

Indicting the Beast: The Legal Principles of Alexander Lukashenko

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Here we proceed from the fact that the mentality, traditions and way of life of the people cannot be changed overnight. Must they be changed at all? It cannot be possible to throw unprepared people into the market abyss—(Alexander Lukashenko, 2002)

We have once again felt ourselves a part of the sacred whole, which name is the people of Belarus. We have made sure: A healthy nation is being formed in our country. Healthy not only physically, but also spiritually—(Alexander Lukashenko, 2009)

For 21 years, Alexander Lukashenko has ruled Belarus with an iron fist, jailing opponents, crushing opposition marches, and, many believe, sanctioning the murder of a rival—(Roland Oliphant, The Telegraph, UK, 2015)

Alexander Lukashenko¹ is probably the most maligned politician in the world today. The reasons for this are not difficult to discover. Contrary to the prattle about his alleged “tyranny,” Lukashenko is under attack due to his success. Why a politician whose approval ratings rarely dip below 65% needs to kill his political opponents is curious. Truth be told, of course, Belarus has more important opposition parties than the U.S., and also has a press that is part state-owned, but with many legal opposition newspapers in existence, partly funded by the United States and the EU. Nevertheless, his success is not based on this.

Lukashenko is victimized because he has proven the economic success of the social nationalist model, or what he calls the “social market” model as opposed to libertarian capitalism. There is no doubt this model has strong national associations, is generally pro-Russian and looks to the East, rather than the terminally ill West, for its economic future. Belarus was one of the most essential components of the old Soviet Union. She is very well educated, specializing in electronics and fuel transport and refining. This makes her highly strategic and a threat to the failing West.

Belarus is *terra incognita* to most Americans, even most Americans who fancy themselves “experts” in international affairs. Therefore, it strains the imagination as to why the Western elite, including former presidential candidate John McCain, have made attacking Belarus a major aspect of their political life. The country is the size of Kansas with little diaspora in America. It seems that the only rational reason for the constant attacks on this tiny country is that it serves as a means of attacking Russia. Russian education, gas and oil

¹ This is a revised version of an article initially published by the Occidental Observer, August 2011

technology, scientific establishments and natural resources can be the only rational reason for this constant drumbeat of rhetorical attacks against her. The fact that Russia and Belarus have seen substantial economic growth and increases in financial capitalization while the West seems forever mired in debt and social decay is something that embarrasses American “free market conservatives.”

Recently, McCain seemed to prove the economic subtext of his often ranting condemnations of Belarus in a recent trip to the Baltics: “We appreciate the step forward the EU took in adopting the visa ban, but, we think, it should go further to economic sanctions on energy companies within Belarus that fuel money for that regime to oppress its own people.” In fact, when any lengthy discussion of Belarus comes up in McCain’s political life, energy resources are usually lurking in the background. McCain has received tens of millions from oil firms in America, Israel, the Netherlands and Britain, and serve as at least the financial reason for this strange obsession.

Elected in 1994, Lukashenko has popularity ratings that Western politicians would—and do—envy. Since 1994, Belarus’ spectacular economic growth, diversification, trade surplus and low unemployment have maintained the president’s popularity rating at very high levels, generally hovering around the 60th and 70th percentile. Recently, the London-based TNS Global Research Organization, polled 10,000 Belorussians as to their President. This shows Lukashenko with a solid popularity rating of nearly 75 percent as of the Fall of 2010. Therefore, the accusations of his rigging elections are nonsense. Even more, his opposition is highly divided, ineffectual and deeply doubtful as to their purpose.

What is the basis of his popularity? It’s his sense that Belarus needs an economic policy that serves its national interests. As the Russian and Ukrainian economies were devastated and taken out of the country by the oligarchs in the early 1990s with State Department, IMF and Harvard University backing, Belarus put its privatization program on hold. The IMF was asked to leave the country, and, from that point on, Lukashenko was called “the last dictator in Europe.” It is no accident that the bulk of his U.S opposition comes from Harvard University, especially from the law school, including Yarik Kryovi, who at one point worked for the Soros-owned “Radio Liberty” and served as a lawyer for the World Bank. His CV lists his work for “private clients” he will not disclose. The power elite wants Lukashenko’s head as he continues to become popular among the hoi-polloi of the country.

