

Yankees Drinking the Blood of Russian Orphans

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The "Live With Mikhail Zelensky" program that aired Feb. 21 on Rossia television featured Yulia Kuzmina, the biological mother of Maxim Kuzmin, the adopted boy who died in the U.S. Rather unconvincingly, the shabby 23-year-old woman told the story of how her children were taken from her home while she was at work in Pskov, how she was barred from seeing them in the hospital for some reason and how they were then — for reasons she couldn't seem to fathom — simply taken away from her.

Luckily, writer Maria Arbatova and State Duma Deputy Yekaterina Lakhova were on hand to fill in the gaps. In their words, "the corruption is obvious": the children were "stolen." They said Kuzmina is a "young, disenfranchised mom whose children were carted away" and emphasized, "it is important to understand just how lucrative this business is."

In the evening after the program was taped, Kuzmina boarded a train back home to Pskov with her latest boyfriend. The pair never made it to Pskov. All that attention from the Moscow authorities and a national television audience apparently went to their heads. They got drunk, started a fight and had to be removed from the train. The hapless Kuzmina tried to bribe her

way back on board, and when that didn't work, she told the train attendants that she had a sponsor back in Moscow who would "toss them in the lake to feed the fish."

It would have been a good idea for Arbatova and Lakhova to have inquired into the background of their young heroine before declaring to the country that Russia's child welfare agencies had sold her children for a fistful of dollars. Kuzmina has been a hard-core alcoholic from the age of 13, never worked a day in her life and uses whatever kopeks come her way for booze. Her brother and uncle both hanged themselves. Her mother is missing and her grandmother, whose pension Kuzmina appropriated, was found dead at home, her face half-eaten by rats. Her current boyfriend has been hauled into court twice, and little Maxim's father is in prison for murdering his own father.

That is the hard reality.

Another fact is that there have been only about 20 deaths among the 60,000 Russian children whom U.S. parents have adopted over the past 15 years — and the cause of death is known in each and every case. Here's another fact: Nobody knows how many children adopted by Russian parents have died of natural causes or been killed. The government does not even maintain these statistics, and the record that it does keep is incomplete and unconvincing.

Of course, progressive citizens can convince themselves that the egregious law banning U.S. parents from adopting Russian children is bad. But the deeper truth is that any government-sponsored witch hunt, campaign to find a scapegoat for crop failure, or pogrom against Jews who drink the blood of Christian children or against Yankees who drink the blood of young Russian orphans has no need of conforming to objective reality. The only goal is to rally the unthinking majority against the bloodthirsty enemy and in support of the wise national leader.

The current anti-U.S. campaign fulfills that function perfectly. For President Vladimir Putin, whose primary objective is to retain power at all costs, such a tactic has no discernible drawbacks. But for Russians who want to see the country develop, such a scheme has no discernible benefits.

And that is what characterizes a regime intent on gratifying its own desires. It is prepared to ruin the country to hold onto power.

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

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