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Blessing Murders

Armed Chaplains in the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Previous ethnical conflicts in different countries witness to a tremendous role which propaganda plays in incitement of the ethnic hatred. For instance, the administration and journalists of *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*, which openly incited to ‘massacre inkotanyi [the Hutu rebels] all over the country’ as they ‘have been waging war against us since 1990’, were put on trial for organisation of mass ethnic cleansings in Rwanda in 1994¹. The full-scale role of the Ukrainian mass media in extermination of ‘separatists’ in the South-East of Ukraine which, as well as in Rwanda, led to death of thousands of civilians is still to be estimated. However, it is important to realize that it was not only journalists but also members of religious organisations who acted as ‘hatred promoters’ before and throughout the armed conflict in Ukraine. The latter have had an especially significant part because as sociologists from Razumkova Centre (in Kiev) stated in spring 2014, ‘the level of religiousness in the Ukrainian society remains high, as for today, 76% of Ukrainian call themselves faithful’². As of January 1, 2014, the register of the Ministry for Ethnic and Religious Affairs totalled 33.993 religious organisations (congregations), including 12,673 (37,28%) congregations of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 4651 (13,68%) congregations of non-canonical Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchy established in 1992 with the support of the authorities, 3763 (11,07%) congregations of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, 2562 (7,54%) congregations of the Ukrainian Union of Joined Evangelical Christian Baptists, 1533 (4,51%) congregations of the Ukrainian Union of Christians of the Evangelical Faith (Pentecostalism) etc.³

Non-canonical Orthodox Denominations

Patriarch Philarat (Denisenko), the Head of the Kiev Patriarchy, supported the ‘anti-terror operation’ (the ‘ATO’) declared by the Ukrainian authorities on April 7, 2014 and urged them for ‘decisiveness’. ‘The Church blesses defence of our Motherland [supporters of federalisation were declared to be pro-Russian separatists]. And we urge our government to become more decisive in this matter. It is high time to show our might and our possibilities. Shall the necessity arise, we are ready to protect ourselves with arms,’ Philaret told *Pryaty Kanal* Ukrainian TV-Channel in the interview broadcasted on April 20, 2014⁴. He also mentioned several practical measures taken by his religious organisation in the interview which had been published several days before that, saying ‘the Church should inspire people and assist our army. That is why bishops and priests of the Kiev Patriarchy are now in army units in the Donetsk, Kherson, Sumy and other Regions. What are they doing there?.. They encourage soldiers.’⁵ Then the escalation of the conflict initiated by the Ukrainian Army followed: the armed forces stormed Kramatorsk on May 2, tried to take Mariupol under control, when 7-9 people were killed and several dozens were wounded on May 9, combatants of the Dnepr-1 battalion shot down civilians in the city of Krasnoarmeysk in the Donetsk Region on May 11,⁶ etc.

¹ *Бабицкий Андрей*. Диктор зло // Esquire Russia. 04.04.2014. URL: <https://esquire.ru/rwanda>

² Україна-2014: суспільно-політичний конфлікт і Церква. Київ, 2014. С. 15. Доклад размещен на сайте Центр Разумкова, URL: http://www.razumkov.org.ua/upload/1400155420_file.pdf

³ Звіт про мережу церков і релігійних організацій в Україні станом на 01.01.2014 року (Форма 1) // Релігійно-інформаційна служба України. 04.04.2014. URL: <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resourses/statistics/ukr2014/55893/>

⁴ Патріарх Філарет - інтерв'ю 5 каналу - 20.04.2014 // Канал пользователя «5 канал» на Youtube. 21.04.2014. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPdZMp5yIxk>

⁵ Патріарх Філарет: «Ніяка Росія Україну не перемаже!» / Бесіду провів *Валентин Торба* // Золотые страницы Украины. Луганщина. 19.04.2014. URL: <http://goldpages.com.ua/person/5768>

⁶ Украинский кризис: хроника противостояния на юго-востоке в мае 2014 г. // РИА Новости. 01.06.2014. URL: <http://ria.ru/spravka/20140430/1005505016.html>

In October 2014, Philaret announced that ‘the Kiev Patriarchy is sending a priest to every army unit, to every volunteer battalion who will raise spirits of the soldiers’⁷. In December, he revealed the number of priests who were serving in army units in the ‘anti-terror operation’ region: ‘About 15 chaplains have been officially sent the Armed Forces General Headquarters. On the whole, there are about 40 people or, probably, more’⁸. It is indicative that 40 military chaplains form the whole number the Kiev Patriarchy had had by the beginning of 2014, in other words, they all had been sent to the ‘anti-terror operation’ region ‘to raise spirits’ of soldiers. At the same time, only one of 280 military chaplains of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox church was allowed to serve in the army⁹. At all appearances, the sermon of the canonical Church about the necessity to put down contradiction and condemn of violence was not appreciated by the military and administrative authorities of Ukraine who counted on coercive suppression of the dissenting part of the society. ‘I tell the warriors what they should know, I say that their war is not a sin,’ Konstantin Kholodeev, a priest of the Kiev Patriarchy, told Censor.net web site in November 2014. ‘A lot of them doubted if they acted right by fighting there. They asked what the Church thought about it, if it was a sin to fight and kill’¹⁰.