Lukashenko’s record is stellar. According to World Bank statistics updated in 2010, Belarus avoided the recession/depression that has the West in its grip. Belorussian banks, mostly owned by the state, outperformed all European banks in 2009. State-owned banks increased their capitalization by almost 20 percent as the Western taxpayer was forced to bail out the same banks that have condemned the Minsk government.

From 2001–2008, the Belorussian economic growth average was almost 9 percent, which is roughly equal to that of China. As Western economies were contracting in 2010, the Belorussian economy grew about 6 percent, with a 10 percent increase in agricultural production and a 27 percent increase in exports. Real income, that is, inflation and cost of living adjusted income, grew by about 7 percent in 2010.

According to the IMF, Belorussian unemployment was 0 percent in 1991, but rose to 4 percent in 1996 as Russian and Ukraine were liquidated from the inside. Under Lukashenko’s firm leadership in stopping privatization and arresting the bandits who tried to liquidate the economy, the IMF reports that unemployment went down to 1 percent in 2008. The United

Nations says the same. As of February 2016, the unemployment rate was 1.6%.

After 2011, the economy, like most in the world, sputtered a little. As always, the western press spoke of the “imminent collapse” of the economy, but this ritual is a false as it is tiresome. The economy grew overall about 1% for each year. At the same time, the value added from foreign businesses in the country increased during this time, going from 5.4% to 6.4% of the whole between 2013 and 2014. Private industry without state control or ownership did the best. In 2009, it offered 40% of the total value added, while in 2014, it was 43.%. State owned enterprises fell from 38.4 to 27.2%.²

The World Bank, trying to mitigate Lukashenko's success, writes:

Until 2008, Belarus was a strong growth performer in a fast growing region. During 2001–08, Belarus’s GDP grew on average by 8.3 percent annually, more rapidly than both the Europe and Central Asia region (5.7 percent) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (7.1 percent). . . . The 2008 global economic and financial crisis was transmitted to Belarus primarily through lower export demand and reduced access to external borrowing. Growth dropped to 0.2 percent in 2009.

Without exaggeration, these figures, all from hostile sources, show that Lukashenko’s leadership was and is a success. This is the main source of his popularity and the reason he is elected and re-elected on a regular basis. But the important question is what serves as the basis for Lukashenko’s leadership? The answer is the “social nationalist and social market” idea. The official *Belorussian Doctrine on Development* says this:

Belarus has chosen to follow the path of evolutionary development and rejected the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund like shock therapy and landslide privatization. Over many years of creative work, the Belorussian model of socioeconomic development has been put in place – the model which combines the advantages of market economy and efficient social protection. Our development concept has been elaborated in keeping with the historical continuity and people’s traditions. The Belorussian model aims to improve the existing economic basis rather than to make a revolutionary break of the former system. The Belorussian economic model contains the elements of continuity in the functioning of state institutions everywhere it has proved effective.

In other words, Lukashenko’s view here is that of a “third way” between socialism and capitalism. It takes what is good from the free market but does not dispense with a strong state that makes certain economic growth is not just for the well-connected few. What Marxism and capitalism have in common is their results: total inequality in power, wealth and access. Whether it be the party or the oligarchical class, these modern, materialist systems serve as little more than massive transfers of wealth from the working man to the oligarch. Whether these oligarchs claim to be working “for the people,” “the party,” or “American freedom” makes no difference. The result is precisely the same. The World Bank also says:

2 These are from Belstat, the official statistical agency of Belarus. Given that the country is seeking WTO membership, its statistics are being rigorously observed from western capitals. They can be trusted. The general database is here: <http://www.belstat.gov.by/en/>

Over the past decade, rapid economic growth translated into remarkable progress in poverty reduction, although the recent crisis was associated with a modest poverty increase. The absolute poverty rate (national poverty line) declined from 30 percent in 2002 to about 11 percent in 2006, and it was more than halved in recent years, falling from 11.1 in 2006 to 5.4 percent in 2009. It remained almost stable at 5.2 percent in 2010, but increased to 7.3 percent in 2011, as a result of declining real incomes in the context of high inflation in 2011, and gradually improved to 6.3 percent in 2012 (Overview, 2015).

The World Bank's data from 1995 to 2015 tells us much. First, that the top 20% of all income earners in the country controlled about 40% in 1998 which dropped to about 37% in 2012. Its GINI index as of 2012 is 26. The share of the lowest 10% went from 3 to 4% in Lukashenko's term. When Lukashenko took over in 1995, he instilled confidence and stopped privatization. The Regime predicted doom and gloom, but their predictions are almost always wrong. Life expectancy went from 67 to 73 in this time. Long term unemployment is at 4%, but was 6% in 2009, the first year data is available.

