



THE NAVALNY FACTOR AND NEW TONES IN THE VILIFICATION OF TSIKHANOUSKAYA

MONITORING OF ANTI-BELARUSIAN PROPAGANDA

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Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in the sites of propaganda

The tone of Bela/rus(s)ian propagandists, with their use of slander and insults against **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**, was set back in [August on “60 Minutes”](#) on Russia’s Channel 1 by the head of Russia Today, **Margarita Simonyan**, who compared the mental abilities of the Belarusian leader to those of an orangutan.

The propaganda methods of discrediting the early autumn of 2020 are described in detail in the article [“\(Bela\)Ru\(s\)ian propaganda: three key ways to discredit Svetlana Tikhanovskaya.”](#) The monitoring issue for [October-November 2020](#) brings a new slice of absurd and low-quality propaganda, including painting Tsikhanouskaya as an Israeli Nazi with an LGBT business.

In December, propaganda attempts to denigrate Tsikhanouskaya in every possible way continued. “Lukashenka called her a sucker because it’s true,” [said](#) one of the most active pro-Kremlin propagandists, slipping into obvious insults.

The main message remains the groundless assertion about the puppet status of Tsikhanouskaya, who is supposedly in the service of either Lithuania, or Poland, or the United States (here the propagandists are constantly confused).

Most of the propaganda site publications in December point to Lithuania. In Regnum’s interpretation, Tsikhanouskaya appears as a [captured Lithuanian woman](#), and [RuBaltic holds the same opinion](#): “Together with Svetka-President, the Lithuanian authorities dream of launching a team of their own people in Minsk who will turn Belarus onto a nationalist Russophobic track.”

However, the December publication of RIA FAN offered a new, Germanic view: “Tsikhanouskaya does not represent anything and does not represent anyone. But the authorities in Berlin are using her for political purposes, which is already serious.”

Yulia Navalnaya threatens the health of Tsikhanouskaya

The story of the poisoning and the return of Navalny supported a host of new absurd comparisons and parallels. “[B]etween Tsikhanouskaya and Navalny you can put an equal sign. These are instruments for imposing sanctions against Russia and Belarus,” Sonar2050 [writes](#).

Sputnik Belarus, in turn, through the mouth of one of its propagandists, [expressed a threat](#) to Tsikhanouskaya, not on its own behalf, but from... Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya: "Yulia Navalnaya will be all over the news as Tsikhanouskaya-2. In this scenario you don't need Tikhanovskaya, as she will only get in the way. If I were in her shoes, I would now pay close attention, otherwise you never know what could happen. There can be only one queen on the mountain, and this is definitely not Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya."

There was no answer to the question of why Tsikhanouskaya, as a democratic leader of another state, suddenly displeased Yulia Navalnaya or the mythical world government, which calculates all events in all countries ten steps ahead. However, the task of propaganda is to offer the most incredible speculations to disorient its gullible followers, and not to explain their absurdity and analyze contradictions.

The pro-Kremlin media also actively stuffed Belarusians with conspiracy theories about the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, alleging it was a provocation either by Germany or the "Anglo-Saxons." Sputnik Belarus drew an analogy with the murder of Rasputin and [came to the "conclusion"](#) that Great Britain was behind everything:

"According to this logic, the murder of Navalny is a superb provocation, especially against the background of sudden unrest in Belarus. We put the responsibility on Putin, and we begin to 'shake the regime.' [...] At the end of 1916, it was important for them [the British] to remove Rasputin, which they did. Now it is important for them to test the strength of Russia and Putin, for which they would sacrifice any Navalny."

An "artificial" Belarus joins Russia

In December, pro-Kremlin media continued their [widespread criticism](#) of Belarusian foreign policy, which in their view is not pro-Russian enough. [According to RuBaltic](#), "the multi-vector approach has brought Belarus to the brink of an abyss." And more generally, multi-vector approaches "are time bombs for the former Soviet republics, as sooner or later they always generate a political explosion."