It should also be mentioned that in April 2015, Philaret awarded Ruslan Onishchenko, the Chief officer of Tornado special company of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with a church medal ‘For victimhood and love to Ukraine’¹¹, and two months later Onishchenko and several his soldiers were arrested on a charge of setting a criminal band on the base of his unit which committed rapes, tortures and abduction of civilians in the Luhansk Region¹².

Members of little known non-canonical Ukrainian Church, the so-called Reformist Orthodox Church of Jesus Christ, serve in a Right Sector battalion in Pesky. It is headed by Sergey Zhuravlev, who in 1991-1996 was a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church (in the Ryazan and Bryansk Region) but was later forbidden to serve because of his tight relations with Pentecostalists. In 2001, Zhuravlev joined the Embassy of God charismatic Ukrainian Church of Sunday Adelaja and in 2003 he established his own religious organisation with congregations in Russia and Ukraine, also known as Brotherhood of Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox Christians of Evangelical Faith of Jesus Christ¹³. ‘Vladimir Rizmnik and Aleksandr Golovichenko are priests of the Lviv Church of Orthodox Reformers who became military chaplains on their own will. For some time, they have been living in the hot spot of Pesky in Eastern Ukraine where thunder of explosions can be regularly heard, a journalist who visited the Donetsk Region this April reports on *Delfi* Latvian web site. ‘The chaplains took off their body armours on a base of the Right Sector volunteers and sat at the table.’ The journalist reports, ‘Priest Aleksandr comes from Crimea, he lived in Russia. When the war started, he returned to his native country with his wife.’ The journalist describes an indicative gesture of the priest at the meal: ‘One of the serviceman tried to open a can of candied milk but the iron ring broke off, and then priest Aleksandr took a stabber which is usually fixed on a Kalashnikov sub-machine from his cassock.

⁷ Усі військові підрозділи в зоні АТО отримують капеланів // Укринформ. 13.10.2014. URL: http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/news/usi_viyskovi_pidrozdili_v_zoni_ato_otrimayut_kapelaniv_1980803

⁸ Филарет: в зоне АТО служат 40 священников УПЦ КП, но они не воюют // Украинская правда. 29.12.2014. URL: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/12/29/7053662/>

⁹ Мальцев Владислав. Украинский капеллан на реках Вавилонских // НГ-Религии. 03.12.2014.

¹⁰ *Скорород Ольга*. Військовий капелан-волонтер Костянтин Холодов: «Я говорю воякам те, що вони повинні чути постійно: їхня війна не є гріхом» // Цензор.Нет. 08.11.2014. URL: http://censor.net.ua/resonance/310817/vyiskoviyi_kapelan_kostyantyn_holodov_ya_govoryu_voyakam_te_scho_von_i_povinn_chuti_postyino_hnya_vyina

¹¹ Патріарх Філарет нагородив комбата-добровольця медаллю (ФОТО) // Едність.інфо. 12.04.2015. URL: <http://www.ednist.info/news/13136>

¹² Задержан командир и еще 7 бойцов роты «Торнадо», которые совершали преступления на Луганщине // Украинские национальные новости. 17.06.2015. URL: <http://www.unn.com.ua/ru/news/1474532-zatrimano-komandira-ta-sche-7-biytsiv-roti-tornado-yaki-chinili-zlochiny-na-luganshini>

¹³ Реформаторская Православная Церковь Христа Спасителя // Иерархия православных церквей. URL: <http://www.hierarchy.religare.ru/h-orthod-ukrref.html> Архиепископ Сергей Журавлев (РПЦХС и УРПЦ) // Блог Сергея Журавлева. URL: <http://archbishopsergeyzhuravlev.blogspot.ru/>

He made a hole in the lid with just one hit.¹⁴ Carrying of a stabber and its open demonstration is typical for people mad about violence.

Greek Catholics

Archimandrite Luca (Vinarchuk), Deputy Chairman of the Synod Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church for Cooperation with Armed Forces and Other Armed Units of Ukraine reported in December 2014 that 'several dozens of Greek Catholic are serving in the Armed Forces units and the National Guard.'¹⁵ At the same time, the official data provided by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) are not so impressive, saying that there are only 10-15 priests¹⁶. The contradiction is solved simply. 'Some chaplains represent official chaplain services of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchy, while some represent our Department independently from these official services,' said UGCC priest Nikolay Medinsky, Head of the Chaplain Service of the *Right Sector* Volunteer Ukrainian Corpus at a press-conference on February 10¹⁷. Twenty chaplains, mostly belonging to the UGCC, have been registered in its battalions, which do not subordinate to the state force ministries yet¹⁸. UGCC priest Petr Buryak, the Chief Chaplain of the 5th separate battalion of the *Right Sector* acting in the town of Pesky near the Donetsk Airport, says in an interview that the *Right Sector* was established in November 2013 on the basis of *Stepan Bandera Trident* nationalistic organisation which had existed for already 20 years and initially had ideological relation with the UGCC. Buryak had served in the *Trident* as a priest since 1994 and he has become its chief chaplain since 2002. In 2013, he has become the chief chaplain of the *Right Sector*¹⁹.