In 1995, Belarus was in the same boat as the rest of Eastern Europe. Her industrial production fell 15% at a minimum. Gross capital formation fell 30% and the lending rate was 170%. Lukashenko stopped the giveaway of the country to foreigners and oligarchs. In 2009, \$15 million in domestic debt was forgiven. In 2008, gross capital formation was 30% with a 23% increase in fixed capital formation. In 2000, 40% of the country lived under the national estimate of poverty. Its not at 4% today (World Development Indicators up to 2012).³

In a meeting with his Cabinet and other significant government and military figures in March of 2002, Lukashenko summarized his political views. It is worth quoting at length:

What are the distinctive features of our model?

First. Strong and efficient state authority. To safeguard the citizens' safety, to ensure social justice and public order, not to allow expansion of crime and corruption is indeed the role of the state. Only the strong authority managed to drag the Belorussian economy out of the economic abyss.

Our nearest neighbors have in the long run realized that, if there is no strong hierarchy of authority, liberalization of the economy in the transition period brings about social instability and legal unheard-of disorder. It results in public unruliness!

As for us, we had a clear idea at the very beginning that premature expansion of market relations would not allow us to radically resolve any of the existing pressing problems. On the contrary, new problems would emerge, generated by the specificity of the market relations. Public accord would break, resulting in conflicts and instability. And it is political stability that is one of the main conditions for gradual integration into the world economy. I would refer to it as one of the distinctive features or consequences (whatever you call it) of the model of development of the Belorussian economy.

3 World Bank data do not go beyond 2012 as yet. The Bank permits the user to chose years and variables in research at <http://databank.worldbank.org/>

Here we proceed from the fact that mentality, traditions and way of life of the people cannot be changed overnight. Must they be changed at all? It cannot be possible to throw unprepared people into the market abyss. One needs decades to work out a new world outlook.

The second distinctive feature of our model is in the fact that the private sector can and has to be developing alongside the public sector. But not to the detriment of national interests. I emphasize: if you are a private owner, it does not imply you should do whatever you like. National interests, the state, must be the main priority and the main goal for the work of every citizen, enterprise or entrepreneur whose production is based on private ownership.

This is not campaign rhetoric, but serves as the basis of government policy since the mid 1990s. The state must be strong, honest, and competently led, because the alternative is oligarchical control and the substitution of private for public law. The state is taking a protective stance towards its people—a novel idea in an age with Western elites have systematically undermined the interests of their own people, particularly with regard to immigration. As the Soviet Union fell to pieces, only the state remained to safeguard some minimal concept of the public good. Russian under Yeltsin and IMF control was incapable of this, proving the incompetence and corruption of such multinational agencies. Only in Belarus was this economic rape stopped.

The ignorance of the “free marketeers” is shown in their views on Russia. They assumed around 1991 that if the government just “got out of way” of the “invisible hand,” all would be well. What they did not count on was the radical inequalities of access to power. Those with good government jobs, black market fortunes or other forms of “gray” access to power were precisely those who were in the best position to take power. Under the weak leadership of Yeltsin and the IMF, the Russian economy almost disappeared. The work of decades of the Russian people was liquidated and sent to America, Cyprus, Israel and Latin America in the name of “freedom” and “democracy.”

The “free market” is a slogan—a mode of legitimizing the already extant distribution of power. There was never a time of the pure “free market,” but rather, it existed only because of the abilities of those capable of taking over during the decay of Ancien Régime-Europe in the Enlightenment. The old social protections of the medieval peasant and townsmen were thrown by the wayside in this oligarchic rush for progress, money and power. The same thing happened in Russia and Ukraine in the early 1990s. Weak leadership meant the liquidation of the state, economy and legal system. In his 2009 New Year’s Address, Lukashenko added more detail to his basic approach:

We were urgently recommended to place the economy under the command of the rules of the world exchange market. But we decided not to rely on the volatile exchange trends.

We are not the ones who have provoked today’s crisis which is sending shockwaves all around the world. On the contrary, the crisis has come as a result of something that we have been always been determined to struggle against.