Sonar2050 also [spares](#) no derogatory metaphors in describing Belarus's multi-vector approach: "The Belarusian crisis is a consequence of the fear of the absolute necessity for integration in state building. The localized, small-scale, contractual multi-vector approach is a poor substitute for rationality. And this is the only kind of multi-vector approach there is."

Another piece from Sonar2050 [offers a very](#) peculiar interpretation for the multi-vector approach:

“The national interests of Belarus lie in the deepening of the Union [State] and with Eurasian integration. Its delay with reference to the risk of losing some market share in European countries is called a multi-vector approach.”

To stay alive under the pressure of “information aggression,” Imhoclub [recommends](#) that Belarus milk the resources of the so-called Union State of Belarus and Russia more efficiently: “Essentially, we must organize, either under the auspices of the Standing Committee of the Union State or separately, a fund that will, on a grants basis, distribute resources for bloggers and new media outlets developing through civil initiatives.”

[Regnum laments](#) that Belarus will not be reunited with Russia, since the Russian ruling elite supposedly does not insist on integration:

“The multiplier effect could be many times greater under the scenario of the reunification of Belarus[ia] with Russia. However, Russian elites are not ready for this kind of development. They are not even ready to insist on the implementation of the union agreement signed in 1999, leaving a wide field for discussions about the expediency of saving the ‘multi-vector’ Lukashenka regime.”

Imhoclub also [leans toward](#) having Belarus give up its statehood and sovereignty:

“Russia and Belarus, of course, need to unite into one state, but not in the form of a confederation. Belarus is invaluable for Russia in the strategic, geopolitical, and other senses. The Russian elite must offer any price to the Belarusian elite and society for unification.”

In the end, the loss would not be big, the pro-Kremlin media show, because Belarus and other post-Soviet countries have never had any independence. Thus, [Regnum calls Belarus](#) “an artificial project,” while [Sonar2050 maintains](#) that “the vast majority of post-Soviet states (with singular exceptions) do not have any independence.”

The fables about an imperialist Poland, the Polish-Lithuanian conspiracy, the insidious plan of the United States, NATO and the West continued full-speed in December.

Once again, Russia is saving Belarus from an aggressive West

The hostile and aggressive West, which is supposedly trying to enslave Belarus with the help of the methods of “color revolutions,” and the friendly, successful Russia, which supposedly acts as a savior, are propaganda classics, variations on which we have reported on from month to month [throughout 2020](#).

The stories about imperialist Poland, the Polish-Lithuanian conspiracy, the insidious plan of the United States, NATO and the West continued in full in December.

“The authorities in modern Poland are betting on expansionism and interference in the internal affairs of neighboring states; foremost, ours,” [warns Imhoclub](#).

Ukraina.ru, clearly without knowledgeable of EU budget allocation procedures, [offers an absurd explanation](#) of the mythical intervention of Poland and the Baltic countries:

“Warsaw, Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn are actively stirring up the internal political crisis in Belarus[ia] in order to increase their own importance in the eyes of the European Union leadership and, under this pretext, demand an increase in funding from the general budget.”

Similar conspiracy theories appear in [another Ukraina.ru publication](#): “European leaders put forth a color revolution in Belarus, the face of which, by chance, was Tsikhanouskaya, along with all possible financial, informational, and political support.”

The West and NATO dream, if not of an attack on Russia directly, then of the [deployment of their military bases in](#) neighboring countries “for sabotage and partisan activities against Russia.”

At the same time, both the Belarusian state and pro-Kremlin propaganda do their best to make absurd the real reasons for Western sanctions against Belarusian officials. Electoral fraud and the death and torture of civilians are not mentioned at all and the explanations sit in the realm of plans to enslave Belarus.

As [one of the commentators of Sputnik Belarus stated](#), “the U.S. sanctions policy will continue until Belarus is headed by political forces that suit them – those who will pursue an anti-Russian policy, try to weaken Belarusian sovereignty, and launch integration processes in Euro-Atlantic structures.”

