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# Azarov's Opinions Regarding Belorussian Events

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Dear Readers:

Today I have [this very interesting interview](#) with Nikolai Azarov, former Prime Minister of the Ukraine. Azarov is a canny former politician who freely gives his opinions on current events in Belorussia, comparing their situation to what happened in the Ukraine 6 years ago. Quick bio first:

[Nikolai Yanovich Azarov](#) was born in 1947 in Kaluga, Russia. He's not Jewish. There is some Estonian blood in him, hence the "Yanovich". In 1966 was accepted into the Geology Faculty of Moscow State University, graduated in 1971. Worked at various jobs as an engineer, specializing in the coal-mining industry. In 1984 Azarov's Ukrainian adventure began when he arrived in Donetsk to work at the Ukrainian State Research Center of Mining Geology and Geomechanics. Quickly assimilated and became a "Donbass" type Ukrainian.





## Nikolai Azarov

In 1990 Azarov entered politics when he ran for the office of First Secretary of Donetsk Obkom of Communist Party Soviet Union (CPSU). He was also a delegate to the 28th Congress of the CPSU, as a member of the Democratic Opposition faction.

After the collapse of the USSR and dissolution of the CPSU, Azarov continued his new career, navigating the shark-infested waters of Ukrainian politics. Joined the Labor Party (led by Valentin Landyk). Started getting government posts, and was elected to Parliament, as a supporter of President Kuchma. From 1995-98 was a member of the Credit-Currency Council of the Cabinet of Ministers. Continued to rise and work on various government committees, became a specialist in economics and trade. In 2001 became the head of the influential Party of Regions. From 2002-2005 was the First Deputy Prime Minister and simultaneously the Minister of Finances under President Yanukovich.

In 2006 was elected to the Supreme Rada on the Regions ticket. Was once again Deputy Prime Minister in the second Yanukovich administration. Again elected to Supreme Rada in 2007. In 2010 again became the leader of his political party, Regions. And then Prime Minister of the Ukraine. Was always associated very closely with Yanukovich.

On 21 November, 2013 Azarov, as head of the government of the Ukraine, worked on the final stages of the negotiations with the EU. Ukraine sought Associate Membership in the EU and a loan

from the IMF.

One day later, 22 November, Azarov spoke at a session of the Supreme Rada, explaining the reasons why the negotiations had fallen apart: The conditions proposed by the IMF were much too draconian, not to mention intrusive, including a usurious rate of interest, and the raising of tariffs on communal services; also freezing of salaries and wages, pensions and social services. The Ukrainian delegation felt they could not accept these demands for austerity.

The failure of these negotiations were the proximate cause of the Euro-Maidan coup which drove Yanukovych out of office and brought to power the current pro-Nazi and pro-European Banderite government. Azarov and his family fled to Vienna, where they still reside.

The rest of this is just translation of the interview, without any additional commentary on my part. The interlocutor is Russian reporter Alexander Kots.

## The Interview

Kots: The day before my call, Nikolai Yanovich “fell under the train”, as they say. As soon as he started blogging about Belorussia, his Facebook account was removed immediately. Followed by the closing of his Youtube channel.

**They have closed all of your channels where you could express your point of view?** I asked the former Prime Minister of the Ukraine.

Azarov: I have already opened a new channel on Youtube, and a new Facebook page. But I lost all my old archives, content,

subscribers — I had 230,000 and 170,000 subscribers, respectively. Every day I had up to half a million readers. And now I have to start all over again. They plucked me naked, such is “Freedom of Speech”, as the Americans understand it.



Reporter Alexander Kots

Kots: The same thing happened to me in the Ukraine. And just now, the moment I crossed the border into Belorussia and wrote my first post on Facebook — they cut me off. Are the Americans just playing with us?

Azarov: Absolutely, 100%. In the evening I give an interview to the main government channel in Belorussia, and that same night the Americans have already blocked me. Automatically, without any explanation of the reason.

Kots: Why is this [censorship] happening, first with the Ukraine, and now Belorussia?

Azarov: They want to cut off any approaches [to the subject matter] that are not in their favor. They are conducting a total propaganda [war] in the social media and Telegram-channels. There is a total disinformation [war being conducted against] the Belorussian population via the internet. A massive one, to boot. It's the exact same thing they did during the Ukrainian Maidan.

Kots: The difference being that the Maidan had its own television [channel].



Pavel Latushko promotes a European vector for Belorussia.

Azarov: Yes, I agree. But I imagine the satellite TV from Poland and Lithuania can reach the Western oblasts of Belorussia without any problems. A completely unprepared generation is being bombarded by fairy tales about “a bright European future”.

Latushko [ex-Minister of Culture for Belorussia, member of the Oppositionist Coordinating Council, recently having fled to Poland] is on the airwaves constantly, insisting that the Russian loan should not have been accepted, that it will be a burden. *[yalensis: Russia offered Belorussia a loan of \$1 billion to be forked over by the end of this calendar year.]* But European credits — well, this is more reliable, these are reforms, this will bring about the wealthy European lifestyle.