The central words are this: “I emphasize: if you are a private owner, it does not imply you should do whatever you like.” It is the nation that comes first. The nation here is the bilingual

tradition of Belarus between Russian and Belorussian. It is Slavic Orthodox and agrarian. It is based on a fundamentally egalitarian distribution of land and resources in the name of ethnic and national solidarity. Economic progress means nothing if it benefits only the few. Nationalism implies solidarity, especially in a small and vulnerable country under constant attack. He writes:

The dominant and extremely aggressive ideology of today is liberalism. Liberalism can be briefly defined as the ideology of social inequality of people, profit and individualism. The masters of the modern world, especially Americans, were able to convince the political elite and the population of the former socialist countries, and especially the republics of the USSR, that liberal values the highest aspects of Western civilization and is the only true reference point for development. However, liberal features, although to a lesser extent, and we should be inherent. I think there is nothing wrong in the fierce competition. Anyway, in this world evolves, competition generates the highest examples of the work and the results of labor.

In his famous essay “On the Historical Choice of Belarus,” the more “ethnic” aspects of his political theory are laid out. In general, the purpose of the state, in this realm, is to provide a safe home for the specific traditions of the peoples living within it to flourish. This includes the agrarian culture, urban life, the specific ethnic traditions of Poles, Belorussians and Russians living within Belarus. The point is not so much that the state is representative of a specific national tradition, but rather that preserving the national traditions of the peoples living within her borders becomes paramount. There are no real ethnically pure states, and therefore, the best the state can do is protect the ethical traditions and regional variations that do exist.

In his April, 2002 State of the Union Address, Lukashenko stated:

Rights and freedoms must be in harmony with responsibilities for violations of the state-established regulations. Development of the Belorussian economy implies not only the encouragement of small and medium-sized enterprise (although, as I said, these must and will be encouraged). Historically, the Belorussian industry means large-scale enterprises. There is only one promising way: updating and re-equipping existing major industries so as to produce competitive new generations of products. Just look, the entire world merges into transnational corporations. Why then should we crush, divide and destroy our gigantic highly cooperated enterprises? They must be relied upon. In pursuing its policy, the state will, first of all, be relying upon these giants, which have been maintaining us and feeding us. Immense investments are needed for this, which cannot be attracted without changing the form of ownership. (Translation mine, available only in Russian)

His doctrine of “social right” is that there are no abstract rights. They are contextualized into a way of life—that of the national collective. You have no right, for example, to do something that harms the economic life of the country. Rights in the West are mindless slogan words without meaning. They exist to end an argument without making your case: “I have a right to do this” the American businessman might say as he outsources his jobs to China. Justifying such an alleged “right” is another matter, but the very act of claiming a “right” to do something shuts down all argument. Lukashenko asks, not what are your “rights,” but what is the “good”

thing to do. No one has a “right” to undermine the public good, especially for private profit. The entire point of law is to protect labor from the arrogance and currency-fetishism of the ruling class. Only strong leadership able to go over the heads of the powerful can fashion such laws. Lukashenko and Belarus have reaped the benefits of such a policy.

In confronting the onslaught of the West in his 2006 State of the Union Address, Lukashenko spared no feelings:

The country’s development policy line worked out by us has proved right. High rates of economic growth, which our economy has been already demonstrating for more than 10 years, provide good evidence thereof. Just compare: our annual GDP growth over the past five-year planning period was 7.5 percent as against 3.5 percent of the world average.

Western theoreticians fail to explain the reasons of such a success. They do not fit in with their “democratic” scheme. The reasons, however, are simple. We have not embezzled the people’s wealth, we have not got into burdensome debts. Relying on life itself, we have worked out our own model of development based on well-balanced and thought-out reforms. Without any sweeping privatization and shock therapy — preserving everything that was best in our economy and in our traditions. At the same time we have been learning to work under new, market conditions, taking advantage of the experience elsewhere in the world and taking into account the modern trends of the world economy. Strong state power, strong social policy and reliance on the people— that is what explains the secret behind our success. (Translation mine, available only in Russian).

Liberal democracy in the West has meant, in real terms, the constant transfer of the labor of the American worker to the pockets of the banks and the multinational firms. When the banks failed, they demanded trillions from these same taxpayers to continue to lend. Much of this money just went overseas and into the pockets of the major players like Goldman-Sachs. In the 2008 elections, Goldman spent a huge amount of money on both candidates. Whoever won in 2008 saw Goldman as their primary beneficiary. This is liberal democracy, and this is a large part of the American failure.