In their public speeches related to the right-wing radicals, Greek Catholic priests trigger nationalists instincts of the West Ukraine residents and their fear for 'aliens' who will come to occupy their houses, land etc. A sermon, delivered during the Maidan events in December 2013 by Mikhail Arsenich, archpriest of one of the UGCC churches in the Ivano-Frankovsk Region, who was captured by Donetsk rebels near Volnovakha among other Ukrainian servicemen, is rather indicative²⁰. 'Would fighters of the Ukrainian Liberation Army tolerate Tabachnikovs and Yanukoviches today?!,' Arsenich said while wearing priest's cassock. 'The only effective method is to kill officials! We cannot talk to the enemies other language but the language of bullets! Take weapon and left fears behind you!.. We want to be sure that neither a Chinese negro, nor a Jew, nor a Russian will come tomorrow to take my house! We are the only ones responsible for how strong our arm will be fighting with the enemy and if our eye will take at aim today's authorities. Let the rifle butt make our hand stronger! Glory to Ukraine!²¹ Nikolay Medinsky, a UGCC priest, echoed him, 'They need our land! They want us to give them our land! But they won't get it, they will lie in our land. Yes, we must love our enemies but our Ukrainian land has always had, has and will have for our enemies. It takes any occupant with love and it will take all

¹⁴ Морозовас Артурас. Сюрреализм Восточной Украины: мы знали правила жизни в России // Delfi. 11.04.2015. URL: <http://ru.delfi.lt/news/live/syurrealizm-vostochnoj-ukrainy-my-znali-pravila-zhizni-v-rossii.d?id=67678560>

¹⁵ Мальцев Владислав. Украинский капеллан на реках Вавилонских // НГ-Религии. 03.12.2014.

¹⁶ Мальцев Владислав. Пастыри с мечом наперевес // НГ-Религии. 18.02.2015; Garasymiw Krystyna. Front jest miejscem, gdzie człowiek odczuwa potrzebę obecności Pana Boga // Niedziela.pl. 21.05.2015. URL: <http://www.niedziela.pl/artykul/15903/Front-jest-miejscem-gdzie-czlowiek>

¹⁷ Днепр Post 10 02 2015 13 00 // Канал пользователя «DNEPR POST» на Youtube. 10.02.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtyGc-VnkaE>

¹⁸ Богуцька Софія. Двадцять священників об'єдналися в окрему капеланську службу Добровольчого українського корпусу «Правий сектор» // Релігійно-інформаційна служба України. 19.02.2015. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/all_news/community/faith_and_weapon/59101/

¹⁹ Горская Дария. Священник Петр Бурак: «В минуты, когда жизнь висит на волоске, даже закоренелый атеист начинает молиться» // Факты и комментарии. 19.02.2015.

²⁰ На Прикарпатье вернулся священник, который три недели пробыл в плену - Чрезвычайные новости, 16.09 // Канал пользователя «Надзвичайні новини. ICTV» на Youtube. 16.09.2014. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LNi-gDN7IU>

²¹ Отець Арсенич Палка промова до пастви // Канал пользователя «Погляд Карпати» на Youtube. 06.12.2013. URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lAHvrY0OpQ>

Russian occupants. Dozens of enemies will die for each our soldier²². A UGCC priest Petr Buryak describes self-defence forces of Donetsk as 'mortal enemies' at a press-conference of the chaplain service in Dnepropetrovsk on February 10. 'Asian Horde has come... to destroy us'²³. The declaration of Greek Catholic chaplains about a threat to the Ukrainian civilians from 'Chinese negroes', 'Jews' and 'the Horde' (nomad Mongols) obviously repeat well-known propaganda samples of the Third Reich about 'bolshevist Mongol Hordes) and arouse in Ukrainian soldiers fear and hatred towards Donetsk self-defence forces, protecting their lives. It should be noted that alike racist propaganda echoing the Nazi one is also used by high-ranked Ukrainian civil and military chiefs, repeating unconfirmed information that the Donetsk self-defence forces consist, or even mostly consist, of 'Asian militants' or Buryats (a nomad people from the east of Russia)²⁴.

In the interview to *Fakty y Kommentary* Ukrainian newspaper Burak said in March that he 'has repeatedly been in Pesky, served there a liturgy, blessed the weapon for battles'²⁵. According to another his interview, he is also armed and is ready to use his arm (though it is forbidden by the canons of the Eastern Orthodox Church). 'I only had a chance to shot at trainings. I have grenades and a Mukha [RPG-18 tank grenade launcher]. In case of an attack or other necessity or if, Lord forbid, somebody in the unit would be killed or injured and could not go on fighting, then I am trained for fighting and I can take arms to save lives of my neighbours.'²⁶ Medinsky said the same at a press-conference in Dnepropetrovsk, 'Our chaplains continue the traditions of the Ukrainian people. When the Horde came to the Ukrainian cloisters, monks went out of them with sabres under cassocks. When our chaplains have to protect their parishioners, they protect them... How? In the left hand a chaplain holds the most powerful weapon in the world, which is a sword of faith, prayer and hope. And sometimes they have to take a two-handed sword'²⁷. Medinsky is also known by his nickname 'Zheleznyak' taken after a Cossack Chief who initiated a massacre of Jews and Polishes in Uman in 1768.

