



UKRAINE: FROM CHRISTIANITY TO SATANISM—PART 1

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I am Ksenia Golub, a Russian journalist, currently living in Belgrade for three years. But my ties to Serbia go back a long way—I first came to the Balkans in 2009 to shoot a documentary. In this article, I want to share my reflections on the background of the current situation in Ukraine. And in this article, I act both as an eyewitness, as I have repeatedly been in the Donbass for a long time, and as an expert—I am a certified specialist in religion.

The processes of transformation of Ukrainian society, which resulted in a special military operation to denazify this once brotherly country of Russia, began long before the coup d'état took place there. The mental revolution took place much earlier.

I can judge this from my trips back in the early 2000s, to my relatives in Donbass. My relatives lived in Gorlovka, Donetsk, Severodonetsk, and Dokuchayevsk—right on line of fire, where they had been since 2014.

Even during those trips, I encountered fits of anti-Russian rage among representatives of central and especially western Ukraine. "Moskals," as the Russians were derogatorily called, were blamed for all of the country's problems. These people always saw the Kremlin's interference in even the smallest matters. It got to be ridiculous—when Putin was blamed for the problem of poor maintenance of property and backyards. Or when the price of Ukrainian-made food rose.

More than once, I faced open accusations and insults when "real Ukrainians" (residents of Donbass have never been considered such in this country) found out that I was from Russia or heard my Russian speech.

So based on my personal experience I can openly state—the problem of hatred towards everything Russian in this state has deep roots. But in this article, I want to draw attention to another aspect of the problem.

The Emergence of Sects in Ukraine

We all know very well that religion has a huge role in the development of society—we see evidence of this in history. Thanks to Orthodoxy, Russia has turned from a principality into a great empire, while its

territory has preserved the various religions of its peoples—from Islam to Lamaism. But it is this Christian faith which was able to unite the people around itself, because it is based on the principle of unity, which is very suitable for the Slavic mentality.

That is why the main anti-Russian ideologist of the United States, Zbigniew Brzezinski called Orthodoxy the main enemy of America.

Ukraine has always been an Orthodox country. Of course, the percentage of Greek Catholics in its western part was quite high, but the country had no more than 4 million adherents of the western branch of Christianity. Most of its residents belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

We all know the phrase: "If you want power, create your own religion." The fight against Orthodoxy in Ukraine began even earlier than the moment it seceded from the Soviet Union in 1991. Even then, in the late 1980s, representatives of various pseudo-Christian sects, which were closely connected with the Western special services, began to infiltrate the republic.

The word "sect" means to separate or cut off from something. In this case we are talking about the cutting off of believers from the main religion.

In the 2000s, the situation with the activity of various religious and occult organizations in Ukraine reached unbelievable problems. They wrote about it and spoke about it from the rostrum, but their activities remained permissible.

In 2007, Bishop Antony of Boryspil, vicar of the Kiev Metropolitan Church, said that dangerous sects were operating in Ukraine and that their ideology was capable of causing considerable damage to the mental health of the people. An article about this was published in the weekly *Dzerkalo Tyzhnya*.

In particular, answering the question of what sects in Ukraine can be called the most influential and widespread, the Bishop said: "In the context of our conversation, the word 'influential' is identical to the word 'dangerous'. In brief, we would have to name the Charismatics (Neo-Pentecostals, the most prominent organization, the Embassy of God), Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Scientology, the Krishna Consciousness Society, White Lotus, and the Bogorodichny Center. According to the bishop,

these are the most dangerous organizations, based on the level of harm caused to the individual.

In 2009 the Ukrainian portal Segodnya.life also published an article on this topic. I will quote part of it.

"Sectologists and psychologists are sounding the alarm: religious organizations, which 'official churches' call sects, are developing at a huge pace, with a large influx of neophytes into their ranks expected during the crisis. Recently in Ukraine, several people tried to create a cell of the so-called Islamist sect, which is banned in many countries, but we prevented it," says SBU spokeswoman Marina Ostapenko. According to her, in the scale and destructiveness the lead is still held by the notorious 'White Brotherhood,' which was active in the mid-1990s," the article said.

Let me remind you of what this association is all about. It was founded in 1990-1991 in Kiev by Yuri Krivonogov and Marina Tsvigun. Later he took the ritual name Yoann Swami (Swami John [the Baptist]) and Tsvigun the name Mary Devi Christos, declaring herself to be the Virgin Mary, the living embodiment of Christ, his mother and bride at the same time.

In 1993 this scandalous sect took over the Orthodox St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev. The adherents of the White Brotherhood were waiting for the end of the world and were going to perform a last prayer service in the church. Only the intervention of the riot police helped to free the cathedral. The sect organizers were arrested, but were soon released.

The lifestyle of the sectarians was strict: it was forbidden to eat animal food, make phone calls, or watch TV. A person who joined the White Brotherhood had to break off relations with his family, friends, and colleagues. The members of the Brotherhood lived 20-30 people in one apartment and slept no more than four hours a day. Yuri Krivonogov and Marina Tsvigun promoted self-sacrifice. They said that the adherents had to endure pain, torture, and death. The founders themselves pledged that they would also die, but they would be the last to die. In three days, they would be resurrected, and a very different life would begin on earth.

In Russia, this sect was declared extremist, and its activities on the territory of the state were banned. But in Ukraine it continued to exist, even right now.

The Jehovah Witnesses were also very active; they were constantly walking the streets, distributing

their "Watchtower" magazines, making door-to-door visits. And it sometimes came to the point of absurdity, when any stranger who rang the doorbell would face aggression from the apartment-owner, who saw a sectarian in everyone.

In Donetsk itself, "houses of prayer" of these organizations could be readily seen during walks around the city. In conversations with local priests, the depth of the problem was even more vivid. They described situations of complete zombification of former Orthodox believers, who even left their families, forgetting about their children and parents, and who signed over their apartments and other property to the sects.

It is not surprising that we, the future religious studies majors, devoted so much attention to events in neighboring countries during our study at the Department of Theology.

To be continued...

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Featured: "The Ghost of a Flea," by William Blake; painted ca. 1819-1820.