Kots: You don't think it will?

Azarov: In his whole life Latushko has never gotten one kopeck out of the European Union. And if he were to start engaging in this for real, then he would know that, in all these years, the biggest loan the Ukraine ever received [from them] was 1.1 billion Euros *[yalensis: roughly \$1.3 billion American dollars]*. And even that, in two tranches, and with humiliating conditions, from the point of view of [national] sovereignty.

Azarov: For example, NaftoGaz or EnergoAtom — state-owned companies, but the oversight committee was to consist of 70% foreigners, and also be located outside the borders of the country. The referees were to be selected by the committee exclusively from among foreigners. So, in other words, if Latushko were to try to get something from them for Belorussia, well, nobody is going to give him the 3-4 billion that he is asking for. And even if they were to cough up something like 300-400 million, well the conditions they would place... But Latushko doesn't care about that, he is an Agent of Influence. Let's just say that Belorussia would lose her sovereignty. But from Russia, the \$1.5 billion [*yalensis: I believe they are talking American dollars here*] is being offered, I am convinced, without any strings attached whatsoever. Just as we, back in the day, received credits from Russia.

Kots: And yet the leaders of the Belorussian protests are calling upon the people to go out on strike, to not pay their taxes, their electricity bills...

Azarov: I can tell you exactly what will happen, if there is a change of regime in Belorussia and a transition to the European model. We went through all of this ourselves, starting with the Orange Revolution in 2005. And ending with the Maidan in 2014. We heard the very same slogans.

Kots: And what did this lead to, in the Ukraine?





Average monthly salary in Ukrainian regions, including both rich and poor.

Azarov: To the situation where we started to pay 10 times more for the communal services, for gas and electricity. Currently our [utility bills] are higher than in Europe. Whereas the real value of wages has gone down. Currently, according to their own calculations, wages approach \$400 dollars [per month]. But that's just the average, which includes [on the high end of the scale] the income of the oligarchs and the very wealthy officials, who don't exist in Belorussia. In the Ukraine the salary of the head of a state-owned corporation might be [as high as] \$3-5 million dollars per month. If one were to [take this away and share among] the remaining personnel, then the result would not be bad at all.

Prices have gone up. Our produce now costs more than in Poland. The average pension is \$120 dollars [per month], of which 60% goes to paying off the communal utility bills. The Ukraine has transformed into an *importer* of produce! Such a fertile land, good climate, and we are importing produce. We still export corn, grain, sunflowers, but everything else we have to import.

Kots: What about industry?





Kharkov Tractor Factory used to produce these babies...

Azarov: A simple example. The Kharkov tractor factory was one of the largest in the USSR. It produced 100,000 tractors a year. Now they only produce single units, on demand. Production has practically ceased. The same fate awaits the Minsk Tractor Factory. The European Union will insist on replacing these products with exports of their own agricultural technology. And by the way, GomelSelMash, Minsk Tractor — these are excellent companies. They produce up to date technology. But that won't mean anything, they will be privatized and handed over to some new owner; either to struggle in a competitive market, where they will soon be bankrupted; or simply just tear the factories down and sell them for scrap — which is exactly what is happening in the Ukraine.

During the era of the “European reforms” 4,500 Ukrainian enterprises were simply torn down for scrap. The future of their Belorussian counterparts is not enviable. Simply because of the fact, that the EU does not need any competitors. Nor do the Americans.

Kots: But why do they need Belorussia to be weak?

Azarov: In order to turn a people into a herd. A herd which is enraged against Russia. It's easier to rule over a poor country. Ukraine showed the way: 15 years have passed since the first Orange Revolution, and we already have a whole generation who learned in school, that Russia is an aggressor and barbarian. [They are told that] if it were not for Russia, they would be living



like people do in Switzerland. This is totalitarian propaganda, which excludes any other opinions. And the same thing awaits Belorussia.

Kots: Indeed, these young people who are marching in the streets, they will be the first ones to lose their jobs, won't they?



Polish farm workers enjoying a break.

Azarov: Without a doubt. The Belorussians have preserved their higher education institutions. They have many students in the Humanities curriculum. But Humanities are not needed any more. Even engineers won't be needed, if there are no factories for them to work in. Even the sciences won't be needed any more. The educational system will collapse. In order to prepare an engineer, very serious studies are needed, knowledge is needed. But to prepare a farm laborer to pick berries in Poland — no knowledge or experience is needed. I know this, we have been through all of this. This is painful to talk about. I have seen all of this with my own eyes. Those of us in the Ukraine, we did what we could. But there were these continuous upheavals and revolutions...

Kots: I have heard that something like 8-10 million Ukrainian citizens are living abroad as guest workers. Do those figures sound right?