Protestants

However, chaplains of Protestant churches are the most common in the 'anti-terror operation' region. 'As for the moment, there are two battalions, our First one and simply the Battalion of military chaplains. It is created by Pentecostals separately from us,' Ihor Oklik, the Chief of the First battalion of military chaplains of Skiniya (Tabernacle) Pentecostal Church in Kiev (also known as Storm) in the interview to Ukrainian journalists in December 2014. According to him, the formation of the battalion began in July 2014 from 'engaging pastors and Christians of the Evangelical Faith', and apart from them, the battalion also comprises chaplains of other Protestant Churches. 'The majority of them are Baptists, Pentecostals, Charismatics'²⁸. In another interview given in January 2015 Oklik said that the First battalion had already totalled 'about 40 chaplains'²⁹. As was shown, it equals the number of military

²² Священник УГКЦ Николай Зализняк на похоронах 11 09 2014 призывает убивать жителей Донбасса // Канал пользователя «Саныч Любознательный» на Youtube. 14.09.2014. URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjGLLiCuQLo>

²³ Днепр Post 10 02 2015 13 00 // Канал пользователя «DNEPR POST» на Youtube. 10.02.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtyGc-VnkaE>

²⁴ См., например: Управление информационной политики и по вопросам прессы. В Иловайск прибыли 600 боевых бурятов // Сайт Донецкой областной государственной администрации. 28.03.2015. URL: http://donoda.gov.ua/?lang=ru&sec=02.03.09&iface=Public&cmd=view&args=id:25472;tags%24_exclude:46 У Жолобка уничтожено около 2000 боевиков-азиатов // Пресса Украины. 05.02.2015. URL: <http://uapress.info/ru/news/show/60598>

²⁵ *Горская Дария*. Священник Петр Бурак: «В минуты, когда жизнь висит на волоске, даже закоренелый атеист начинает молиться» // Факты и комментарии. 19.02.2015.

²⁶ Капеллан «Правого сектора»: Резервы украинской нации неисчерпаемые // Северская правда. 23.03.2015. URL: <http://spravda.com/kapellan-pravogo-sektora-rezervy-ukrainskoj-nacii-neischerpaemye>

²⁷ Днепр Post 10 02 2015 13 00 // Канал пользователя «DNEPR POST» на Youtube. 10.02.2015. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtyGc-VnkaE>

²⁸ Каждый капеллан принял добровольное решение умереть. Игорь Шторм о Первом батальоне военных капелланов / Беседовала Татьяна Калениченко-Мухоморова // Религиозно-информационная служба Украины. 26.12.2014. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/expert_thought/interview/58613

²⁹ *Кухарчук Руслан*. Капелланы украинского фронта // ProChurch.info. 22.01.2015. URL: <http://prochurch.info/index.php/news/more/31736>

chaplains of the Kiev Patriarchy of UGCC for that moment. Nevertheless, there also was a separate battalion of military chaplains, which was mainly Protestant too. There is no information about the number of chaplains there, however it is unlikely to have just several men. A few Ukrainian Protestant Churches took part in formation of these military chaplains battalions serving in the military units on the front. 'This battalion was initiated by Oleg Khomenko, the leader of Med-Auto-Maidan, and Ihor Storm, chaplain of Skiniya Church,' the Facebook group of the First battalion of military chaplains reported in August 2014. 'the Battalion was supported by two churches of Novoye Pokoleniye (New Generation) Church in Kiev (the pastor of the first one is Sergey Oreshnik and Ihor Lemeshchuk heads the second one), and Spaseniya Church (Of Salvation) in Brovary, Vinogradnik (Vineyard) Church in Kiev and Slovo Zhizny (Word of Life) Church in Belaya Tserkov.³⁰ Then other churches joined to these religious organisations referring chiefly to the charismatic movement of Protestantism.

The interview published on December 24, 2014 at Censor.net mentions a participant of the First battalion of military chaplains 'Oleg Usatuk, a pastor of Protestant Kiev Church of Evangelical Christians' and names its Chief, Ihor, presumably, the mentioned above Ihor 'Storm'³¹. The Church meant is Bozhya Slava (God's Glory)³².

'Our partners are Golgofa (Calvary) Church, which is out of any unions, our friend, pastor Aleksey Satenko,' Ihor 'Storm', mentioned above, told the Religious Information Service of Ukraine on February 26, 2014³³.

The report on the web site of the mentioned above Skiniya Church published on December 31, 2014, says, 'This time, Vladimir Bevz, a military chaplain of Philadelphia Kiev Church, was on the front together with Skiniya pastors³⁴. He is mentioned on the web site of the Skiniya once again. 'On February 4, chaplains of Skiniya Vladimir Bragarnik, Konstantin Kuksa, Artem Babiychuk, Aleksandr Germash and Vladimir Bevz (Philadelphia Church) together with senior pastor Rustam Fatullaev served several masses and spoke to the military in the anti-terror operation region³⁵.

Facebook group of the First battalion of military chaplains published a report about a visit of members of the First battalion of military chaplains to the town of Pesky where the 5th separate battalion of the *Right Sector* is based on January 7: 'Thanks to everyone who took part in this trip: Novoye Pokoleniye Church (Belaya Tserkov), Golgofa Church, Church of Jesus Christ the Saviour (Ivano-Frankovsk)³⁶.