In sending the Western oligarchs packing, Lukashenko did two things: first, he assured his own popularity and political success while, second, earning the hatred of the Western establishment. It should be noted that at the 2010 Bilderberg meeting, not a single Russian or Belorussian was invited. The same was true in 2011. (Jim Tucker, personal communication)

In his “Historical Choice” essay, Lukashenko condemns the form of Free Trade practiced by the EU. For him, the playing field is already slanted to the elites in the powerful states of the union. In the EU—he is writing in 2003—states like Greece or Portugal could not compete with the advanced states of Germany or England. The benefits that Greece takes from the EU exist solely in the interests of the ruling classes, while the people suffer. German or French goods flood the Greek market, putting Greek artisans out of business.

When Lukashenko uses the word “independence,” it is meant not just as a campaign slogan, but as a moral reality. Independence means economic independence—the global market will be entered on our terms, not the banks’. Independence means that, while Belarus will always be an Orthodox and Slavic people, that does not mean issues of justice will be ignored in Minsk’s choice of allies. There is to be no dependence on anyone. Dependence on other states for energy,

markets or industrial components automatically means that the people themselves have lost all power over their economic lives, and their well-being in that sense is solely in the hands of others, foreigners. For Belarus, the worker will be involved in all levels of economic decision making and will have some control over the economic life he enjoys.

The President has issued a decree that offsets interest on loans for small businesses and consumers so long as they are focused on Belorussian development and local life. In 2012, he lowered taxes for small rural industrial projects. Each child born to Belorussian parents receives \$10,000 as of 2015. In addition, they receive a monthly stipend of 50% of the living wage.⁴

Rural development is not ignored in Belarus. The Ukrainian and American farm is largely a memory. In Belarus, there is a single standard of social minimum standards that all regions must develop. Families in rural areas may not spend more than 25% of their income on housing or community services. Non-cash assistance is granted in these conditions.

Contrary to myth, Belarus has a substantial and vigorous civil life with many political parties. The old communist party and the Agrarians are a strong basis of support for the president, but the Republican party of Labor and Justice as well as the Liberal Democratic party are also supportive of Lukashenko's ideas.

In 2015, Lukashenko won the first round of the presidential election with 51% of the vote. This is not exactly indicative of vote rigging. In 2010 he won 58%, 63% in 2006 and 57% in 2001. These are roughly in accordance with his popularity rating according to most polls, but as always, polls are very sensitive to their wording and method. Asking whether Lukashenko is on the right path and forcing respondents to say yes or no is manipulative. Most are in the middle. Just before the elections, his polling was at 46% with his opposition at 36% while a full 30% at least “did not know” or were “unsure.”⁵ It is important to note that while Lukashenko and his policies have been generally popular in Belarus, the population has absolutely zero trust in the opposition.

When commemorating the 60th anniversary of the massacre of Katyn in March of 2003, Lukashenko said this:

We still have to analyze and learn lessons from current events. But already today it is clear: the system of the world order has been destroyed due to the war in Iraq, the role of the UN Security Council has been brought to zero, international law has been trampled underfoot, the principle of no external imposition to any people of the system of governance and power has been violated. The Belorussian people condemn the aggression by the United States of America. So do most of the peoples and states of the world, including even the closest allies of the USA.

Lukashenko has consistently promoted that United Nations as a means of controlling American imperial power. Furthermore, he appreciates that the UN would include the views of poorer states throughout the world in foreign policy decisions. Lukashenko has rejected any form of global government, but still sees a constructive role for some international organizations in protecting the weak against the strong. He stresses the “principle of no external imposition” of

4 Decree number 78 of February 23, 2016 and Decree 574 of 2014

5 From the Independent Institute for Socioeconomic and Political Studies, reproduced by the magazine Belrynok: <http://www.belrynok.by/ru/page/news/1302/>

state forms or ideology on a people. Lukashenko condemns America's ideological crusade for oil, Israel and the oligarchic doctrine of "liberal democracy."

Lukashenko sees ideological crusades not as moral interventions or manifestations of disinterested humanitarianism, but cloaks for raw oligarchical power. In Lukashenko's ethical theory, oligarchy is the worst form of government. Historically, from Novgorod to Venice to New York, oligarchies have used liberalism, "republicanism," and media manipulation as a cloak for their own power. In a similar vein, Lukashenko states in his 2006 address to the heads of Belarus' diplomatic corps:

If we are talking about respect for states, their independence and sovereignty, their rights to choose their futures, about the right of the people to elect its leaders, about respect of the right to life and free labor, worthy wages and salaries, the right to equality of all before the law, the right to freedom of opinion and expression in conformity to the law, without detriment to the rights of other people — these are our values. The U.S. and the EU do not have a monopoly on these rights. Our nation had paid a far greater price for these values than the USA and the EU.