Classic false dilemmas about the political development of Belarus also come into play; that is, it is better under Lukashenka and Russia than under the West. Propaganda pieces maintain that the change of power will turn Belarusians into slaves.

“And then our ‘creative class’ will have no other future except for becoming slaves of the Western Dukes de Malicorne... Soviet Man must regain cultural hegemony, taking his rival, first of all, from out of public consciousness,” [teaches Imhoclub](#).

But, [shows Regnum](#), the resources of the suppliers of “color revolution” dwindled because of the Vatican. The Holy See is supposedly more interested than anyone else in preserving Lukashenka’s power. Moreover, it is argued that the Belarusian social system “is in harmony with the pontiff’s ideas on building a just world”!

The Regnum piece is clearly confused in its testimony, because just two months earlier it had asserted quite the opposite: the Vatican supposedly is deliberately destabilizing Belarus and plans to tear it away from Russia. We wrote in more detail about the Vatican conspiracy theories in one of the articles of the previous monitoring issues – [“The Vatican is pressing – salvation is in the Orthodox Church.”](#)

The West is preparing a nuclear attack on Belarus

In its propaganda regarding the aggressive West in the month under review, RIA FAN went further than others. “The U.S. could use nuclear weapons in Belarus[*-sia*] and Ukraine,” the agency [bellowed in a headline](#). Supposedly, public opinion of European countries is already preparing for this. It is true, however, that not a single fact for such preparation is offered for some reason.

If not a nuclear attack, then a NATO bombing of Belarus was certainly being threatened, and Lukashenka has saved Belarusians from it, [writes Imhoclub](#): “That is, at some point, all of the above looked like real planning for a peacekeeping operation, like in Yugoslavia. And Alexander Lukashenka expressed this when he said that the new president, according to the constitution, could request the assistance of foreign troops.”

Commentators and columnists from Sputnik Belarus come to the rescue. One [described](#) how “an economically stable, nuclear-capable Russia peacefully and firmly parries the provocative ‘jabs’ of the alliance.” They say that NATO does not even come close to the Russian “Vanguards,” “Iskanders,” “Zircons,” “Daggers,” “Poseidons,” «Borei-As,” and “Yasen-Ms.” [Another said](#) that if something happens Russia will fight for Belarus with an insolent and impertinent Poland and other NATO countries as they would “for any piece of Russian land.”

A declining West encroaches on Belarusian family values

In addition to “information wars” and NATO military bases, the West has many other combative tools in its arsenal, propaganda sites reminded us. Specifically, these include attacks on family values. The West has already declined and is neglecting the family, pulling Belarus and other countries with it, and threatening pro-Kremlin internet resources.

“We see how the devaluation of the institution of the family has occurred in Western Europe, where the figures of the father and mother, of parents, are interpreted differently,” [explains one of these sites](#).

One [opinion piece](#) regards international organizations as an aggressive Western offspring. An article titled “The Moment of Truth to Save Family Values” maintains that it is necessary to put an end to “global and UN funds” for the sake of Belarus’s future:

“The ways of destroying the traditional family and the methods of launching orange revolutions, have already been repeatedly tested in other countries before they came to us. In essence, they consist in the fact that international organizations lobby for liberal anti-values, using financial leverage and timing the rhythm of the attack and its concealing rhetoric with “country specifics.”

One of the earlier issues of our monitoring [reported](#) on a conspiracy propagated by a pro-Kremlin pseudo-Vitebsk website regarding the harmful influence of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and the female trio from the joint headquarters. It argued that “behind the feminists are not only women, but also coordinators with big money whose interest lies in destroying civilized society with its traditional foundations.”

Messages about a highly moral Russia with its traditional values and a West decaying like Sodom and Gomorrah are a classic propaganda trick that fails to explain why the divorce rate in Russia is higher than in many Western countries and why the situation with birth rates is no better.