On January 25, ProChurch.info Protestant web site published an interview with members of the battalion who 'returned after serving for famous 'cyborgs' in the Donetsk Airport to Kiev. One of them is already mentioned Ihor 'Storm' and the other two called themselves 'Oleg Marinchenko (nicknamed Padre) who had served in church before the war as a deacon and assistant of priest in Dom Arkhitekтора (Architect's House) Church... and Valery Pedchenko (nicknamed Obolon) who was a deacon in Vozrozhdeniye (Renaissance) Church in Kiev and headed rehabilitative service, lives in Rovno and works in a new church now³⁷. The text commenting the video of Marnichenko's speech in Kiev, taped by his faith-followers on

³⁰ Сообщение в группе «Military Chaplain Battalion» в соцсети Facebook. 27.08.2014. URL: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=705023059592017&id=678838562210467

³¹ Кузьменко Евгений. Военный капеллан Олег Усатюк: «На войне неверующих нет. В окопе под обстрелом «Градов» молятся все» // Цензор.Нет. 24.12.2014. URL: http://censor.net.ua/resonance/316856/voennyi_kapellan_oleg_usatyuk_na_voyine_neveruyuschih_net_v_okope_pod_obstrelom_gradov_molyatsya_vse

³² [Наш пастор] // Сайт церкви «Божья слава». URL: <http://bozhaslava.org/o-nas/pastor>

³³ Каждый капеллан принял добровольное решение умереть. Игорь Шторм о Первом батальоне военных капелланов / Беседовала Татьяна Калениченко-Мухоморова // Религиозно-информационная служба Украины. 26.12.2014. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/expert_thought/interview/58613

³⁴ Мы – одна семья // Сайт церкви «Скиния». 31.12.2014. URL: <http://skinia.org.ua/chaplain/voennye-kapellany/ato/1529-2014-12-31-13-50-26.html>

³⁵ Победа придет только с Господом // Сайт церкви «Скиния». 05.02.2015. URL: <http://skinia.org.ua/chaplain/voennye-kapellany/ato/1547-2015-02-05-10-10-56.html>

³⁶ Сообщение в группе «Military Chaplain Battalion» в соцсети Facebook. 07.01.2015. URL: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=775284515899204&id=678838562210467

³⁷ Кухарчук Руслан. Капелланы украинского фронта // ProChurch.info. 22.01.2015. URL: <http://prochurch.info/index.php/news/more/31736>

November 9, 2014, reads, 'As the first chaplain, Oleg marnichenko was sent to one of the most active hot spots of the ATO, which is the Donetsk airport, to serve in the 79th separate air-mobile brigade. Dom Arkhitekтора's Church continues to pray for Oleg and his soldiers'.³⁸

On January 26, the Religious Information Service of Ukraine published an interview of chaplain Aleksandr Pastukh who was in a hospital in Dnepropetrovsk after having been wounded. He said, 'I'm from Odessa and serve in Christian Reformist Church of Glorification. I was not going to war but last August I realized that I had to go there. First, I went to Kiev where there is Battalion of military chaplains organisation. I brought all the necessary papers, passed an interview and was allowed to serve as a chaplain'.³⁹

Besides Novoye Pokoleniye Kiev Church mentioned by Ihor 'Storm', Dnepropetrovsk parishes of this religious organisation joined the battalion activity. They started a full-scale preparation of priests for serving in the hostility zone. 'First Ukrainian School of military chaplains opened near Dnepropetrovsk', RIA Novosty Ukraina news agency reported on February 16. RIA Novosty Ukraina Correspondent found out in the school that education here is arranged on the base of the Novoye Pokoleniye Ukrainian Christian Church (UCC). Its students are priests of various churches and confessions who will go through basics of psychology, tactic medicine, extreme driving, basics of firearms training and will train practical skills of acting in battle imitation. Ruslan, the Chief of the First Ukrainian battalion of military chaplains, nicknamed Ros, shared his experience with the students. 'The majority of our school students are ordinary parishioners,' says Andrey Tishchenko, the senior bishop of Novoye Pokoleniye UCC⁴⁰.

What is the reason for such notable presence of Protestant priests in the hostility zone? It is probably in the general idea of their sermons to the military. 'Unfortunately, people in our country do not understand properly, what commandment 'thou shalt not kill' means and why Christianity for some strange reason is thought to be a religion for the weak and the religion and religion of complete pacifism,' says pastor Artem who served in Ukrainian units in the town of Pesky in the interview broadcasted in December 2014 by Voyennoye Televidenye Ukrainy (Military Television of Ukraine). 'It's false, as the Bible shows that the God is militant, He has always protected His people⁴¹. 'A believer can shoot in his enemy. He can wound, maim, kill,' said Sergey Ponomarenko, an archpriest in a church of the Centre of Evangelical Churches of Ukraine, who became a combatant (not chaplain) of the Donbass battalion, in the city of Yagodin in October 2010⁴². He also refers to the Old Testament, 'There is a saying: to defeat an enemy... The Lord calls Himself Lord of Hosts.'⁴³ In December 2014, Ukrainian journalists reported (referring to him) about a Novoye Pokoleniye Pentecostal pastor in the city of Pershotravensk of the Dnepropetrovsk Region who also became a military paratrooper. 'Vyacheslav was sent to the 25th brigade of the Air Landing Troops, where according to his rank he became a Chief of operation platoon of self-propelled artillery subdivision. And then he moved to the 1st battalion of air infantry where he became a chief of grenade launch subdivision. Vyacheslav always tried to find a way... to preach about God actively in the Army... During his service chaplain did not come to the unit, so the priest partly fulfilled their functions: he listened to people, prayed about them... Vyacheslav believes this war to be a spiritual one [religiously motivated]. He knows that in Russia discrimination of Protestants have resumed