As always, Lukashenko shows the distinction between a politician and a statesman. It is concepts like these that have helped this man become one of the most popular politicians in the Slavic world. Again, the Belorussian President holds abstract "rights" as little more than cloaks for raw oligarchic power. The U.S. invades the rights and sovereignty of other states not to protect people from "human rights abuses," but rather, to serve the interests of its overgrown and excessively wealthy private sector.

While the Western press continually repeats the inaccurate statement that Belorussian media is "state-owned," they themselves hew to a single line on most important topics, especially on foreign policy. Needless to say, the oligarchic control over Western media is too well known to deserve further comment.

The very fact that the President of Belarus holds that Western hostility is due to "external influences" strongly suggests that he is referring to financial and ethnic sources of power. This is important, since it goes to the heart of his social ideas. The state, at its best, is a source of moral authority and the public good. When the state is captured by alien elements, it then becomes merely a coercive agency of oligarchy. Therefore, in a rather roundabout way, Lukashenko is making the accusation that Western states are not public, but rather private, entities. If they were to become public entities once more, they would then drop their hostility to the Belorussian political system.

Some years ago, Lukashenko was treated with yet another tirade from western writers for comments in support of some of Hitler's policies. This is unremarkable since so many of Hitler's early policies were very successful. Hitler is an excellent parallel to Belarus due to the prostrate condition of Germany after World War I. This is not all that different from the auto-demolition of the USSR and the debacle of privatization in the 1990s.

While I don't want you to think that I'm supportive of Hitler in general, all historical figures are complex: they are not all good or all evil. Hitler formed a powerful Germany thanks to a strong executive power. For 30 years Germany

suffered in a severe crisis along with Europe. Germany was rescued from this due to the ability of the nation to consolidate and unite around a strong leader. Today we are in a similar situation. We need to consolidate around one or a group of people to survive, to survive and get to our feet once again.

Not a word of the above is historically or morally problematic. Hitler's leadership brought a humiliated, war torn, bleeding and dying Germany back to first world status in a few years. While there was no bloody war in the early 1990s, the former USSR had lost 80% of its economy, the population was dropping and the standard of living had reached catastrophic levels. Only a strong, social nationalist executive could save the country from the fate of Ukraine. Lukashenko's eternal reputation was made in doing just this. It is not so much that he rightly praised Hitler in that regard, but as always, western hacks project their own society's failures into strong leaders.

Lev Krishtapovich (2015) writes for the Geopolitical Institute of Belarus that the ideological orientation of the state since Lukashenko can be summarized under five headings. First, that the eventual union with Russia within the context of the Customs Union is desired and desirable. Second, as a proviso to the first, that Belarus insists on its own form of statehood within this union. The state here is not an abstraction, but a lifestyle, a “language” in the broad sense of the term.

Thirdly, that Orthodoxy is essential to Belorussian history and life. Without the church, there would be no Belorussian identity. This is not a matter of opinion but something easily comprehended by a quick glance at the history of states in the area. There is no “separation of church and state” in the western sense because that implies that the state is not an aspect of our final purpose and end as human beings. It is essential to note that when the Unia was forced on the country, the peasantry remained firm. The faith then has a strong populist idea attached to it. It is the “peasant” religion as a religion of resistance and rebellion.

Fourth, that the entire idea of an ideological conception of the state in history is essential for eastern nations, especially smaller ones such as Belarus. Unity is essential when it is so easy to be swallowed up by more powerful and richer neighbors. Historical events are understood both as literal, chronological occurrences taken in sequence, but it is also a “sense” of history, an idea that these are not random occurrences, but point to a destiny and an identity.

Fifth, the victory over Hitler is forever etched into the mind of Belarus and will always be important to her identity. Having lost possibly 40% of her population in the war, there will always be a sensitive feeling towards Germany, imperialism and Hitler. The defense of Belarus and the unity of the people around their agrarian tradition is essential for survival. Belarus is not a liberal society for this reason.