Azarov: In 1991 there were 52 million residents of the Ukraine. Today, even by the cunning standards of Ukrainian officials, who come up with estimates [*yalensis: I understand that Ukraine has not had a real census for quite some time*] based on consumption of bread, milk, meat — there are at most 37 million Ukrainians. And that includes residents of the Donbass and the Crimea. If you discount Donbass/Crimea, then **there are 32 million Ukrainians**. Where did the other 20 million go, during these 30 years of Ukrainian independence? A loss of 300,000 souls per year — this is a physical deficit for the Ukraine, every year we are losing an entire Poltava! Multiply that times 30 years, it's 9 million. The rest is due to migration. Roughly 10 million. Which is comparable to the entire population of Belorussia! The lion's share of these migrants have already settled in Russia, they have received citizenship. Seasonal workers, who travel back and forth, judging by the passenger flow between Ukraine and Russia — 2 million. The rest have emigrated to Europe or America. My Facebook posts have readers from 65 countries around the world. I doubt if Australians or Koreans are reading me. These are our emigrants, whom fate tossed thither.



Every year the Ukraine loses the equivalent of a Poltava.

Kots: The Belorussian protesters say: “We are not against Russia. We want to be friends with everybody, both with Moscow

and with Europe. People on the Maidan used to say that too, but somehow it didn't work out that way.

Azarov: It's deja vu. The Poles and Americans worked so hard to organize these events, whom do you think they were doing all this for? According to my inside sources, they were planning on this [Belorussian] thing to go down two or three years from now. There was a plan, financing, assignments given out. Agents of Influence were prepared, future leaders, activists. They all underwent training. But then things started happening earlier [then they anticipated]. In Ukraine the miners strikes also didn't just spring up out of nowhere, they happened after the trade union leaders underwent training in the American trade unions. The same thing happened in Belorussia.

Why do you think the Americans would invest so much money in this? In order to bring to power in Belorussia people who "want to be friends with everybody?"

Kots: But isn't that what Yanukovych wanted?



Azarov warns of zombification.

Azarov: Exactly. In what way did we not please the European Union? What did we do to them to deserve this coup? Well, it's very clear, what. They don't need any of this "friends with everybody" malarkey. They only need countries that are hostile to

Russia. And as soon as their marionettes seize power in Belorussia, then a very clear anti-Russian course will ensue. All the pro-Russian elements will be physically exterminated, as happened in the Ukraine, either that or tossed into jail, if they haven't managed to flee the country first. And then the zombification will begin. Five years shall pass — and Belorussia will be unrecognizable! Trust me, the fate of Belorussians is not of interest to anyone. Whatever woes await them, will people lose their jobs, will the economy collapse — is there is a single person in America or Poland who cares about that? On the contrary: the worse off the masses are, the angrier they are, all the easier to sic them on the enemy by tossing them a bone or two.

Kots: Is there any way to prevent this from happening?

Azarov: Just one. To recognize immediately that this is [an attempted] coup. Isolate all the organizers. Do that which we did not do. And very clearly respond to those who recognized this Tikhanovskaya as President. Already, Poland has recognized Tikhanovskaya as President. And yet to this moment Belorussia has not severed diplomatic ties with Poland — why not? You don't need to be a dictator to do that, just operate according to the law.

And do not fear, as we were feared, the yelps of the Americans. They will introduce sanctions regardless what you do. The Belorussian government must come to grips, and communicate clearly to the people: There will *not* be a European path. All that the West wants to do is establish a Latin-American dictatorship inside Belorussia.

Kots: So, in the end, there is no other option except Union with Russia? What would Belorussia get out of a Union state?

Azarov: The Belorussian economy is already integrated into the Russian one. It is already 50% in the Russian market. This tendency should be strengthened. Large cooperative projects should be initiated. For example, the building of a nuclear energy station. The more such projects are created, the more people will be incorporated into them: Students, workers, engineers, the scientific intelligentsia, government officials. And this will produce prosperity.



Kots: What about a common army? A common currency? Are these needed?

Azarov: Why not? In its time the Soviet Union was a common market consisting of 15 countries. And this never hampered the national regions from developing in their own way. And then [after the collapse] national trade tariffs were implemented. Every man for himself. And what have our republics gained in the past 30 years? A few areas have more or less returned to the levels they were at in 1990. When, in these past 30 years, we could have been building a real GDP! We could be living 3 times better [than we do].

Kots: Do you think it's possible that a Union State could be so

successful that even the Ukraine would want to join it?

Azarov: Not without a change of regime in the Ukraine. Currently the regime is neo-Nazi, anti-people. Until it has been removed, nothing useful can be done. The people there are actually ready for a change. But people are also scared.

As for Russia and Belorussia — everything depends on the economic course. If people are able to achieve high rates [of economic growth], then the Union will become attractive.

Although, it would seem that China, in just a short time, has become the leading economic powerhouse. And yet the propaganda still works against it. Everybody holds their nose: “Yes, but they have a dictatorship there.”

You see, the attraction of a system doesn't just depend on successes of the economy, but also on how the regime presents itself to the world. But the fact is, that Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia possess all the requisites, if working together, for rapid economic growth. And then, within the next 20-30 years rise up to the level of China, Europe, America.

This could happen. Or, it might take longer. Or perhaps not at all.

**[THE END]**