³⁸ Олег Маринченко, первый пастор-капеллан в ВСУ // Канал пользователя «Victor Titarchuk» на Youtube. 09.11.2014. URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8jVw-83nwo>

³⁹ «Хлопцы мне кричали: "Рассказывай нам истории, не молчи!"» – воспоминания капеллана о боях в Донецком аэропорту / Беседовала София Богуцкая // Религиозно-информационная служба Украины. 26.01.2015. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/expert_thought/interview/58908/

⁴⁰ Украинская школа военных капелланов. Курс выживания в экстремальных условиях // РИА Новости Украина. 16.02.2015. URL: <http://rian.com.ua/story/20150216/363557315.html>

⁴¹ Капелан Артем - душпастир повернувся з села Піски // Канал пользователя «Військове телебачення України» на Youtube. 24.12.2014. URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbZ_Jmsw4NA

⁴² «Верующему можно убивать». История пастора, который стал воином на Донбассе // Обозреватель. 30.10.2014. URL: <http://obozrevatel.com/interview/09731-veruyuschemu-mozhno-ubivat--istoriya-pastora-kotoryij-stal-voinom.htm>

⁴³ Там же. URL: <http://obozrevatel.com/interview/09731-veruyuschemu-mozhno-ubivat--istoriya-pastora-kotoryij-stal-voinom.htm?full=1>

[contradicts the reality]⁴⁴. And he preaches among the military about ‘a war against faith persecutors’.

It should be noted that the instances of protestant pastors who took arms to kill the rebels are not single at all and it is not condemned by the faith-followers. Oleg Usatuk, a pastor from the First battalion of military chaplains, said in December 2014, ‘When I was serving in Pesky in October, a soldier with a submachine gun came up to me and asked: ‘Which Church are you from?’ I answered that I am from the Kiev Church of Evangelical Christians. He said, ‘the thing is, that I am a priest too, I served in Luhansk. Separatists took my house and I brought my family to Kiev.’⁴⁵

He is likely to mean Sergey Reuta, who served in Dnepr-1 battalion and was killed on November 24, 2014 not far from Pesky near the Donetsk Airport. Vladimir Ivanov, a priest from Dnepropetrovsk, wrote in Facebook about his death, ‘Sergey Reuta has been a pastor of Zhivoye Slovo Church in Luhansk for many years.

Shortly before the invasion of the Russian militants this Church had finally bought out the long-expected building for its services. However, when the pro-Russian military aggression started in April in the East of Ukraine, pastor Reuta and four more men decided to become volunteers to protect the Ukrainian sovereignty and spiritual service among soldiers⁴⁶. Chaplain Nokilay Yaoshenko told journalists in the interview released by Fakty y Kommentary Ukrainian newspaper on April 7, ‘I arrived to our battalion as an anti-aircraft gunner but I also act as a military priest.’ The article is illustrated with a photo in which Yaroshenko puts his hand on an anti-air-craft gun. The chaplain also told what he tells soldiers as the nurse of souls. ‘For example, a soldier tells me, ‘I was in a close fight and killed a field engineers with a knife with my own hands. Now I’ve lost my sleep over it.’ Another soldier says, ‘I’m a machine-gunner, I killed many Russian soldiers in fighting. Though they are enemies, they are still people. How can I live with it?’ I explain to them that the Bible does not condemn those who fight for protection of their own country. Back to front, protection of your land is a pleasing God act⁴⁷. Once again, Vyacheslav Cerny, Sergey Reuta and members of his church, Nikolay Yaroshenko combined army service on the front (thus, killing people) and a religious preach. Meanwhile, the reason they give (the loss of the built house) is not closely enough for such radical breaking-off with the Christian canons, which forbid clergy to take weapon and kill people even at war.

‘I cannot announce his name but just in a meter from me a clergyman, a pastor, is, who protests my country today! He is serving now in intelligence service. Our country awarded him with an order for protecting the native land as a token of gratitude. It was given for the first 500 separatists whom my brother in Christ helped to destroy.’⁴⁸ These are words of Gennady Mokhnenko, a priest of Tesrkov Dobrykh Del (Church of Good Deeds) from Mariupol in October 2014. The leader of this religious organisation actively working with the drug-addicted and homeless teenagers considers it possible even for himself to kill people and even flies in the face with it. In November 2014, he answered the hosts question at ImpactTV Protestant Californian TV-channel, ‘If you had an opportunity today to press a button and kill Putin, would you use this opportunity?’ ‘I would. No doubt.’⁴⁹ ‘Will you take the arms if there is no other choice? And I will,’ he had previously said at Dva Portfelya (Two Suitcases) Ukrainian TV-show

⁴⁴ Вернер Нелли. Духовные войны // Диалог.ua. 23.12.2014. URL: <http://dialogs.org.ua/ru/periodic/page35536.html>