It is significant, in Krishtapovich's analysis, that Lukashenko stopped the criminal wave of privatization when he was elected president. This became the modern touchstone for Belarus: the state, strong leadership, saved the country from the unenviable fate of Ukraine. The problem for western apologists is that “democracy” is inherently tied up with the market, privatization and, ultimately, oligarchy. The rights of free speech are certainly not a problem, but in oligarchy, only the monied class has any real influence with that speech.

To conclude, it might be appropriate to list the basic themes that recur in Lukashenko's thought and policy.

1. A nationalism that stresses the economic security of his small country. Ethnicity and morality are important because they serve as a basis of solidarity for the basic economic concerns of the people.
2. The continual attack on “abstractions,” such as “human rights” or “economic freedom.” Since abstractions can mean whatever the speaker wants them to mean, they are used as covers for the exercise of colonialism and economic imperialism. Abstractions cannot become policy. They can justify or rationalize policy, but their relation to policy is indirect at best.
3. In cases of emergency, such as the meltdown of the Russian and Ukrainian economies in the early 1990s, the state has the responsibility to take the lead in protecting the population from oligarchy and foreign attack. This is especially the case in smaller and hence more vulnerable states.
4. No state can function when it is penetrated by oligarchy and the “free market” ideology. These care only about private goods, while the state serves the public good only. The state serves the public good when it uses its authority against concentrated economic power and self-interested foreign interference.
5. The state understands its role only in light of the historical experience and the ethnic tradition(s) of its people. The state is necessary but dangerous. They are armed and very capable of seeing themselves as autonomous to all other centers of power. It can also be the savior of the people. The state is – in itself – a neutral idea.
6. Economics exists for the whole people. If it does not serve the public good, then it has no moral legitimacy, regardless of all “rights” talk to the contrary. Those that produce goods, both intellectually and physically, should own them and benefit from their sale and use.
7. The state has a legitimate economic role in both media and economics. It has no right to rule these in a totalitarian fashion, but it, especially in times of stress, has a right to have its voice heard. A strong state sector is not the same as “tyranny.”
8. There is no real moral distinction between state control and oligarchic control in the west today. There is no distinction between the public and the private sector. The state should be stronger than all economic factors in society. Otherwise, these create an oligarchy and all end up serving them. Liberalism is totalitarianism through the economic elites that create it. The state, while capable of great evil, is generally a clumsy weapon.
9. The media is one of the world’s most powerful weapons. Hence, it should be regulated like any other weapon. Media elites are often oligarchical and centralized, and use their empires for the sake of controlling others. A free media, therefore, is a mixed one, with different points of view being permitted. This is far more the case in Russia and Belarus than it is in the US. The interest of oligarchy is fundamentally identical. Therefore, their media will be the same.
10. No system has the right to manipulate the internal affairs of another. This is especially the case when such interference is blatantly self-interested and serves the interest only of an economic oligarchy. Again here, the use of abstractions such as “free elections” is equally self interested. Its about the ease of capital's penetration into another society.
11. “The people” is another of these abstractions that mean nothing. To use the phrase “the people,” the speaker must be referring to a specific people, a specific language and historical tradition, as well as a specific social context. Only then does the term “people” have any meaning and even there, class distinctions must be taken into consideration.

12. International justice, if it means anything, refers to a state of affairs where the world's ethnic groups, races and religions are given the independence to develop according to their own historical tradition, not the ideological slogans of the current hegemon.
13. International justice also implies objective and politically neutral international bodies that can mediate disputes outside of an ideological agenda. This is far from "world government," but refers only to certain arrangements that can solve international problems in a neutral manner before they lead to mass warfare. This is especially sensitive in smaller states that have lost huge percentages of their population in wars. The fact that Belarus lost almost 30 percent of its population in the Second World War makes the average Belorussian a bit testy about the possibility of another shooting war on its soil.

The "market" model theorizes about a small state that has very little role in life. In truth, all capitalist states have huge governments guarding international and domestic corporations. The social nationalist or corporatist model in Belarus refuses to distinguish between the common good and the individual good. Newly industrializing states are under intense pressure from far more powerful societies from the outside seeking the resources and normally cheaper labor of the country. The state-model is essential for survival.

Stability and development are not merely qualitative notions, but are defined in part as social equality and solidarity of the specific parts of the society. Work is natural to man. It should not be seen as drudgery. Vocation is important in the Slavic models of life from Gregory Skovoroda's work where the "vocation" of the person is never alienated labor. Patriotism is needed to weld the society together for a specific – rather than abstract – conception of statehood and the commonweal.

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