of Limitations", which includes youth events and competitions, conferences, forums and events, search work and much more.

This contributes to the preservation of historical memory about the victims of war crimes of the Nazis and their accomplices during the Great Patriotic War, the establishment of the circumstances of newly discovered crimes against the civilian population. This is a good foundation, and it needs to be developed.

And our media need to show these children and young people more actively and cover their work, scientific and historical research, and good deeds.

I still don't understand why our media repeatedly replicate information about this or that crime committed by a teenager, but shy away from telling good things about our children, who become real heroes of their time or do good.

**How would you assess the threats and problems that it is important to see now?**

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**Alexander Bastrykin:** We all understand that our younger generation is the foundation for the further development of the state and the support which is essential for the fate of the entire country. Therefore, the formation of such a solid foundation is a strategically important task. But what are we facing lately?

Some members of our youth no longer think in the same categories that have been valuable for many generations. Our young people, falling under the influence of negative trends, including pro-Western ones, lose their national identity, but what is even worse, they begin to use drugs, join illegal groups, and commit crimes.

**Your agency not only investigates crimes, but is also directly involved in the education of the younger generation, isn't it?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** We do pay a lot of attention to the education of young people. In practice, such work has long been successfully carried out. But additional normative regulation is needed to develop it.

That is why a draft law amending the federal law "On the Investigative Committee of Russia" in this part has recently been submitted for consideration to the State Duma. It assumes the consolidation of legal foundations for the organization of educational, psychological, cultural and educational work, the development of physical culture and sports, and effective psychological monitoring in the system of the Investigative Committee.

All of this will significantly increase the human resources capacity of the department and will contribute to the development of professional and moral qualities of employees and students.

Let me remind you that now the Investigative Committee has two academies, a number of their branches, four cadet corps, and a boarding house for female students.

In addition to studying basic and special disciplines, our guys find free time to help veterans. Even at their young age, they note that for them communication with the older generation is an incentive not only for their future professional development, but also for their development as a person.

In addition, they regularly participate in patriotic actions, search events, clean up cultural sites and monuments to those who died in the war, speak at conferences, and study history.

All this certainly gives a great positive impetus to the formation of their system of values, moral guidelines, and we will continue to work in this direction.

It is important to instill in the younger generation a sense of responsibility and civic duty, and it is possible to raise our children honest and courageous only by the example of the lives of real heroes of the Fatherland.

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## **Cadets Kutuzov, Lermontov and Rachmaninov**

**Does this explain why the UK of Russia is so active in developing cadet training?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** The history of cadet education in Russia is a worthy example of the upbringing of the younger generation. It lays the seedlings of citizenship, patriotism, boundless love for their Motherland, which in the future can be embodied in principled, honest and high-quality service to the Fatherland.

Throughout the more than 300-year history of the cadets, who were initiated by Peter the Great, the students of the schools have been the blossom of the nation. They were the glory and pride of the state, brightly manifested themselves not only in the military art, but also in culture, science and public life.

Field Marshals Kutuzov and Rumyantsev, Generals Brusilov and Karbyshev, Admirals Nakhimov and Kornilov, poets Lermontov and Tyutchev, composers Rimsky-Korsakov and Rachmaninov, painters Vereshchagin and Bogolyubov, writers Radishchev and Kuprin, scientists Yablochkov and Mosin - this is far from a complete list of graduates of the cadet schools.

These are good traditions that must be continued. If we carry out reforms in education, science, culture, religion, and language without reference to the experience of previous generations, it will lead to an increasing separation and polarization of national societies, undermining the foundations of cultural sovereignty, political stability, and statehood.

We must remember about the protection of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, culture and historical memory, and organize the educational process with this aspect in mind.

**Then tell us in detail how education and training process is organized in the cadet corps of the Investigative Committee?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** At present we are in charge of Alexander Nevsky Cadet Corps in Moscow, St. Petersburg Cadet Corps, Volgograd F.F. Slipchenko Cadet Corps, Sevastopol V.I. Istomin Cadet Corps, Boarding School for girls in the Northern capital, Moscow and St. Petersburg Academies and their five branches in Yekaterinburg, Khabarovsk, Rostov-on-Don, Novosibirsk and Nizhny Novgorod.

I would like to emphasize that we are actively supporting orphans and children left without parental care, also in terms of receiving a quality education.

For example, quotas are established for such children in admission to educational institutions of higher education. For example, in 2020-2021 the Academy of the Investigative Committee ensured the enrollment of 40 percent of the children of this category, the cadet corps of the Investigative

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Committee of Russia - 50 percent.

In cadet corps increased attention is paid to issues of patriotic and moral education of students, early career guidance is organized, additional educational programs are created.

These educational institutions fully meet all the requirements of our time. They are equipped with modern office equipment, computer classes, libraries, sports and gyms. They are taught by creative teams of teachers whose main task is to prepare cadets for responsible public service.

## **Why an investigator would go to a conservatory?**

**In addition to cadets, you have the youngest law enforcement agency by age. How do you educate investigators starting their careers?**

**Alexander Bastrykin:** The educational system in the Investigative Committee is directly related to the process of education.

In order to educate highly moral and spiritually developed specialists, cooperation agreements have been signed with the Academy of Military Sciences, the Writers' Union, the Mariinsky and Maly Theaters, the Moscow Conservatory, the Russian Judo Federation, the all-Russian educational organization Russian Knowledge Society, as well as an agreement with the Russian Defense Ministry (for training personnel for military investigative agencies) for training in investigative work.

Attention and respect for people, honesty and integrity in service, initiative and perseverance - these are the parameters that are incorporated in all of our pupils.

After all, citizenship and patriotism, the intellectual and spiritual potential of the younger generation, and thus the future of Russia, depend largely on moral and willful qualities.

It should also be noted that in November 2020 the Investigative Committee of Russia approved the Concept of continuous departmental education for the period from 2021 to 2025. It pays special attention to the use of practice-oriented methods in the educational process.

This way, we provide training for professional staff. I am sure that with this approach, cadet class graduates will be a personnel reserve of the investigative authorities of the Investigative Committee of Russia, and will serve honestly and with dignity for the benefit of the Fatherland.

All this allows to realize one of the strategic goals of the agency - to bring up in one person a professional and a decent man in the spirit of citizenship and patriotism.



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