⁴⁵ Кузьменко Евгений. Военный капеллан Олег Усатюк: «На войне неверующих нет. В окопе под обстрелом «Градov» молятся все» // Цензор.Нет. 24.12.2014. URL: http://censor.net.ua/resonance/316856/voennyi_kapellan_oleg_usatyuk_na_voyine_neveruyuschih_net_v_okope_pod_obstrelom_gradov_molyatsya_vse

⁴⁶ Луганский пастор Сергей Реута стал добровольцем полка «Днепр» и погиб в бою под Донецком // Цензор.Нет. 25.11.2014. URL: http://censor.net.ua/news/313419/luganskiyi_pastor_sergeyi_reuta_stal_dobrovoltsem_polka_dnepr_i_pogib_v_boyu_pod_donetskom

⁴⁷ Осипчук Игорь. Капеллан Николай Ярошенко: «На Донбассе местные называли нас карателями, а потом отпускать не хотели» // Факты и комментарии. 07.08.2015.

⁴⁸ Протестантский пастор: «Путин превратил наши жизни в ад!» // SlavicSac.com. 10.10.2014. URL: <http://www.slavicsac.com/2014/10/10/mokhnenko/>

⁴⁹ Пастор Геннадий Мохненко: «Я готов ликвидировать Путина!» // SlavicSac.com. 07.11.2014. URL: <http://www.slavicsac.com/2014/11/07/mokhnenko-putin/>

of his faith-follower and added that ‘today, several pastors have solved this question, they divested the holy orders took sub machine guns and went to the front’⁵⁰. To confirm his words, Mokhnenko released snapshots on his pages in social networks where in October 2014 where he is wearing a body armour and a helmet with a sub machine gun⁵¹, a machine gun⁵² and a grenade launcher⁵³ surrounded by his under-age pupils as well as with various fire arms. At the beginning of 2015, the combatant pastor entered Inter-confessional Battalion of military chaplains (another name for the First Battalion of military chaplains described above⁵⁴), and confirmed it publishing his certificate in the Internet⁵⁵.

Participation of NATO Instructors

An outrageous moment is the role of military emissaries from the USA in training of these military chaplains. ‘On November 30-December 2, Dr. Naomi Paget came on a visit to Ukraine,’ the Religious Information Service of Ukraine reported on December 3, 2014. ‘She is a chaplain and a crisis interventionist for the FBI and certificated member of spiritual response and an operative member of the American Red Cross... On November 30 and December 1, Naomi held three meetings in Kiev organised by Novaya Zhizn (New Life) and pastor Anatoly Kaluzhny and supported by the Social Service and Charity Department of the UOC of the Kiev Patriarchy’⁵⁶. Video of the lecture was published on the same day in the Novaya Zhizn Church group in Facebook where it was stated that ‘Dr. Naomi... has experience or working in hot spots’⁵⁷. It is very expressive hint, especially together with the report of the Religious Information Service of Ukraine that ‘the chaplain recalled her experience of cooperation with the FBI, in particular, the work on questioning’ at the meetings in Kiev⁵⁸.

Skiniya Church also reported about a similar seminar with Paget: ‘December 16-29 2014, military chaplains received an opportunity to take a training at the international Basic Training Course for organisation of care and psychological help within hostilities (crisis situations). As a result, seven people received certificates’. The name and position of the lecturer on the certificates can be read on the photograph published on the Skiniya web site: ‘Naomi Paget, Dmin, Head of National VOAD Spiritual Care Committee, chaplain, FBI anti-crisis manager’⁵⁹. Judging by the joint photograph of Skiniya chaplains and Paget in a hall with a huge coat of arms of Ukraine on the wall, the meeting was also held in Kiev. On May 25-29, Paget held a training for 270 people in Greek Catholic Lvov Spiritual Seminary of Holy Spirit⁶⁰.

⁵⁰ Контуженные портфели. Часть 1 // Сайт Геннадия Мохненко. 16.09.2014. URL: <http://mokhnenko.org/programs/two-bags/451.html>

⁵¹ Фото в аккаунте Геннадия Мохненко в соцсети ВКонтакте. 02.10.2014. URL: https://vk.com/gennadiy.mokhnenko?z=photo52895383_340285355%2Fphotos52895383

⁵² Фото в аккаунте Геннадия Мохненко в соцсети ВКонтакте. 02.10.2014. URL: https://vk.com/gennadiy.mokhnenko?z=photo52895383_340285360%2Fphotos52895383

⁵³ Фото в аккаунте Геннадия Мохненко в соцсети ВКонтакте. 02.10.2014. URL: https://vk.com/gennadiy.mokhnenko?z=photo52895383_340285361%2Fphotos52895383

⁵⁴ Когда закончится война, для христианских служителей она только начнется, потому что в реабилитации будут нуждаться воины АТО и их семьи / Беседовала Татьяна Длинна // Религиозно-информационная служба Украины. 16.06.2015. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/expert_thought/interview/60283

⁵⁵ Сообщение в аккаунте Геннадия Мохненко в соцсети ВКонтакте. 07.04.2015. URL: https://vk.com/wall52895383_95049

⁵⁶ Эксперт ФБР и капеллан поделилась опытом служения и помощи пострадавшим на войне // Религиозно-информационная служба Украины. 03.12.2014. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/all_news/community/charity/58386/

