

Folklore Lunch Series

The Spirits Never Die: Ukrainian Native Faith as Spatial, Historical and Political Construct



Presented by Adrien Nonjon, PhD
Candidate, INALCO, Paris

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Zoom Presentation

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Long confined to the margins of anti-Soviet dissidence in the 1960s and 1980s, Neo-paganism is now a tangible reality in Ukraine, thanks in particular to movements such as RUNvira (Ridna Ukrayins'ka Natsional'na Vira) and ORU (Ob'iednannia Ridnoviriv Ukraïny). Correlatively to the rise of this culture and spirituality, which aims to be both alternative and fundamentally autochthonic, a certain number of questions remain as to the content of its discourse, particularly as to its precise ideological positioning. Indeed, if at the beginning it could only be limited to a quest for emancipation on the spiritual, philosophical or identity level, Ukrainian neo-paganism has been able, during the second half of the twentieth century and up to the present day, to progressively transgress political divisions in order to unite, carry and renew certain militant creeds, even the most radical ones. It is through several issues (ecological, political and military) that this presentation aims to show the structuring role of neo-pagan spirituality both in the cohesion of certain claims and in the will to create a coherent worldview exclusively turned towards a celebration of an often idealized "Ukrainity."

Adrien Nonjon is a Ph.D. candidate in History at the Centre de Recherche Europe-Eurasie (CREE) of the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations in Paris. He holds a MA in Geopolitics and Political Sciences. From 2019-2021, Adrien was a research fellow at George Washington University's Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, participating in two research programs supervised by Professor Marlène Laruelle, on Transnational History of the Far-Right, and Illiberalism. He specializes in the cultural and political history of the Baltic Black Sea Region.