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Selective Psychoses

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Mikhail Kosenko, one of the demonstrators arrested by the authorities for his role in the May 6, 2012 rally protesting President Vladimir Putin's return to power, was forced to undergo compulsory psychiatric treatment in October.

Shortly thereafter, Zurab Kekelidze, one of the country's top psychiatrists, told a news conference that Kosenko is indeed mentally ill, that he hears voices and "is convinced that he has been poisoned with lead."

Andrei Bilzho, a prominent artist, disagreed with Kekelidze's opinion. Bilzho, a former psychiatrist, studied psychiatric patients who had been under observation for more than 10 years without ever showing signs of requiring hospitalization. According to Bilzho, Kosenko is a similar case. He suffered from schizophrenia in his youth, but for the past 12 years has shown no odd behavior that would even come close to requiring psychiatric treatment.

I am not a psychiatrist and don't want to meddle in this medical dispute, but I do have a question to Kekelidze and Bilzho regarding the mental state of some Putin supporters.

Consider, for example, Irina Bergset. She is one of the organizers of both the Russian Mothers movement and the rallies protesting adoptions of Russian children by U.S. parents. Bergset once met a Norwegian man through the Internet, married him in his home country, bore him a son and shortly after divorced him.

When the divorce court granted visiting rights to the father, Bergset reported to the Norwegian police that the father had threatened to kill the boy. When the police found no evidence to support that claim, she told them the man had raped the boy along with a dozen other adults that included, she said, women with penises.

After that interesting story, the Norwegian authorities determined Bergset to be mentally ill and deprived her of parental rights.

Bergset then realized that the social welfare agencies employ pedophiles who, she explained, took her boy to a special house where they dress children in animal costumes with male genitals drawn on them, put blue paint on them and rape them. She said that all of this was recorded on video, and that afterward, her former husband and his friends used a special vacuum cleaner-like device to remove the sperm and traces of DNA from the children who had been raped.

She then took her son to the hospital to have him examined, but after hearing the details of her story, the doctor on duty refused to comply.

Only at that point did Bergset finally see the light and realize that not only her former husband and social welfare agencies had joined in a conspiracy against her son, but that all of Norway was involved.

According to her latest version of the story, her son's attackers were not wearing animal costumes with phalluses drawn on them but costumes bearing the likeness of President Vladimir Putin. "They dressed him in a Putin costume," she said, "and people stood in line to rape my four-year-old boy, and I must remain silent because if I say anything about it they will declare me crazy."

Question: Is Bergset psychologically healthy? If not, is she more or less imbalanced than Kosenko, who has shown almost no signs of illness for the last 12 years?

Yulia Latynina hosts a political talk show on Ekho Moskvy radio.

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