⁵⁷ Сообщение в группе «New Life Church, Kyiv, Ukraine» в соцсети Facebook. 03.12.2014. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/newlife.kiev.ua/posts/906401139370078>

⁵⁸ Эксперт ФБР и капеллан поделилась опытом служения и помощи пострадавшим на войне // Религиозно-информационная служба Украины. 03.12.2014. URL: http://risu.org.ua/ru/index/all_news/community/charity/58386/

⁵⁹ Обучение капелланов // Сайт церкви «Скиния». 21.12.2014. URL: <http://skinia.org.ua/chaplain/voennye-kapellany/ato/1516-2014-12-21-21-05-31.html>

⁶⁰ Заглавная информация в мероприятии «5-ти денний тренінг Наомі Пейджет, Dmin (академічний докторський ступінь) 25-29 трав 2015 р. підходить до завершення» в соцсети Facebook. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/events/361651650704903/>

According to the published information, Paget was not the only American military chaplain who took part in training of their Ukrainian counterparts. 'Together with other chaplains, Artem passed trainings of the Ministry of Defence where American military psychologists told them how to work with soldiers at war,' says the report *Chaplains in the battle: military priests at the front* dedicated to daily life of 72nd separate mechanical brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine which was taking part in hostilities in the South-East of the Donetsk Region. It was presented on December 26, 2014 in *Okna-Novosty* (Window-News) programme of STB Ukrainian TV-channel⁶¹.

Similar trainings of Ukrainian military chaplains held by American specialists become more frequent and popular. 'A training session for military chaplains was arranged in Kiev,' CNLNews Russian language Protestant sputnik TV-channel reported on May 14. 'Over 80 priests from all over Ukraine, who are serving today to soldiers at the front, have come to adopt experience of USA practical chaplains who have served in various hot spots of the world. The leading speakers Dr. Luis Rosa, USA Navy officer, USA major Ronald Boyd and Scott Temple, director of the Assemblies of God Office of Ethnic Relation will hold trainings for stress situation management and will give practical advice for consulting the military'⁶². Rustam Fatullaev, the senior pastor of Skiniya Church who was interviewed in the report it is 'an educative session' was related mainly to the First battalion of military chaplains. And here is another event connected with a competitive structure of the Ukrainian Chaplains: 'June 1-21, 2015, a unique school for chaplain service training in the Ukrainian society will be organised in Kharkov. The school will be organised in the form of summer camp with daily practical trainings. Our tutors are active chaplains of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, hospital chaplains, academicians of Christian higher education institutions, American and Korean chaplains'⁶³. The list of lecturers published by the Ukrainian Chaplains comprises also its foreign participants among whom is 'Dusty Buksly, a US Navy officer, specialist on psychological help for combatants' and 'Marcin Coziel, the Head of NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine'⁶⁴. The group in Facebook for participants stated: 'We gather at the Blagaya Vest (Evangel) Church office in the HEMZ Culture House, Marble Hall, storey 2'⁶⁵.

Military specialists from other NATO countries also take part in preparation of chaplains. 'Guest from Latvia, a NATO colonel', says the caption to the snapshot of a lecturer in the *Ukrainskoye Kapellanstvo* (Ukrainian Chaplains) school of military chaplains in Kiev on May 4⁶⁶.

American organisations also provide financial assistance to the Ukrainian military chaplains. 'Our friends from a large American chaplain communities opened a bank account for us and are ready to help us,' *Ukrainskoye Kapellanstvo* (Ukrainian Chaplains) group in Facebook reports on June 3⁶⁷.

⁶¹ Капелани під кулями: військові священники на передовій - Вікна-новини - 26.12.2014 // Канал користувача «Вікна-новини» на YouTube. 26.12.2014. URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYyTIRl4V0Y>

⁶² CNLNEWS: Сессия для военных капелланов // Канал користувача «CNLNEWS» на YouTube. 26.12.2014. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRtKlK_G_Wog

⁶³ Заглавная информация в мероприятии «Летняя школа капелланов в Харькове. 01-21 июня 2015 года» в соцсети Facebook. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1619781481568188/>

⁶⁴ Файл «Программа конференции.docx» выложен в открытый доступ на Google-Docs, URL: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2Xb8GDQGXf0c2hyWlh0YWwKaUE/view> Ссылка на публикацию дана пользователем «Украинское капелланство / Ukrainian Chaplaincy». 31.05.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Chaplaincy.in.Ukraine/posts/480550732100906>

⁶⁵ Сообщение от пользователя «Украинское капелланство / Ukrainian Chaplaincy» в мероприятии «Летняя школа капелланов в Харькове. 01-21 июня 2015 года» в соцсети Facebook. 21.05.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1619781481568188/permalink/1638455153034154/>

⁶⁶ Сообщение пользователя «Украинское капелланство / Ukrainian Chaplaincy» в соцсети Facebook. 04.05.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Chaplaincy.in.Ukraine/timeline/story?ut=43&wstart=1420099200&wend=1451635199&hash=-5460446815069251246>

⁶⁷ Сообщение пользователя «Украинское капелланство / Ukrainian Chaplaincy» в соцсети Facebook. 03.07.2015. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Chaplaincy.in.Ukraine/photos/a.425984287557551.1073741830.306294819526499/495451713944141/>